

On Climate Imperialism

A COLLECTION OF JOSE MARIA SISON'S
ARTICLES, STATEMENTS, INTERVIEWS ON
CLIMATE CRISIS.

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ON CLIMATE IMPERIALISM



Questions from ND Online School of Anakbayan-Europe

Answers by **Jose Maria Sison**

17 October 2021

COP26 or the Conference of the Parties has begun in Italy this month and will culminate in Edinburgh, Scotland by the end of October to November. We are thus, excited to have this ND Online special on Climate Crisis. To begin with:

1. Did Marx and Engels envision that rapid industrialization will ultimately lead to a crisis on climate? What do they have to say about the relationship of man to nature? Can you suggest to us reading materials?

JMS: At the time of Marx and Engels in the 19th century, the degree of industrialization that free competition capitalism achieved did not yet cause damage to the environment or to the ozone layer in particular to an extent

causing drastic climate change and threatening the very existence of humanity. But they saw the need for humanity to understand the laws of nature, make wise utilization of nature and have harmonious relations with it. It would take a further development of capitalism to its monopoly stage that science and technology would be used by the monopoly capitalist class to plunder, pollute and ruin the environment to the extent of posing the danger of human extinction. We are now confronted by the problem of huge amounts of carbon dioxide emissions that are causing global warming.

We are nearing the tipping point of irreversible environmental destruction. Scientists, conscientious social activists and the broad masses people are alarmed and concerned with the heating up of the surface of the oceans, the frequent widescale forest fires, the melting of icebergs and rise of the sea level.

Since the very foundation of the theory of Marxism, dialectical materialism has taken into account that humanity is part of nature and that humanity and nature as distinguishable phenomena have an interactive relationship. In *Dialectics of Nature*, Frederick Engels sought to relate the natural sciences to the social sciences. He paid attention to anthropology in both the aforesaid book and *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

He showed that man made himself through labor and that the dialectical relationship between humans and nature involves both unity (man being part of nature) and struggle. He defined in *"The Part Played by Labor in The Transition from Ape to Man,"* the basic position of Marxism: Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. And it really is the

source – next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth.

In his Critique of the Gotha Program, Marx declared: Labour is not the source of all wealth. Nature is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labour power....Only in so far as man from the beginning behaves towards nature, the primary source of all instruments and objects of labour, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, does his labour become the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. In production, nature is the mother and human labor is the father.

2. How does monopoly capitalism contribute to the plunder of our environment? What is direct foreign investments, can you give solid examples in the Philippine setting? Why does climate imperialism have an impact on semicolonial and semifeudal countries like the Philippines?

JMS: Foreign monopoly capitalism has been the main factor in the plunder and destruction of our environment. It deploys direct investments to acquire assets in the Philippines and exploit its natural and human resources. It also deploys loans in order to perpetuate underdevelopment and high profitability for the foreign investors. It has imposed on us the use of fossil fuel in our households, transport system and workplaces. This has emitted a huge amount of carbon dioxide polluting our lungs and contributing to the destruction of the ozone layer, the intensification of radiation and global warming.

Foreign monopoly capitalism has limited the Philippines to providing cheap raw materials and cheap labor in exchange for imported manufactures. It has extracted superprofits by cutting down our forests to take logs, using open pit mining to take out a wide range of mineral ores and expanding monocrop plantations for the purpose of export. Chemicals used in mining and monocrop plantations have poisoned the streams and the fields for producing food staples for the people.

US imperialism has also manipulated weather conditions to wage geological war against its enemies in the Asian mainland and the Philippines is also adversely affected because it is in the path of super-typhoons directed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. There are extreme changes of climate from super-typhoons through floods to droughts. The warming of the seas has speeded up the super-typhoons and the loss of forest cover has made them more destructive than ever. Soil erosions and landslides have increased.

3. The Philippines is a country usually battered by natural calamities. What do the progressive forces and revolutionary forces do to fight against the worsening global climate crisis? How can these forces help whenever the country is hit by a catastrophe? How do these catastrophes affect the principles and ideologies of the revolutionaries and activists?

JMS: Indeed, the Philippines is a country usually battered by natural calamities. An average of 25 typhoons of varying ferocity now devastate the Philippines every year because global warming has made the Pacific Ocean a super-highway for them.

The progressive and revolutionary forces must arouse, organize and mobilize the people against the dumping of fossil fuel (oil, gas coal) on the Philippines by the foreign oil monopolies and demand the accelerated adoption of environment-friendly technologies to generate energy, such as the use of solar, wind, hydrogen and tidal power.

When catastrophes hit the country, the progressive and revolutionary forces must undertake campaigns to provide relief and rehabilitation to the people in need and demand the end of policies and practices that result in the catastrophes and the failure of the reactionary government to serve the interests of the people.

It is perfectly in accordance with the principles and ideologies of the legal national democratic movement and the people's democratic revolution to struggle for ending the policies and practices of foreign monopoly capitalism and the reactionary government that plunder and destroy the environment and cause the catastrophes. The protection, conservation and wise utilization of the natural resources are in consonance with the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle as well as with the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed and exploited classes.

4. Can technological advancement and protection of nature coexist, or does our modern society mother to the death of nature such as what we habitually see in sci-fi movies and books?

JMS: Science and technology can be used by the people to serve their needs and at the same time advance and protect nature, in contradiction

with the monopoly bourgeoisie that uses science and technology to plunder and destroy nature for sole purpose of taking superprofits and that avoids the costs of conserving, restoring and renewing renewable resources in the environment.

The monopoly bourgeoisie uses not only the sci-fi movies and books but also other means of information and education to spread the notion that the people are helpless and the lie that economic development is impossible, unsustainable or self-destructive if undertaken by the people and their progressive and revolutionary forces in the global South and not by the imperialist firms and banks which are supposed to be readily endowed with the technology and financial resources to fix the problem of environment degradation and damage that they themselves have wrought.

5. October is also the month of peasants – how does climate change affect the livelihoods of peasants and indigenous peoples in the world, particularly in the Philippines? Can you explain more about mining, quarries and dams? They promise progress and development, what impact do they have on the peasant communities?

JMS: Climate change adversely affects the livelihoods of peasants and indigenous peoples in the world, particularly in the Philippines, because the unpredictable shifts from one extreme climatic condition to another destroys the crops or prevents any timely measure to save them if any. A super-typhoon, a flood or a drought is capable of destroying the crop and prevents the peasant communities from reaping the fruits of their labor.

Mining and quarries destroy the foliage that protects and gives nutrients to the farms and crops of the peasants communities. They can cause the streams to dry up or take a course away from the farms. They cause soil erosion and landslides. Mining operations use acids that poison the streams. The use of explosives in mining has made earthquakes very frequent. Dams are built to concentrate the flows of streams and rivers in one direction. Thus, many of the widespread peasant communities are deprived of water for their farms and daily needs. They are often deprived of any satisfactory program of resettlement because of bureaucratic corruption.

6. The Philippines is an island nation. Our seas are of great abundance, but why are our fisherfolk in a dire situation now? Why is there a need for us to import fish from (and on the topic of importation, other agricultural produce as well?).

JMS: One third of the fish requirement of the Philippines is supposed to come from the West Philippine Sea but our sovereign and maritime rights have been sold out by the Duterte regime to China despite the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the legal victory of the Philippines before the Permanent Arbitration Court in The Hague in 2016. Chinese factory ships and fleets of boats have been sucking up the fish from the West Philippine Sea and preventing Filipino fishermen to fish there.

So, the solution of the traitor Duterte is to buy galunggong and canned sardines from the Chinese in the name of neoliberalism. We buy the fish stolen from us. Also, Duterte has a stupid policy in agriculture. He lowers the buying price of rice under the National Food Authority to kill our peasant producers and imports rice from abroad. He and his big comprador cronies

make a killing both ways. But he is destroying the livelihood of the peasants and wasting the foreign exchange resources of the Philippines. It is absurd that the Philippines, an agricultural country, has become one of the world's top rice importers.

7. Indigenous peoples thrive for many years without destroying nature, how are their practice and tradition different from ours? What can we learn from them?

JMS: The indigenous people abound in the hills and mountains of the hinterlands. They are basically peasant in class terms. They have been able to subsist by combining agriculture with fruit-gathering, hunting and fishing in local streams. We can learn from them how to work and survive with a low level of technology and assist them in obtaining economic and technical assistance and social services. We can also help or join them in defending the environment and struggling against the invasion by logging, mining and plantation companies.

8. The New People's Army also calls itself the Green Army because they are protecting nature. In what manner can they respect and protect the forests and jungles of the country while making it their home?

JMS: The Red commanders and fighters of the *New People's Army* respect and protect the forests and jungles of the country because these are their homes and bulwarks for guerrilla warfare, politico-military training, cooperation with the indigenous people and source of food. They unite and cooperate with the indigenous communities and poor peasant in preventing

the logging, mining, plantations and tourist or real estate companies from grabbing their land and other natural resources.

9. In your opinion, Tito, how does being a revolutionary, being a Marxist-Leninist impact one's stand on climate crisis? Why is it essential for revolutionaries to take part in the struggle against climate injustice?

JMS: As a Marxist-Leninist and proletarian revolutionary, it is my duty to fight foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists who collaborate in exploiting and oppressing the toiling masses of workers and peasants. The indigenous people and poor peasant settlers are most subjected to land grabbing and displacement by logging, mining, plantation and real estate companies that ruin the environment and aggravate the climate crisis. The fight for climate justice is necessarily a national and class struggle against the foreign monopoly capitalists and the local exploiting classes that bring about climate injustice.

10. What can we learn from Marxism-Leninism in advancing the fight against climate crisis?

JMS: We learn from Marxism-Leninism the fundamental principles about humanity being a part of nature, their dialectical relations in the course of the prehistoric and historic development of human society, the worst attacks done by monopoly capitalism on both humanity and nature and the

possibility that humanity under socialism and communism can use the natural and social sciences to avail of nature without damaging and destroying it but making it even more green, abundant and fruitful.

OPEN FLOOR QUESTIONS

1. How does the huge foreign-owned fishing boats affect the livelihood of our fisherfolks? What about the situation in South China Sea?

JMS: The livelihood of our fisherfolk is adversely affected by the Chinese, Japanese and other foreign factory ships and fishing boats operating in Philippine seas. In the South China Sea, the Chinese have taken over Panatag Shoal and the rest of the West Philippine Sea. Thus, we now have to import from China fish stolen from our own seas.

2. Does the NPA help in relief operations during the crisis? How do they survive the earthquakes and typhoon?

JMS: It is a fundamental principle and long-standing policy of the NPA to help the people in relief operations during calamities and crisis. Being a disciplined and mobile force, the NPA can move easily to more relatively secure areas during earthquakes and typhoons. But still they have to endure and overcome the same difficulties as the people.

3. Kaingin system has been a practice for many years, why is it bad for the nature?

JMS: The kaingin system is often used as a whipping dog by the publicists of the exploiting classes. It is relatively harmless in comparison to the largescale grabbing and misuse of the land by the logging, mining, plantation and real estate companies. Swidden farming has been a traditional method for the poor peasants and lower middle peasants to make a living.

In the first place, swidden farming is usually undertaken in logged over areas. What is slashed and burned is secondary forest growth in logged over areas. The revolutionary forces can mitigate the damage to climate by planting swidden farms with fruit trees and other crops that retain and enhance the fertility of the soil.

4. Does being a revolutionary automatically mean being an environmentalist?



JMS: If you are a revolutionary, you must be an environmentalist. You must join or support the campaign to preserve and protect the environment. At best you can join the people in the Philippines who are very much engaged in the midst of the indigenous people of fighting for their ancestral domain and the protection of the environment.

5. How does the war of aggression aggravate the climate crisis?

JMS: The war of aggression aggravates the climate crisis because it uses weapons of mass destruction, such Agent Orange and other defoliants, napalm, white phosphorous bombs, cluster bombs and other bombs that destroy the forests, chemicals that poison the streams and disease-carrying animals and insects.

6. What impact does free market have on climate imperialism and further destruction of our environment?

JMS: In the name of the free market, the neoliberal policy predetermines the character of the Philippine economy as a supplier of cheap raw materials and cheap labor and as buyer of foreign manufactures. Thus, foreign monopoly capitalism has been able to plunder the natural resources of the Philippines, destroy the environment and biodiversity and aggravate the climate crisis.###

Climate Crisis Special: SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE!

Questions from ND Online School of Anakbayan-Europa

Answers by **Jose Maria Sison**

17 November 2021

We've come to the last installment of our Climate Crisis Special! And what better way to culminate this discussion than to talk about how to change the system in order to save our planet.



1. Tito, before we proceed to discuss the grassroots movements fighting against climate injustice, allow us to ask first about the government approach. How effective are the so-called “frameworks on the restoration and protection of biodiversity” in reversing the effect of the degradation of nature?

JMS: To this day, 84 percent of the energy used in the world is based on fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas and methane). The imperialist powers and their oil, gas and coal monopolies obscure this fact and avoid committing themselves to any definite program of reducing dependence on fossil fuel and increasing reliance on renewable energy (solar, wind, tidal, hydrogen and so on). By a definite program, I mean solid time-bound targets by the industrialized states that will markedly slow down global warming and bring average temperatures to a lower and more stable equilibrium.

They minimize the problem of carbon emissions and global warming by simply referring to the need to keep the global average of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels as limit to temperature increases of the earth's surface in the next 20 years and faintly mention that going past the tipping point of 2 degrees Celsius means accelerating the catastrophic phenomena of heat waves, forest fires, prolonged droughts, melting of the icebergs, rise of the level and acidity of the seas, tsunamis, super-typhoons and other extreme weather conditions. But then, they belittle the already disastrous impacts of climate catastrophes that are already occurring with increasing frequency in the past 25 years since the Kyoto Protocol was signed but snubbed by the biggest carbon emitters.

Then to appease the entire world and distract us from their remorseless efforts to further emasculate the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement of 2015, they propose all sorts of frameworks and proposals such as voluntary decarbonization, carbon trades, net zero emissions, restoration and protection of biodiversity. There are no compulsory provisions for them to comply with even as they have the highest ability to adopt renewable energy faster than the underdeveloped countries.

They avoid having to pay tax for all the carbon industrial emissions that they have done to worsen the greenhouse-gas effect on the atmosphere and damage the ozone layer since the rise of monopoly capitalism. They even try with might and main to use the climate crisis as reason to prevent the industrial development of underdeveloped countries and the processing of their own mineral resources.



FF Question: In what way can this framework of restoring and protecting biodiversity aid in reducing the negative effect of human activity?

JMS: First of all, we should not allow the fossil-fuel imperialist powers to take cover under the phrase, human activity. They are the inhuman culprits for the climate crisis. But they blame the victims of the climate crisis and *“human activity”* in an abstract metaphysical sense, in a clever but obvious attempt to spread the blame on all of humanity for causing climate change. Since the start of the industrial revolution in 1761, 1.6 trillion tons of carbon dioxide have been emitted to the atmosphere. The main culprits have been a bloc of European countries responsible for 514 billion tons, the US for 400 billion tons and China for 200 billion tons (mostly in the last 40 years).

Restoring and protecting biodiversity is a desirable objective and should be part of a serious systematic program of reducing dependence on fossil fuels and increasing renewable energy at an accelerated rate. All types of land and natural-resource use, especially intensive land use for production, must be regulated so as not to worsen the already degraded situation especially of forest and marine biomes—which function both as the world’s most stable biodiversity sanctuaries and as its biggest “lungs”, capturing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen, and thus able to offset to some degree the huge carbon emissions of industrial capitalist economies.

However, many reactionary states often use biodiversity as a “motherhood slogan” to pit environmentalists and poor communities against each other, by redirecting the environmental blame on poor peasants, fisherfolk and other small producers whose subsistence livelihoods may add to diminished natural resources, but only in minute increments. Meanwhile, the imperialist corporate landgrabbers, extractive profiteers and polluters, who in fact are the biggest culprits in biodiversity depletion worldwide, are left off the hook.

2. What can the government policies and/or laws do to combat the climate crisis? Laws or policies such as poverty alleviation, economic policies, tax implementation, etc.?

JMS: The people of every country should be aroused, organized and mobilized to demand and propose definite solutions to the climate crisis and compel the government to adopt and implement policies and laws to reduce dependency on fossil fuel and increase reliance on renewable energy. They should demand and compel their governments to adopt strategies of comprehensive economic development – in industry, agriculture, services, urban and rural habitats, trade and finance – which enhance the said solutions to the climate crisis.

Some of these solutions would fall into the category of mitigating measures, others adaptive measures, but all must be equitable and sustainable instead of being just short-term remedies that benefit only a few. The overwhelming majority of non-imperialist countries should use their democratic weight to compel the fossil-fuel imperialist powers to agree to solutions for the benefit of humankind.

FF Question: What about the climate finance mechanism – in what way will this save the climate?

JMS: So far all the so-called green financial policies offered by the imperialist powers are in their favor against the underdeveloped and middling countries of the world. The climate finance policy and mechanism to save humankind should require the fossil-fuel imperialist powers to pay tax for the loss and damage that they have done since the advent of monopoly capitalism in England in mid-19th century. Compensation and loans must be extended to the underdeveloped countries to enable them to develop renewable energy, import a reasonable amount of fossil fuel and pursue their own drive towards industrial development without repeating the environmental sins of the advanced industrial powers.

Due consideration must be given to underdeveloped countries to develop their own fossil fuel in combination with the development of renewable energy systems and carbon-capture technologies that are cheap, decentralized and truly effective in ensuring the transition to clean energy. In this regard, there have been good proposals on climate finance that have been pushed by many climate-justice NGOs and people's movements such as IBON International, Oxfam, and the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness. These should be studied and seriously considered by the financially more capable industrial powers.

3. We've asked this in the opening episode of Climate Crisis Special – but again, how can those tote bags or canvas bags, metal or reusable straws, etc. reduce the waste humans are producing? Isn't it just another form of mass production considering how many of these are

being produced, and how much more 'reusable' products are being developed?

JMS: Plastics and other synthetic materials which are nonbiodegradable are byproducts of monopoly oil production. Thus, they have become a widespread and growing problem. While the oil monopolies cannot be prevented soon from producing plastics, these can be recycled into useful products like bricks for construction. Discarded metals, canvas bags or reusable straws can be systematically collected and recycled.

The lifestyle shift to non-plastic substitutes for consumer products can be seen in its two aspects: From one aspect, it could be a small but positive start of much bigger and long-term shift in social values and lifestyles that gives a high premium to ecological consciousness and responsibility. Such a shift may thus represent real system change, which is what the peoples of the world aspire for.

But from another aspect, a “no-plastics” stance can simply be an easy, tokenist way for big monopolies to green-wash their business operations. Environmental activists must be conscious of this duality in certain “ecological lifestyle” positions, and continually push not just for personal lifestyle change but for social system change.

4. What about the Kyoto Protocol; apart from the US and China not signing up on the said Protocol, why did it fail? Is Kyoto Protocol a failure from the very beginning?



JMS: The Kyoto Protocol failed because the US and other major fossil fuel producers and users like Russia and China did not sign up. It exempted the developing countries for any liability for damage to the environment and granted credits to them which the developing countries could buy to further generate carbon emissions. Thus, the protocol has been widely rejected as no solution to the problem of carbon emissions and global warming.

5. How did the parties involved handle or penalize Russia, US and China for rejecting the Protocol?

JMS: There are no effective provisions in the Protocol to penalize Russia, US and China for rejecting the Protocol. In the first place, a state can be liable only for what it signs as an agreement with the validity and effect of a treaty. The US took the lead in denouncing the Kyoto Protocol as unjustly favoring the developing countries.

6. After Kyoto, Paris is the next nodal point of the climate conferences. How effective is the Paris Agreement of 2015?

JMS: The Paris Agreement of 2015 set as goal to keep the average temperature of the earth's surface at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to prevent it from reaching 2 degrees. Then scientists

have pointed out that beyond this level global heating becomes rapidly cumulative. But there are no provisions for limiting the production and use of fossil fuel and for penalizing noncompliance with the limitations.

FF Question: Why do all these agreements come with few concrete penalties when faced with shortcomings? What does it say about the seriousness of the Parties involved?

JMS: The conferences of parties called to make these agreements include the fossil-fuel imperialists and are subject to the control of the oil, gas and coal monopolies. Thus, there are no effective provisions for the reduction of carbon emissions and the increase of renewable energy. There are also no provisions for penalizing violations of the agreement.

Here is an example of fossil-fuel imperialist double-talk. At a press conference during the UN Climate summit in Glasgow, Joe Biden attacked Putin and Xi for their absence and therefore failing to take a leadership role; at the same time he demanded from OPEC countries that they pump more oil.

7. From Kyoto Protocol to Paris Agreement and now to Glasgow, why after all these years of Conferences of the Parties, lengthy discussions and agreement we keep on failing to solve the climate crisis? Do you have any idea what is happening closed doors?

JMS: Well, I have already pointed to the fossil-fuel imperialists and their oil, gas and coal monopolies. After all, all these meetings come under the bannerhead of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Framework agreements are general declarations of intent and are not as detailed and rigorous as agreements that are meant to be enforced and to penalize violations.

FF Question: What can we expect now from the Glasgow conference?

JMS: The results are already known. There are pontifications about keeping the average temperature increase of the earth's surface at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and for net zero carbon emission. There is an acknowledgment of fossil fuel as the main source of carbon dioxide emissions and there are mere promises to phase down the use of coal. But there are as still no clear provisions for systematically reducing the 84 per cent global usage of fossil fuel and for penalizing violations of agreement.

8. Are there other organizations or movements across the globe that fight against climate injustice? How different is their approach from the national democratic forces who are also concerned about climate?

JMS: There are many people's organizations and movements across the globe that fight against climate injustice. The majority of them condemn imperialism or monopoly capitalism as culpable for destroying the environment, degrading it and bringing about the climate crisis. They do not differ from the national democratic forces in the Philippines in waging legal political struggles against the imperialist powers and the local puppets and in demanding system change to solve the climate crisis.

However, in the Philippines, there is also a people's democratic revolution trying to stop the imperialist powers from raking in superprofits by obliging

the Philippines to import fossil fuel and allowing them to operate logging, mining and plantation companies that destroy and degrade the environment, deprive of the people of the land and poison the streams towards the landholdings of Filipinos.

There are similar revolutionary movements in other countries that have a strong component on environmental protection and defense of resources against imperialist plunder, such as in India and Kurdistan.

FF Question: Given the different approaches and ideologies, what is the best way to unite with the various organizations with the same goal?

JMS: There are wide environmental, social, economic, political and cultural grounds for uniting the various organizations which are for climate justice and system change against imperialism. We should not impose any ideology on them. It is enough that there is a focused concern about the climate crisis and unity is encouraged and developed on anti-imperialist and democratic grounds. Various organizations in various countries can have their strategy and tactics in struggle according to concrete conditions.

While we emphasize unity on climate justice and system change, it must also be noted that in certain advanced capitalist countries, there are a handful of NGOs that are well-funded by giant monopoly groups. They often join the calls for “climate justice” but limit their concrete demands to lobbying for profit-driven “green solutions” that are either nothing more than corporate PR green-washing campaigns, or to sell new kinds of lucrative investment such as super-expensive geo-engineering and carbon-capture projects,

megadams. These are basically false solutions and must be exposed, although this does require patient research, mass education and information campaigns directed at many citizens groups that may find such solutions appealing.

9. We saw that ILPS is present in Glasgow. As the Chairman Emeritus of the broadest anti-imperialist organization, can you enlighten us on the importance of building a broader unity of an anti-imperialist front in fighting climate change?

JMS: The ILPS was present in Glasgow in order to make its demands for solving the climate crisis and to call for a broad united front against the imperialist powers responsible for the climate crisis. Building a broader unity in an anti-imperialist front in solving the climate crisis is highly important and indispensable for the survival and social progress of humankind.

The climate crisis is not just some transient problem but has become almost as wired into the imperialist system as its other fundamental self-contradictions such as financial crises, wars, fascism and national oppression. It may well be an important arena in the forthcoming people's battles against imperialism. The ILPS' commitment to address the imperialist roots of the climate crisis is a strategic decision that is consistent with its program and constituency.

10. Why is the Philippines the second on the list of the most dangerous countries to be environmental activists? Who are these environmental activists, and what kind of intimidation do they face?

JMS: According to Global Witness, as of 2020, the Duterte regime was responsible for killing extrajudicially 227 defenders of the land and environment. These are people defending their homes, land and livelihoods, and ecosystems vital for biodiversity and the climate. They include social and religious activists and indigenous people resisting the drive of the regime to auction off land and natural resources to foreign monopoly companies.

The regime is at the forefront of the most rapacious and powerful exploiters, which include not just these foreign companies but also their big comprador-landlord-bureaucrat capitalist allies that benefit from the land grabbing and plunder. Thus, the forces of coercion and intimidation are not just the regime's military and police forces, but also various kinds of private armies, security agencies, and hired killers.

FF question: What does this say about the political situation in the country?

JMS: The political situation in the Philippines is worsening rapidly because Duterte is carrying out a policy of state terrorism under the so-called Anti-Terror Act which he railroaded last year in order to accelerate the red-tagging of all his opponents and critics and frame them up for abduction, torture and murder.

Duterte is also using drone surveillance, attack helicopters, artillery and aerial bombs to attack indigenous communities and other upland peasant settlements which are considered by the military as guerrilla bases of the *New People's Army*. These attacks on civilian communities are in gross

violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and are intended to grab the land for the benefit of foreign and local mining, logging and plantation companies.

11. Has it always been like this for the Filipino environmental activists? How did the US-backed Duterte regime aggravate their situation?

JMS: The Duterte regime has been the worst assailant of the land and environmental defenders and the indigenous people since the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship. I have already referred to the hundreds of land and environmental defenders that he has butchered and the indigenous and other upland peasant communities that he has indiscriminately bombed.

It is remarkable that Duterte had at first appointed Regina Lopez, a highly dedicated and much-admired environmentalist who was very vocal against corporate mining and other ecologically destructive projects, as his Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources. Then Duterte figuratively stabbed her in the back by allowing her appointment to be bypassed by the Commission on Appointments. Not yet one year into her DENR post, but already undertaking some very positive pro-environment measures, Lopez was unceremoniously replaced in 2017 by one of Duterte's trusted henchmen, ex-AFP chief of staff and retired general Roy Cimatu.

Duterte quickly lifted the official ban on new mining agreements (EO 79, issued by then President Benigno Aquino III in 2012). Under his new EO 130 and a militarized DENR, foreign mining firms rapidly expanded their operations, including brazenly illegal magnetite (black sand) quarrying

operations by Chinese firms. Military operations quickly intensified, especially in Mindanao where many rural communities had been strongly opposing the destructive mines.

12. The peasant activists in the Philippines are at the forefront of the struggle against the climate crisis. The discussion on climate is loaded with technical jargon; how do the mass activists conduct education and propaganda on this subject?

JMS: Indeed, the peasant activists in the Philippines are at the forefront of the struggle against the climate crisis. The mass activists learn from the peasant masses first their conditions, needs and demands and thus they know how to avoid the technical jargon of scientists, discuss the climate crisis in understandable terms and succeed at their educational and propaganda work on the subject.

The important thing is that the peasant communities' daily concerns are explained in ways that show how these are linked to scientific concepts such as climate-change phenomena. Ordinary people can readily connect worse floods, typhoons, droughts, even infestations, to climate change when the causal links are explained in simpler terms. Peasants and indigenous peoples are in fact more observant because their production and daily lives are tightly intertwined with natural cycles and specific ecosystems.

FF Question: How can the petty bourgeoisie help in education and propaganda work?

JMS: The petty bourgeois with formal education from the bourgeois universities can help a lot in education and propaganda work if they learn to distinguish the pro-imperialist and reactionary ideas from the correct ideas that he can begin to learn from social investigation and from the masses. He can advance wave upon wave in gaining correct knowledge through the continuous interaction of revolutionary theory and practice.

All scientific questions that involve fairly recent discoveries and technology applications, especially those that impact on people's health, daily lives and livelihoods, must of course be first correctly understood and validated by leading activists, through their own rigorous research and social investigation. This is what differentiates revolutionary activists from sleek demagogues. An alliance between science and activism can make sure that such understanding is brought to public awareness leading to effective mass response.

The Philippine mass movement has no lack of such a scientific mass base. There has long been close cooperation on environmental issues by scientists, research institutions, NGOs advocating ecology issues and people's rights, and mass organizations, and allies in the academe like in the AGHAM, mass media, even Churches and local officials. Let us recall, for example, the sudden rise in public consciousness about climate change in the aftermath of typhoon Yolanda, when the entire world's focus was on Philippines as one tragic example.

Through the correct approach and persistence in mass education and propaganda, key scientific terms can soon escape the jargon-house, become part of popular usage, and represent a higher level of mass

understanding about important social issues. Just consider, for example, how epidemiology terms and scientific debates have become part of the global public awareness in just the past two years of the Covid pandemic.

13. How should the mass organizations proceed now that the Glasgow conference has been concluded? How can we ensure that it won't be another Kyoto Protocol or Paris Agreement – a band-aid solution.

JMS: The mass organizations dedicated to system change and solving the climate crisis should persevere in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people to condemn the continuing attempts of the US and other imperialist powers to prevent real solutions to the climate crisis and continue to take superprofits from dependency on fossil fuel.

At the same time, they must also expose and oppose the many schemes by big-tech monopolies and big-finance groups for riding on popular “green technologies” but only to strengthen their monopolies, open up new investment niches, and rake in more superprofits, while hiding the fact that they still remain dependent on fossil-fuel corporate consumers (both upstream and downstream on the supply chain).

14. What about the revolutionary movement, not just in the Philippines but around the world. How can they unite to end climate imperialism?

JMS: There are already international anti-imperialist and democratic united front organizations like the ILPS, ICOR and others which are uniting to fight and end climate imperialism.

The revolutionary movements around the world are of course not the only ones that are fighting to end imperialism as the historical cause of global warming in the industrial era. In recent years, millions have marched in the streets to protest the weak, obscurantist and evasive responses of imperialist states to the climate problem.

Like I said in response to some earlier questions (Questions 8 and 9): There is a great need for a broader unity in fighting climate imperialism. The workers', peasant, youth, women and indigenous peoples' movements have important roles to play in giving sustained power to this important area of struggle, so that it is not limited to lobbying the UN and holding ritualized protests during COP meetings.

15. What about in the Philippines, Tito. How can National Industrialization and Genuine Agrarian Reform ensure the safety of our country against imperialist plunder?

JMS: First of all, there must be full national independence. The Filipino people and their revolutionary forces must achieve national liberation from imperialism and the puppet reactionary forces before there can be genuine land reform and national industrialization.

At the same time, national liberation must be powered by genuine popular sovereignty, or people's democracy in the various fields, to ensure that imperialism and its local reactionary forces cannot easily launch a comeback, or engineer disruptions that will sabotage land reform and national industrialization.

16. Does CPP-NDF have a specific program addressing the climate issue?

JMS: Yes, of course, the CPP and NDFP have a program of wisely utilizing the natural resources and promoting a clean and healthy environment. They are against the imperialist powers and their puppets continuing to plunder and degrade the environment and take out our natural resources as they please. When they are already in power, the CPP and NDFP will take care to protect the environment and use the natural resources without ruining and degrading the environment and without contributing to the climate crisis.

In the context of the aborted NDFP-GRP peace talks (2016-2018), the NDFP was able to forge a comprehensive draft CASER that proposed a number of provisions on ecological protection. These could have been implemented upon the advance of the talks, even as these need to rely on the strength of other socio-economic, political and constitutional reforms, especially on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and National Industrialization and Economic Development as the pillars of socio-economic reform.

FF Question: How is it being implemented then?

JMS: The CPP, NPA and the NDFP are now waging a people's democratic revolution to fight and stop the imperialist powers and their local puppets from plundering and destroying the environment with their open pit mining, logging and monocrop plantations and from perpetuating dependency on imported fossil fuel.

Inspired and strengthened by the CPP-led forces, and often taking the cue from the pro-environment policies and program of the NDFP, so many communities, groups, and activists of all colors have in fact been launching mass struggles to oppose specific cases of environmental destruction. So many environmental NGOs, institutions, and allies have been supporting them and defending them against state repression. In that sense, the climate-justice movement in the Philippines is not just a CPP-led mass struggle, but a broad movement by the entire people.

17. Tito, lastly, can you tell us how will the world be in a socialist society. What is the future of our planet in a socialist society? How significant is our fight to end capitalism in building a better planet?

JMS: The world will be fundamentally better when the world capitalist system is ended and socialism reigns. In fact the end of capitalism in the entire world will usher in communism, a classless society. In the meantime, the proletariat is striving to win socialist revolution in various countries before monopoly capitalism can be totally ended. The Filipino proletariat and entire people are now struggling to win the new democratic revolution and proceed to the socialist revolution. They are thus making a significant contribution to the world proletariat revolution for socialism and communism.

The world has had ample experience of socialist construction in the Soviet Union (1917-1956), Maoist China (1949-1976), and in several other countries where proletarian parties won political power, to prove the assertions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao about the socialist system providing the best conditions for ensuring ecological balance and sustainability. Mao displayed the most advanced understanding in this

regard, especially in his work “On the Ten Great Relationships” and in pushing for state policies which advanced that framework. From the 1950s until 1976, China has offered a pioneering and shining example of how to rapidly build a modern socialist economy by “walking on two legs” (i.e., combining collectivized agriculture and modern industry), achieving zero-waste levels of production, encouraging thrift and eschewing waste and profligacy.

Socialism upholds the primacy of social benefit (as against the capitalist profit motive) and provides central economic planning. This removes the root cause of capitalism’s systemic crises of overproduction and destructive competition, allows for appropriate balance among the various components of the social economy. Socialist culture encourages a high level of commitment among the people to nurture their homeland and its resources for the benefit of future generations. Most importantly, the scientific outlook of proletarian ideology combines advanced theory with people’s practice, relies on mass initiative to solve problems, and encourages self-criticism to point out weaknesses and provide lessons—which are crucial for a socialist society to face the scientific challenges of climate change.###

IMPERIALISM IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE AND SPREAD OF DEADLY PATHOGENS

Webinar sponsored by Commission No. 6 of the International League of Peoples' Struggle for organizing this webinar on the general theme of Resisting a policy of famines: A struggle against furthering imperialist domination of food and agriculture amid the pandemic.

Full Text of Presentation

By **Jose Maria Sison**

June 19, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

First of all, I wish to thank Commission No. 6 of the International League of Peoples' Struggle for organizing this webinar on the general theme of **Resisting a policy of famines: A struggle against furthering imperialist domination of food and agriculture amid the pandemic.**



My specific task is to speak on the topic of "Imperialism in food and agriculture and the emergence of deadly pathogens". I wish to present to you the major facts about imperialism in food and agriculture under the neoliberal economic policy, the consequent emergence of deadly pathogens due to social and environmental degradation and the conclusions and imperative tasks that can be set forth.

Because of time constraint, I shall focus on the relations of imperialist corporations (whether they are called multinational, transnational or simply monopoly corporations) and the underdeveloped countries with regard to the exploitation of land and other natural resources. All of us can assume that the monopoly agro-corporations realize their superprofits in their home countries and in the world at large by being able to get cheap agricultural, forest and mineral products from the underdeveloped countries.

I. Imperialism in Food and Agriculture

The Anglican cleric and economist Thomas Malthus wrote in 1798 that an increase in a nation's food production increased the well-being of the people as well as their number and ultimately the population growth would result in a deterioration of the standard of living due to the inability of the economy and natural resources to keep pace with population growth. He opposed the optimistic view in 18th-century Europe that society could keep on improving and perfecting itself.

He was being pessimistic, parochial and carried away by the Christian doctrine of original sin and human imperfectability in contrast to divine perfection. He failed to take fully into account the high potential of science and technology even under capitalism for raising productivity and the fact that the desperate poor of England could be redeployed to the much less populated colonies since the 16th century and of course to the urban factories since the onset of the Industrial Revolution.

Since the time of Malthus, a great deal of changes have occurred. Science and technology have continued up to now to expand the productivity of the

proletariat and other working people but population has increased at a cumulative rate, especially because of the progress in chemistry, pharmaceuticals and medical science which in the main stopped epidemics of the sort and scale that wiped out large chunks of the population in ancient and medieval times.

But free competition among the capitalists of the 19th century has developed to monopoly capitalism, which accumulates wealth so fast in the hands of the few at the expense of so many people. Monopoly capitalism or modern imperialism is the decadent and moribund final stage of capitalist development, prone to ever worsening crises of overproduction and wars of aggression in the struggle for a redivision of the world among the imperialist powers.

In the 1970s the Malthusian theory enjoyed a big revival when at the World Food Conference in Rome the ideologues and economists of the imperialist powers harped on the oil crisis and the limits of growth and called for population control. Officially calling themselves the “Club of Rome” and issuing popular publications, they obfuscated socialism and improving science and technology as the way to avert the so-called Malthusian trap. As recent history of socialist countries shows, these can assure the economic well-being and cultural development of a population much larger than that of the 1970s or even now.

But the economists of monopoly capitalism hypocritically espoused environment-friendly sustainable development and at the same time deployed petrodollars and maintained the neo-Keynesian line of economic development in which the underdeveloped countries must get loans from the

imperialist countries and open up to foreign direct investments and foreign loans for infrastructure building to facilitate and enhance the exchange of raw materials from the hinterlands and manufactures from abroad under the auspices of the IMF and the World Bank.

Concurrently, the US was bogged down by the problem of stagflation from the recurrent economic and financial crisis due to the rehabilitation and expanded productive capacities of the major capitalist countries previously ruined by World War II. Starting in 1979, the solution pushed by the US and followed by its allies was the neoliberal economic policy to accelerate profit-taking and capital accumulation supposedly to enable the monopoly bourgeoisie to create more jobs and more social wealth in complete denial of the proletariat as the real creator of social wealth.

The neoliberal policy includes pressing down wages, eroding job security, pensions and social benefits, reducing taxes on corporations and high earners, liberalizing trade and investments, privatizing profitable public assets, doing away with regulations that protect labor, women and the environment, and further de-nationalizing the economies of the semi-colonies and dependent countries to extend national treatment to foreign monopoly corporations.

The crisis of overproduction in manufacturing and the falling rate of profit which characterized the deep slump of 1980 to 1982 in the imperialist countries drove the monopoly firms to seek a higher rate of profit from exploitation in the underdeveloped countries by plundering their natural resources. The US stood out in financializing its economy and conceding consumer manufacturing to China in the 1980s.

For more than four decades, the US and its imperialist allies in the G-7, the OECD and G-20 and the multilateral agencies like the IMF, World Bank and WTO have touted the neoliberal economic policy of imperialist globalization and imposed it on all the client states of the US and its imperialist allies. It has become their new and ever more exploitative way of harmonizing their interests and glossing over inter-imperialist contradictions at the expense of the proletariat and people of the world.

The imperialist powers easily dictated neoliberal economic policy to client states, especially in the underdeveloped countries, whose accumulated foreign debt made them beggars for structural adjustments programs. The imperialist pontification is that underdeveloped countries can develop faster by accepting neoliberalism and availing of comparative advantage by specializing in the production of certain raw materials and semi-manufactures for export. Thus, the underdeveloped countries like the Philippines have continued to be drawn away from the line of genuine land reform and national industrialization.

In this connection, the US and other imperialist corporations have been able to tighten comprehensive control over the economies of the client states through structural adjustment programs and have gained further privileges, national treatment or most-favored-nation treatment for their investments in the acquisition of land and natural resources and operation of all kinds of businesses. They have thus widened their opportunities for the accelerated plunder of the natural resources and degradation of the environment in the underdeveloped countries.

At breakneck speed, they and their big comprador and bureaucrat capitalist agents have proceeded to expand logging, mining, plantation, ranch and aquacultural operations to increase production for export. These have corresponded to the drive of the imperialist powers to obtain ever greater amounts of superprofits from cheaper raw materials and counter the persistent tendency of the profit rate to fall in their home economies and to feed the appetite of China for food and raw materials in its frenzy to make itself a new capitalist giant in the last four decades.

The result has been the immense land grabs of the 21st century. The accumulation of land in the hands of imperialist agro-corporations has been propelled by the high prices of basic food stuffs in 2008 and 2011 as well as by the finance oligarchs' search for tangible assets following the eruption of the global financial and economic crisis in 2008.

This whole process led to farmers and small food producers being dispossessed of land and their mass migration to cities, while imperialist agro-corporations replaced traditional agriculture with monoculture plantations. The resulting urban and urbanizing areas, which serve as markets and trade routes for agro-corporations' products, have become the spaces where certain diseases, previously confined in the forests, can enter and thrive in.

All the logging, mining, plantation, ranch and aquacultural enterprises for the purpose of export plus real estate and tourist enterprises have reduced the agricultural land and water resources for producing food for domestic consumption. Moreover, they have resulted in deforestation, cycles of severe droughts and floods, soil erosion and landslides, the pollution of rivers and streams by acids from the open-pit mines and pesticides from the

large monocrop plantations and the disruption of water flows to the farms producing food for the national population.

The ruined lands no longer fit for agriculture and other so-called idle lands (including ancestral lands of indigenous people) not deemed profitable for actual production continue to be subjected to land monopolies. Increasingly, these are converted into eco-tourism and agro-tourism resorts or as residential, commercial and recreation adjuncts of big-business enclaves—essentially to jack up differential land rent and to create new sources of profit in non-industrial services on top of the more traditional comprador-landlord profits.

In some countries and global regions such as in Africa, vast lands with yet unexplored and untapped water, mineral and biological resources are controlled by big finance capitalists for speculation purposes. Some African oil magnates have ventured into acquiring and exploiting large swathes of land in Africa for food production.

But global food system is dominated by the imperialist powers especially by the US which is the world's largest food exporter. Neoliberal policies since the 1980s have opened up agricultural markets to heavily subsidized agricultural production by the global powers. In the underdeveloped countries, rural economies have become even more linked and subordinated to global agri-business.

Transnational agri-corporate giants expanded and entrenched themselves in food systems worldwide. They control farm inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals) and make the agricultural equipment and

machinery. They are the monopoly traders buying the world's major crops, the world's largest food processors and manufacturers, and the retailers dictating to consumers at the end of the global food supply chain. Underscoring their overwhelming domination, one-third to as much as one-half of global agricultural trade is intra-company trade.



The imperialist agro-corporations, with the assistance of big comprador agents, control, manipulate, reduce and distort food production and agriculture not only within the context of neoliberal policy and the economy of a particular underdeveloped country. But they also profit even more from creating food scarcity in one country in order to import food from another underdeveloped country or even from an imperialist country. They control food production and trade on a scale beyond the ken of national authorities that are supposed to be concerned with food sovereignty and security.

II. Pathogens Due to Environmental Degradation

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread to more than 200 countries and wreaked havoc on their health systems and economies. It is so serious that governments and scientific institutions and experts have called attention to the emergence of highly contagious and lethal pathogens as a result of environmental degradation and the increasingly extreme climate and weather changes.

Progressive scientists tell us that deadly pathogens have always existed and have caused diseases and epidemics even before the era of imperialism. But because of their belief in continuous technological and economic progress, some scientists in the 1970s believed that infectious diseases had receded so much that they ceased to be the objective of research.

It was ironically during this time that the world economy was being restructured according to neoliberalism in ways that would drastically change social relations, populations, food patterns, and use of land. While pathogens will always exist, it is the way our societies are arranged or disarranged that enable them to cause diseases and even pandemics.

Large-scale deforestation, land-use changes and other capitalist-induced human encroachment into natural biomes have reduced the habitat for wildlife and have disturbed the ecological balance among organisms, thus creating the conditions for the mutation of microbes to become more infectious and more harmful pathogens. At the same time, the increasing population has become more dependent on and closer to the decreasing forests.

The resulting more intimate interaction of humans with wild animals as well as with livestock, poultry and pets has facilitated the transmission of the pathogens from these animals to humans. Neoliberal economic policies have accelerated the ruination of the environment and bombardment of unhealthy foods and drugs into human systems, causing the weakening of the immunity levels of both humans and animals (both wild and

domesticated) as well as the birds and insects that carry and transmit the zoonotic diseases.

Scientific studies have established that new pathogens like SARS (2003), the swine flu (2009), MERS (2012) and now COVID-19 are the outcome of environmental degradation and more frequent contact of humans with wild species that carry the pathogens. This is in the context of the accelerated exploitation of natural resources in response to the growing demand for resource-based products, energy and animal-based foods.

The WHO reports that the 21st century has already been marked by major epidemics. Old diseases like cholera, plague and yellow fever have returned and a cascade of new diseases have emerged like SARS, pandemic influenza, MERS, Ebola, Lassa fever, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, yellow fever, Zika, chikungunya, avian and other zoonotic influenza, seasonal influenza, pandemic influenza, cholera, monkeypox, plague, leptospirosis and meningococcal meningitis. And now COVID-19.

It is estimated that 60 to 70 percent of recognized emerging infectious diseases originated from animals dwelling in forests disturbed and degraded by imperialist corporations and their local agents. In pursuit of superprofits, these plunderers have wreaked havoc to appropriate or environment-friendly use of land, agricultural practices and food production. The rapid expansion of logging, mining for fossil fuel and other minerals for industrial use and export-crop plantations has propelled the invasion and degradation of the tropical forests and other natural biomes, especially under the neoliberal economic policy regime.

Other major impacts of climate change, such as the melting of ice in glaciers and tundra, may also release and reactivate en masse ancient pathogens rendered inactive during previous ice ages and against which present-day organisms, including humans, cannot quickly mount effective immune defenses.

The Global Risks Report of the World Economic Forum has for the first time called attention to environmental risks, including climate change and damage to biodiversity. Previous outbreaks of infectious diseases of zoonotic origin and the COVID-19 pandemic are estimated to lead to further contagions that are now considered as one of the main threats to humankind.

The ideologues and political agents of the monopoly firms acknowledge environmental degradation as a serious threat to humankind and identify the burning of fossil fuels and the destruction of tropical forests as the cause of global warming and now of highly infectious pathogens. But they do not identify the monopoly bourgeoisie as the chief culprit responsible for the plunder and degradation of the environment.

In line with the advance of science and technology, there are cleaner and more efficient sources of energy than fossil fuel, such as the sun, wind and the tidal waves. But the oil monopoly firms have become so heavily invested in fossil fuel and are engrossed with making superprofits from it. There are cheaper and more efficient ways of producing more and better products from less raw materials, but the monopoly capitalists persist in ways damaging and destructive to society and nature. The monopoly corporations are fond of claiming to be innovative and good users of science and technology, but

they subordinate these to profit-making rather than avail of them to produce goods more efficiently and economically to serve the needs of the people.

A number of pioneering capitalist corporations and some governments of advanced capitalist countries are turning to renewable sources of energy and raw materials but only as new sources of profit. But they are far from being able to displace the dominant oil and gas monopolies and the newly-risen fracking companies. There are also renewed attempts to include nuclear power and megadams as “safe, clean and renewable” sources of energy while evading long-held public concerns about their long-term adverse effects on health, safety and other environmental impacts.

Rather than hold the monopoly bourgeoisie accountable for the degradation of the environment and for the consequences detrimental to the people, the ideologues and political agents of monopoly capitalism blame the people who have been deprived of land for trying to eke out a living from the forests, natural grasslands, lakes and seacoasts as swidden farmers, animal hunters, herdsman, fisherfolk, low-level wood cutters, fruit gatherers and the like. The big corporations and landlords keep on grabbing the land and depriving the millions of landless peasants of land and natural resources. At the same time, there is no genuine land reform as well as national industrialization to generate employment for the rapidly growing number of unemployed.

In many underdeveloped countries, the people are deprived of land by monopoly corporations and their local adjuncts. These corporations take ownership or control of the land under various forms of agreements with the state for the purpose of logging, forest management, mining and agriculture,

including monocrop plantations, ranches or intensive mixed-farms for livestock and feeds, orchards and shrimp farms. Monocrop plantations to produce food and raw materials for industrial use and ranches for raising various types of herds are the most land-extensive. They usually take over the logged-over areas in the public domain.

Capitalist-oriented monoculture technologies in crop production and animal-raising, because they entail high densities of identical species, are proving to be major factors in driving up infectious plant and animal diseases. The new pathogens behind these diseases spread rapidly, cause recurrent epidemics among crops and livestock with agro-chemical and biotech-weakened immunity, and thus create new dangers to the people's health and livelihood.

In the practice of agro-imperialism, foreign monopoly corporations use the political power of their imperialist states over the client-states and deploy large amounts of finance capital and productive capital. The latter takes the form of equipment such as bulldozers, tractors, seeding machines, harvesters, power generators and the like. They go to the extent of taking patent rights over certain native plant and animal species or agricultural processes through gene editing or genetic engineering which robs the people of the right to cultivate plants or raise animals that they have long developed through traditional seed and breed selection methods.

Unlike traditional breeding techniques, modern biotechnology is now able to splice genetic material across unrelated species to create genetically engineered (GE) organisms. Capitalist biotech firms are thus able to control the process of producing GE seeds and animal breeds in order to

monopolize the supply. This new form of piracy and monopoly is not only enforced by legal and technical means, but also achieved by market mechanisms.

Agrochemical and biotech firms aggressively campaign for entire agricultural sectors to adopt the new GE crops and livestock, thereby killing off the traditional breeds. The GE crops and livestock, while supposedly more resistant to old pests and pathogens, produce the conditions for the rise of novel pests and pathogens. These new and barely understood hazards push farmers and rural communities to be more dependent on “improved” and expensive biotech solutions, in an endless race that eventually bankrupts the small farmers. There are also cases when GE organisms turn feral and spread uncontrolled, becoming invasive species themselves.

The imperialist agro-corporations collaborate with the client-state in carrying out campaigns similar to the Green Revolution whereby they monopolize the GE seeds or animal breed and other required inputs (chemicals, equipment, irrigation and the like) and shut out the landless peasants and small owner-cultivators. However, the foreign agro-corporations sometimes engage the rich peasants and small and medium landlords in lopsided lease and growers agreements whereby they lose control over the land.

Monocrop cultivation over vast tracts of land has caused massive destruction of the original fertility of the soil and the consequent massive use of fertilizers, pesticides, hormones and other chemicals only destroys the soil further. Worse, these chemicals poison the food chains and cause a wide range of diseases, including cancer and kidney failures. In this regard,

certain agro-chemical monopoly firms have become notorious for poisoning the food chain. These are Monsanto-Bayer, Dow-Dupont, and Syngenta ChemChina.

Favored by the neoliberal economic policy and using their financial prowess, the imperialist agro-corporations have gained control over global agricultural production and trade in connection with the large chains of supermarkets. They lord over vast tracts of land of various categories (agricultural, pasture, timberland, mineral-rich, and so on) and water resources in various underdeveloped countries, deprive millions of people of these, distort the agricultural sector and entire economy, bankrupt the peasant masses, cause food shortages and famines, deplete the forest and aquatic-marine resources and serve as a major factor in ruining bio-diversity and causing more contagious and lethal pathogens.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, seasonal, migrant, and permanent farmworkers and food processing workers have been made to harvest and work without sufficient pay, protective gear, safer distancing protocols, and medical care. Thus, the intensifying hardship and exploitation of workers and peasants allows greater profits for multinational corporations in the global agricultural industry.

In addition, global hunger and food waste due principally to overproduction, and secondarily speculative hoarding of essential food products by a select few are rapidly increasing. Big pharmaceutical firms have also sought to make bigger profits by producing products (such as COVID-19 treatments and testing kits) derived from peasant and indigenous practices, knowledge,

and resources, and even by using indigenous groups as guinea pigs for experimental drug testing.

III. Conclusions, Prospects and Imperative Tasks



US imperialism has been the chief instigator of neoliberal economic policy and has touted it as the most effective policy for imperialist globalization. Despite its recent falling out with China as its main partner in neoliberal globalization and despite its protectionist pronouncements

and actions against what it now regards as its main economic competitor and political rival, the US like China still considers neoliberal economic policy as exceedingly profitable for all imperialist powers. This is still the most effective way for exploiting the people and resources in underdeveloped countries which are made the source of cheap labor and cheap raw materials, a field for investing surplus capital and a market for surplus manufactures.

But neoliberal economic policies have outraged the broad masses of the people in both imperialist and underdeveloped countries. The accelerated accumulation and centralization of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie, by pressing down the incomes of the working people, has resulted in the frequent recurrence and worsening of the crisis of overproduction and consequently financial crisis. The rate of exploitation has run so fast that only a small fraction of 1 percent of the population, a few

hundreds of individuals, own 80 percent of the global wealth, and 99 percent of the population have only 20 per cent to share.

All the promises of the exponents of neoliberal policy that the growth of the gross domestic product and the rapid accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie would trickle down have proven to be completely false. Unemployment, lack of job security and mass poverty are growing in all types of countries. Even the much-vaunted middle class in developed countries has shrunk and joined the precariat. Underdevelopment, the highest rates of unemployment and the worst forms of poverty and deprivation afflict the overwhelming majority of countries. The world capitalist system is wobbling with the mounting debt of central banks, corporations and households.

The neoliberal policy is unsustainable and is therefore unravelling and has become thoroughly discredited. It has aroused the outrage of the peoples of the world. Since last year, there has been an unprecedented outbreak of mass protests on a global scale against neoliberalism, austerity measures and the escalating use of state terrorism to suppress the complaints and demands of the people for better socio-economic, political and cultural conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns have slowed down the mass protests for a while in recent months because the people themselves have agreed to fight the pandemic due to extreme concerns about a barely known, fast-spreading and deadly threat to their health. But this has exposed the anti-people character of the ruling systems and the anti-social

consequences of neoliberalism, such as the gross inadequacy of the public health systems and the inability to provide medical services.

Most governments have adopted drastic nationwide measures against the pandemic, reflecting to some degree the real and urgent need for effective public-health response, but also giving in to doomsday scenarios pushed by certain quarters. These include rash repositioning of medical resources that exposes basic flaws in the healthcare system, and extensive lockdowns that forcibly close many businesses, limit or paralyze public transport, and oblige most people to stay home or “shelter in place.” As a result of the lockdowns, a big percentage of the toiling masses and among the middle classes have lost their jobs or source of livelihood, especially in the informal sector.

Most reactionary states have taken advantage of the pandemic and the lockdowns to dictate their own ruling-class priorities in meeting the crisis while setting aside the people’s urgent needs and demands. In the course of the lockdowns, they have failed to provide adequate food assistance and other forms of social relief and emergency services, causing widespread hunger, diseases, and other extreme deprivations.

In some countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and elsewhere, fascist forces have taken advantage of the pandemic and the lockdowns to repress the people, impose or expand emergency powers and military takeovers of civilian functions, short-circuit regular state processes to pass unpopular measures and fast-track their factional objectives, and make massive transfers of public funds to the private corporations and to pockets of corrupt bureaucrats and military officers.

At any rate, the pandemic and lockdowns have broken down production in the global economy and have aggravated the economic crisis. The IMF, World Bank and OECD are estimating that the global GDP for 2020 would contract by 5 percent, a bigger drop during the global recession of 2008. The OECD has calculated that for every month of lockdown outputs in most sectors fall by 25 percent and the annual GDP by 2 percent. The IMF also estimates that over 170 countries will experience negative per-capita income growth this year. The economic slump looms ahead as far worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s.

According to the ILO, around 81 percent of the world's 3.3 billion workforce have been locked out of their jobs. Around 6.7 percent of working hours have been lost in the second quarter of 2020. The expected loss in labour for 2020 is around USD 3.5 trillion. Mass poverty will increase drastically. Oxfam expects a 20-percent contraction in income and foresees that people living in extreme poverty will rise by 434 million to 932 million worldwide.

As early as April 2020, the UN World Food Programme already announced a doubling of its pre-COVID estimates of global famine, while its head warned that the economic disaster triggered by the lockdowns was heading towards famines "of biblical proportions." The latest findings show that more than 1 billion people are being cast away to the ranks of the desperately poor. The people are now in a dire situation of being jobless, homeless and hungry in both imperialist countries and underdeveloped countries. Famine has appeared in an increasing number of countries. Hunger is now killing far more people than COVID-19 has been able to do. According to official statistics from the United Nations' World Food Program as of June 7, 2020, about 12 times more people have died due to hunger worldwide than from Covid-19 this year.

The political leaders and economic planners of the imperialist powers are obsessed with “quantitative easing” (lowering interest rates and increasing money supply) to counter the conditions of depression. But the central banks, the corporations and households are already exceedingly overloaded with accumulated debt. Piling debts on debts merely aggravates the crisis. The global public debt at the end of 2019 was already USD 255 trillion, nearly three times the USD 87 trillion debt level when the financial crash of 2008 occurred. And the people are outraged that, while they suffer the rapidly worsening conditions of oppression and exploitation, the bailouts and stimulus packages are going to the monopoly banks and firms.

The economic and political crisis conditions are ripe for the proletariat and people to launch mass protests on a world scale. They have started to burst out or have resumed their pre-pandemic vigor in the US, Europe, Hong Kong, Philippines, India, Nepal, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Kurdistan, Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine and elsewhere. By using repressive measures, the ruling systems are generating political crisis. They are goading the people to rise up and fight the escalating conditions of oppression and exploitation. It is widely recognized that the world capitalist system is now in the throes of an economic and financial crisis that is definitely far worse than that in 2008, and the people are increasingly unable and unwilling to live in the old way nor accept the so-called “new normal”.

In the underdeveloped countries, the people suffer far more oppression and exploitation than the people in the imperialist countries. They can be expected to wage various forms of struggle. The aggravation of the land problem by the imperialist agro-corporations in conjunction with the persistence of feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation generates ever

more favorable conditions for people's war along the line of the people's democratic revolution in semicolonial and semifeudal countries like the Philippines.

The pandemic and its attendant health and economic crises present favorable opportunities for people's struggles, as well as enormous tasks and challenges for them. Many emerging issues cry out for people's campaigns and struggles. They are ventilated by the anti-imperialist and democratic forces, carried by traditional as well as by the latest means and methods of communications and rouse the people to collective protests and demands on varying scales from local to global.

The financial oligarchs, monopoly capitalists and their big comprador allies pretend to wish returning to business as usual as in the past but they themselves and their political agents in power are escalating the level of oppression and exploitation and presenting this as the "new normal" as their way of overcoming the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. There is an urgent need for the people to seize the moment and heighten the level of consciousness, organization and mobilization for radical reforms and revolutionary change.

It is the imperative and urgent task of all patriotic and progressive forces who seek the national and social liberation of the people to arouse, organize and mobilize them for the struggle to realize full national independence, democracy, social justice, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, the expansion of social services, the development of a national, scientific and pro-people cultural and educational system and international solidarity with all peoples and countries on the

basis of equality, cooperation and mutual benefit and for the cause of just
peace and development against imperialism and all reaction.###

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND MIGRATION

Questions from NDLINE ONLINE:

Climate Crisis Special

Answers by **Prof. Jose Maria Sison**

24 October 2021

Although migration has been part of human nature for so long, in the second episode of our NDLINE ONLINE: Climate Crisis Special, we will discuss the cause and effect of climate-crisis-driven migration.



1. To begin our session, can we define what migration is and how essential migration is in sustaining our economy and (bio)diversity?

JMS: If we look back to humanity's long prehistory and history, it was evidently through steady migration that our ancestral communities were able to people most habitable regions of the planet, leaving former homelands that had become less habitable or less capable of supporting bigger populations due to many factors – which at first were mostly natural, then increasingly man-made. Migrations continued throughout ancient and feudal civilizations and became even more marked under capitalism due to increased mobility of people.

In the modern era, communities of varying scales are known to have migrated within a country or across borders due to climatic changes such as

deforestation, desertification, loss of biodiversity, melting of the icebergs, rise of sea level and coastal erosion as well as drastic climatic or environmental changes and extreme weather conditions such as super-typhoons, floods, droughts and earthquakes.

The migrants stay away from their original homeland for different lengths of time within their own country or go to nearby countries or further away. In the 1970s, a combination of super typhoons and floods in Mindanao and intensified military campaigns of suppression compelled millions of Moros to migrate to Sabah. Of recent memory is the super-typhoon Yolanda which swept away people's homes in several Visayan islands and compelled the people to seek shelter and relief elsewhere for some years.

From the late 1970s, there is also the long-running phenomenon of millions of Filipinos migrating to the Middle East and other foreign countries to take low-wage jobs in order to augment family income drastically decreased by the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system and by the climate crisis.

2. Climate changes naturally. We had the Ice Age. Some of our rivers were deserts before or vice versa; why do we sound the alarm now on climate change? And why only now?

JMS: We are not in the cusp of any geologic cataclysm or any drastic climatic change due to the natural cycle like the one that occurred when the earth shifted from the Ice Age. But due to the long-running irresponsibility of monopoly capitalism from the 20th century onward, we are on the brink or close to the tipping point where we can no longer reverse the course of global

warming and drastic ecological changes that will lead to the massive existential threats to if not the extinction of humanity and other biological species.

3. What is happening to the coastal areas, plains and meadows that propels people to quit their traditional livelihood and migrate? Can't we adapt to the ever-changing nature to sustain ourselves or start anew, in particular this drastic climate change?

JMS: Coastal areas are being flooded and eroded because of the rise of the sea level and the melting of the icebergs. Deforested mountains mean loss of hunting grounds, more landslides and silted rivers for upland peoples, and more destructive floods in the lowland valleys. Plains and meadows are also subject to extreme conditions such as prolonged droughts and desertification. At the same time, big comprador-landlords and high bureaucrats take advantage of these conditions of proneness to disaster and reduced productivity in order to further hasten land conversion into tourism, real estate and infrastructure projects, which in turn act as further disincentives to agriculture especially food production.

What is happening is causing the people to quit their traditional livelihood and migrate. Our scientists should start checking how many of our thousands of islands have already disappeared or about to disappear and how many of our traditional coastal and island fishing villages have likewise disappeared. Even before our coastal areas and rich fishing grounds are markedly destroyed by global warming, these are already rapidly degraded by unregulated sand-quarrying, toxic pollution, and intrusion by big foreign-owned fishing fleets and beachfront landgrabbers.

Adaptation to and mitigation of the drastic climate change are still being tried in many places because in the first place the impoverished people cannot just migrate, except by walking or riding short distances. But the accelerating rate of global warming is alerting us to the danger of the tipping point or point of irreversibility of global warming being reached soon. Take note that more than ten million English-speaking Filipinos have migrated abroad due to the social and environmental crisis.

4. Agricultural countries like the Philippines must have funds for the sustenance of our agricultural workers. Is there an existing budget for agricultural development in the country? If there is, is it enough to sustain the 75% of our population – the peasant class?

JMS: The reactionary state in the Philippines has no policy or program or budget for genuine land reform and agricultural development that can sustain peasants and agricultural workers, who compose the majority of the people. The Duterte regime has gone to the extent of terminating the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and launching a bloody anti-communist campaign of military suppression.



It has violently and unjustly reacted the proposals of the NDFP for agrarian reforms and rural development as well as as national industrial

industrialization and economic development in the Draft Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms. It is desperately trying to preserve the semicolonial and semifeudal system of oppression and exploitation.

The reactionary government, having adopted neoliberal policies such as trade liberalization, deregulation and so on in the past more than 35 years, can no longer so easily reverse the impacts of these policies on Philippine agriculture, such as lack of support for local food production and increased dependence on food imports, and over-reliance on unsustainable livelihoods based on tourism, labor export, and real estate.

As a result, the peasantry may appear to have shrunk in size, but that's only an illusion because the majority of the rural population are still heavily dependent on the land and its shrinking resources. They may be more mobile due to expanded road networks and cellphone usage, but only because this help them eke out increasingly marginal and precarious livelihoods where they work for longer hours and yet take home very low incomes.

Sinking deeper and deeper into poverty and desperation, many rural people become victims of exploitative usurers, labor recruiters, human and sex traffickers, and other sorts of anti-social or criminal schemes that are run or protected by the big civilian and military bureaucrats. On the other hand, they seek radical solutions to the social crisis and become more open to agrarian revolution and sympathetic to the people's army.

5. The government mentioned that the young farmers are choosing to leave their farmland and look for a more lucrative job other than farming, is there truth in it? If so, what makes them choose or want something else?

JMS: It is fake news from the reactionary state, its economists and statisticians that the youth are abandoning the farms in favor of more lucrative jobs other than farm jobs. The fact is that that unemployment is rising rapidly in both rural and urban areas. What the young farmers after the harvest season do is to seek odd jobs in mining, plantation and logging areas or go to the urban areas for odd jobs in construction and street peddling in urban centers and slums and areas surrounding some factories.

But a big bulk return to the rural areas because the natural cycles of farming and rural social traditions, and other semifeudal forms of commodity production and construction projects that pop up here and there, continue to provide them some economic opportunities however transitory and marginal. In fact, during the nearly two years of Covid lockdowns and school closures since March 2020, there has been a marked tendency for young people to return to their villages and try to revitalize farm and garden production.

The big problem is that there is no agricultural and industrial development in the Philippines, as in the tiger economies of Southeast Asia before the Asian financial crisis of 1997. And the reactionary state tries to conjure the illusion of development by maximizing the share of the service sector in the economy by up to 58 percent. This is the most import-dependent and consumption-oriented sector of the economy and mixes up big, middle and

small type of enterprises and abstractly assumes as employing tens of millions of workers who are mostly either on five-month contractualization or are mere odd jobbers or “self-employed” in the so-called informal sector of the economy.

The reactionary state deliberately minimizes the share of agriculture in the economy by deliberately reducing it to only 7 to 9 per cent, ignoring the undocumented consumption of the peasants themselves, the rent paid to landlords and sales to merchants. And entire peasant family, including 9-year-old children, participate in agricultural production and related small-handicrafts. But only the heads of peasant families are considered peasants and only the year-round farm workers connected to farm machines and warehousing are duly accounted as farm workers but not the millions of seasonal farm workers.

6. How will the Philippines or the world survive without the agricultural workers or the fisherfolk community? How can we sustain ourselves? Can we rely on urban farming and GMO farming? What is Urban farming and GMO farming? How do they affect the livelihood of the traditional farmers and our consumption?

JMS: We cannot survive without the peasants, farm workers and fisherfolk of the world. They produce the food for the Philippines and other countries of the world. Despite global warming, there are still wide areas in the Philippines and most other countries that are suitable for agriculture. In fact, a number of countries with vast deserts like in the Middle East and Central Asia have realized that they must use at least a hefty slice of their newly acquired industrial capacity and petrodollars to efficiently manage and even

increase their freshwater resources (including cheap conversion of saltwater to freshwater) in order to reclaim the deserts and turn them into rich farmlands.

Urban farming, GMO farming, and so-called aquaponic technologies, have their special roles to play in maximizing certain technologies and skills related to agriculture and food production. It is, for example, a good thing for



urban households and communities to maximize marginal lands for vegetable gardens, fishponds and small livestock. But such technologies, particularly GMO-related, can also be misused to exploit the people, especially in the hands of huge imperialist monopolies driven by superprofit motives.

In underdeveloped countries like the Philippines, we cannot simply resort to urban farming and GMO farming. These are even more costly methods of farming dependent on piped-in water and imported construction materials, seeds, agro-chemicals and other things from foreign agri-corporations. It is much better to rely on the combination of traditional and modern technologies, made more scientific and environment-friendly through such methods as agro-ecology, and of course in the context of thorough-going land reform, national industrialization, and the empowerment of the working class and peasantry in close alliance.

7. Can we say that one of the reasons for the decreasing population of indigenous people is climate crisis? How does it take place?

JMS: As far as the Philippines is concerned and other underdeveloped tropical countries, the indigenous people (like the Aetas, the Igorots, the Dumagat, Mangyans, Lumad and the like) have no choice but to stick to their place in order to defend their ancestral domain, their farms and the environment. In fact, it has been the closeness to the land and native conservation practices of upland people and some far-flung island peoples that have, in effect, served to buffer their communities from the worst impacts of the climate crisis.



So far, it is not yet the climate crisis that is compelling them to leave their homes, farms and local ecological niches but it is the sequence of mining, logging and monocrop plantations and military operations and more recently of tourism-oriented and real-estate-oriented enclaves and related infrastructure coming in to force them out of wide areas. Subsequently, these intrusive operations contribute to the climate crisis that adversely affects the indigenous people who usually transfer from one part of the Sierra Madre, Cordillera or Pantarong mountain range to another.

Out-migration among indigenous people (especially among the youth) from their ancestral homelands to the more developed lowlands and urban areas was starting to be felt even before the climate crisis became a major global problem. The gradual intrusion of cash economies and erosion of natural self-sufficient economies created push-and-pull factors for indigenous youth to seek farm and off-farm work elsewhere. But, in most cases, this did not result in an absolute decrease of the population of indigenous peoples but rather their spread into the shrinking frontier areas and melting-pot lowlands – where they tended to reproduce the indigenous lifeways of their ancestral villages.

8. What do we exactly mean by climate-crisis-driven migration? How does a crisis on climate forces people to flee? Can you give concrete examples? What happens to the climate migrants and refugees? From which sector or class do they usually come? Where do they usually go to when they migrate?

JMS: It is in large areas of Africa and the Amazon, especially on the Brazilian side, where we see the long-running invasion by foreign monopoly agri-corporations, deforestation and desertification causing large-scale migration of the people at the first instance and the climate crisis consequently arises. Blaming the climate crisis as the culpability of the entire humanity and not that of monopoly capitalism is an obscurantist trick of the imperialists to befog their criminal responsibility.

In the Philippines, which is a tropical archipelago, the indigenous people tend to stick to their ancestral domain even as the better part of their land has already been grabbed by foreign and local agri-corporations. They try

to survive by getting jobs from the mining, logging and plantation companies and do swidden farming, gold panning, wood-cutting and food gathering in the vicinity. It is a different story when Duterte and the Chinese casinos take over the entire Boracay island and push out the indigenous people entirely from the island.

9. What other forms of oppression and exploitation do these climate migrants and refugees face? How can we organize them or what better way can we organize these groups to contribute to the national democratic revolution?

JMS: In the case of the Philippines, after the land grabbers that include not only foreign and local mining, logging and plantation corporations but also bureaucrat capitalists and traditional landlords and merchant usurers, do not drive away the indigenous people entirely from a wide area but allow them to stay to serve as mostly irregular wage-earners and to have small plots of land to farm in the vicinity.

The revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines has paid attention to the indigenous people or national minorities from the very start in the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. Thus, mass organizations and alliances have been formed to uphold, defend and promote the rights of the indigenous people to self-determination, to their ancestral domain and to self-development against all forms of oppression and exploitation.

The legal forces of the national democratic movement and religious missionary formations have also worked to support the indigenous people,

help to protect themselves from oppression and exploitation, oppose landgrabbing, provide assistance for the development of agriculture and sideline occupations, social services (especially education, health and better housing) and improve relations with nearby poor peasant settler communities and other communities.

10. How are climate migration and climate imperialism interrelated?

JMS: The climate crisis is the result of the plunder, destruction and degradation of the environment by the monopoly capitalist corporations. These are the main instruments of climate imperialism. By causing the climate crisis, they further cause climate migration in the Philippines and various countries of the world.

11. Some say that the reason for the climate crisis is overpopulation. Which one of the solutions should be population and space control (where spaces for human settlement will be occupied by companies or businesses); what can you say about this?

JMS: Blaming overpopulation as the reason for the climate crisis is a clear case of blaming the victims and absolving the criminal corporations. After the best land for agriculture is grabbed from them, the indigenous people and other poor peasants are forced to resort to the traditional swidden farming.

Then the monopoly capitalist giants and their apologists blame them for destroying the environment and assert that because of science and technology being in their hands the world is still capable of producing twice

the amount of food that now feeds the nearly 8 billion people of the world. They also obscure the fact that artificial food shortages are manipulated to generate higher profits for themselves.

12. How does the revolutionary movement address climate migration and its victims? What can be done to stop this other form of migration?

JMS: The revolutionary movement must inform and arouse the toiling masses of workers and peasants among the indigenous people and entire people, build their mass organizations and alliances and mobilize them in various forms of political, economic and cultural struggles in order to fight and defeat foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

The objective of the revolutionary movement is not merely to demand higher wages for the farm workers and to seek concessions from the indigenous communities but ultimately to dismantle the mining, logging and plantation operations, take back the land from the landgrabbers and give the land to the indigenous communities and the poor peasant settlers because they are class brothers and in dire need of land.

Too many people, 10 to 12 million Filipinos, have gone out of the Philippines as migrant workers due to the general conditions of oppression and exploitation and the consequences of land grabbing and climate crisis, and yet their foreign exchange earnings are misused by the reactionary state to favor the foreign monopolies and local exploiting classes. The environment and natural resources of the Philippines are being plundered to a point where the archipelago is pockmarked by open pits and soil erosions. And

the mineral ores of so many kinds are undocumented and are being smuggled out.

13. What effect do haciendas and plantations in the semicolonial state have on the worsening climate crisis and migration? How do the revolutionary forces educate and defend the farm workers in these areas?

JMS: The haciendas and plantations are big comprador-landlord operations. They are the bases for the production of export crops and the foreign exchange income is used for the importation mainly of consumer manufactures and secondarily depreciable producer goods. They engage in monocrop production and use a lot of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These chemicals are carried by the streams to the farms producing staple food for the people and are poisonous to these. The mining operations use even more poisonous acids for primary processing, kill the fish in the streams and poison the staple food-producing farms.

The haciendas and plantations are the hotbeds of the worst kinds of exploitation and oppression. Only a few of the farm workers, who operate the farm machines and man the warehouses, are employed and compensated the whole year round. The overwhelming majority of farm workers are hired seasonally at subhuman wages through labor contractors as in the old cabo system, now euphemistically called “workers cooperatives” in some plantations of Mindanao. The combination of class exploitation, environmental degradation of climate crisis limits the incomes of the peasants and farm workers and pressures them to seek odd jobs and swidden farms elsewhere.

14. Low lying areas in Metro Manila and other places in the Philippines are in danger of being submerged due to the rising sea levels brought about by Global Warming. How this problem should be solved in short term and long term?

JMS: Indeed, the worsening flood problem in Metro Manila and other places in the Philippines is due to the blocking of water from the Sierra Madre and the rising sea level brought about by global warming. The short-term solution is to stop the reclamation projects of the Chinese casino syndicates in Manila Bay. These projects block the outflow of water from the Sierra Madre.



The long-term solution is to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions on a world scale and prevent the temperature of the earth's surface exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius because beyond this point heat waves and forest fires will accelerate towards and beyond 2 degrees Celsius, which is threshold to the earth's incineration.

15. There is a threat to Small Island Developing States in the Pacific (as well as other places in the globe) of being wiped out and having climate refugees in massive proportions in the next 100 years due to global warming and rising sea levels. What will happen to the nation

state status of these poor countries? How this problem should be solved?

JMS: If these small developing states in the Pacific are wiped out by being submerged, then they shall cease as nation-states because their communities shall have drowned or shall have migrated to higher ground in bigger islands nearby or in other countries. At any rate, it shall give time for them to regroup as nation-states elsewhere. As a matter of fact, millions of Filipinos have already become migrant workers as a result of the social and environmental crisis. But they can be thrown back to a drowning Philippines by the same social and environmental crisis worsening in the host countries.

In this regard, although the Philippines is by no means a “small-island state”, we can expect analogous tidal-flooding events to become more and more frequent and destructive in coastal areas, and perhaps even fully or partially submerge certain island groups in Pangasinan, Southern Luzon, Palawan, elsewhere in the Visayas and Mindanao, and especially in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. These are expected to further fuel climate migrations within the country and out-migration as well.

16. What are the lessons that can be learned in Cuba's emergency response system in times of disaster?

JMS: Cuba is located at the opposite side of the globe compared to the Philippines, but both are similarly situated in terms of being tropical archipelagos subject to annual cyclone and monsoon cycles. Cuba is at frequent risk of natural calamities like hurricanes, earthquakes and droughts, especially because of the effects of global warming. Thus, the people and civil defense



agencies of the state need to be well-prepared to reduce the destructive impact the natural disasters, bring large numbers of people to safety, provide shelters, food, clothing medical and other forms of relief and enable rehabilitation and reconstruction as soon as possible.

Cuba and the Philippines even have a similar (and to some extent even a parallel) colonial and feudal, and later semi-colonial and semi-feudal, history of exploitation and oppression as well as people's revolutionary struggle. But there the parallel ends, because the Philippines continues to be ruled by reactionary classes beholden to US imperialism. This basic difference shows in the state response to many social problems, especially in health care and disaster response.

Cuba has been exemplary in having a ruling communist party, the state agencies and mass organizations of various types to mobilize the population and material resources for overcoming the problems brought about by natural disasters. The Cuban people have a high level of fighting spirit and resilience tempered by a long period of revolutionary patriotism against US

imperialism and they have the spirit and methods of cooperation that they developed in the course of striving to build socialism. ###

THE “*GREAT RESET*” GENERATES THE GREAT RESIST – International League of Peoples’ Struggle

By **Jose Maria Sison**, *Chairperson Emeritus*

International League of Peoples’ Struggle

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The ideologues, propagandists and advertising experts of the monopoly capitalist states and corporations cooked up and started to hype the notion of the “*Great Reset*” in the 2010 in the wake of the great financial crash of 2008, which exposed the persistence of the crisis of overproduction, overaccumulation of private capital and the falling rates of profit. The worsening bankruptcy of the world capitalist system is manifested by the ever-growing public debt burden.



What may be construed as a “great reset” actually occurred when the decades of the revisionist betrayal of socialism and restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China led to 1991 when the collapse of the Soviet Union categorically ended the bipolar world of the *Cold War* and made US imperialism the sole superpower in a “unipolar” world.

Bush the elder celebrated this major development by proclaiming the “*new*

world order” and proceeded to wage a war of aggression against Iraq to begin a US-Israeli Zionist campaign of wiping out previous Soviet influence in Arab states and other pro-Palestinian state and destroying the government with independent or nonaligned policies. What led to a series of “*ceaseless wars*” would come under the so-called neoconservative policy.

Under this policy, the US is supposed to take advantage of the full-spectrum of its power, ranging from the soft tactics of diplomacy to the threat or use of high tech military superiority in order to put the 21st century under the dominance of Pax Americana. In general, the former revisionist ruled states were just too eager to come to terms with the US under its policies of neoliberalism and the US became more confident of waging wars of aggression because of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

Russia and China went through the troubles and pains of converting their economic and political systems into capitalist ones before the end of the 20th century and stabilized themselves as the 21st century began. On the impulse of the so-called global war on terror, as a result of the 9-11 incident, the US carried out a policy of favoring its military-industrial complex and outsourcing much of its consumer manufacturing to China. The frenzy of war production and wars of aggression aggravated its strategic decline.

After letting the US expand the NATO, unleash wars of aggression in Iraq and Yugoslavia and go further on a rampage under the pretext of a “*global war on terror*”, China and Russia tended to assert their independence and initiative from the US by forming the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the BRICS and the New Development Bank. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash, economic competition and political rivalry among the

traditional and new imperialist powers started to surface, the inter-imperialist contradictions became noticeable as the financial crash set off a prolonged global depression.

The “Great Reset” Is a Mere Rhetorical Reaction to Catastrophe

With the foregoing as background, the notion of the great reset can be understood not as some kind a great beginning of a positive series of developments but as a reaction to events adverse to global capitalism and as a desperate wish to rise from catastrophe. In fact, the book by Prof. Richard Florida that launched the notion in 2010 was titled, *The Great Reset: How New Ways of Living and Working Drive Post-Crash Prosperity*. The book dealt with the financial crash of 2008, to describe the future of cities.

It examined the economic incentives which had driven American society in the past. It compared the depression to two similar periods in recent history, the 1870s and the 1930s. Since 2010, the crisis of the world capitalist system has worsened, with all major contradictions intensifying. And the inter-imperialist contradictions have come to the fore.

To cause war and disorder, the US and NATO unleashed the “*color revolutions*” in former Soviet republics and the “*Arab spring*” in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. Subsequently, the US under the Obama regime publicly acknowledged the economic and military rise of China as a threat to the US and called for a strategic pivot to East Asia. The Trump regime adopted a more aggressive policy against China, like the trade war and reduction of trade with China and accusations against its stealing technology from the US.

The US persisted in carrying out its neoconservative policy despite the heavy costs of the wars of aggression and inability to expand economic territory. It could not subjugate Iraq completely and was unable to control the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds at the same time. It could not defeat Syria and its alliance with Russia. It became unable to control Afghanistan and had to accept defeat and withdraw from it in 2021.

In Ukraine from 2014 to 2022, the US and NATO had set the stage for US puppets and fascist organizations to oppress the Ukrainians of Russian nationality and provoke the war of counter-aggression begun by Russia and by the anti-fascist Russian Ukrainians in 2022. But to the dismay of the anti-Russian Ukrainian oligarchs and fascists, the US and NATO have not provided the high degree of military support and intervention that they previously expected.

The phrase “*great reset*” was adopted as the name or banner line of the 50th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), in June 2020. This brought together the billionaires and high political leaders who were convened by Prince Charles of Wales and the WEF, with the theme of taking advantage of the global crisis to rebuild society and the economy in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. The “*great reset*” has been made notorious by accusations that the billionaires and their political agents have been using



the pandemic to make superprofits from it and to control and repress the people with the compulsory vaccinations and lockdowns.

Klaus Schwab, who founded the WEF in 1971 and who is its current CEO, has described the three core components of the Great Reset as follows: the first involves creating conditions for a *“stakeholder economy”*; the second component includes building in a more *“resilient, equitable, and sustainable”* way—based on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics which would incorporate more green public infrastructure projects; the third component is to *“harness the innovations of the Fourth International Revolution for the public good”*.

The great resetters use the phrase *“stakeholder economy”* to deny the existence of exploiting and exploited classes and class struggle and to extinguish the differences of the billionaires and the toiling masses of workers and peasants. They grab the issue of environmentalism in order to put a greencolor on their plunder and destruction of the environment and deny the monopoly capital culpability for global warming. And they express their determination to own and control science and technology from the the Third to the Fourth Industrial Revolution for the purpose of taking private superprofits and maintaining wage slavery by the monopoly bourgeoisie.

“Great Reset” Offers No Solution to the Worsening Crises

Klaus Schwab has pontificated that the conditions for the *“stakeholder economy”* are created by improving policies and agreements on taxes, regulations, fiscal policies and trade to result in *“fairer outcomes”*. He



conforms to the neoliberal policy of maximizing profits and capital accumulation in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie as the presumed creator of wealth, cutting back taxes on corporate income and the personal incomes of the wealthy, pressing down wages, privatizing profitable public assets, reducing outlays for social services, liberalizing investments, trade and credit for the monopoly bourgeoisie and denationalizing the client economies.

Schwab has prescribed that large-scale pandemic spending programs with private investments and pension funds ought to improve on the old system by building a new one that is more *“resilient, equitable and sustainable”* over the long term, building green urban infrastructure and creating incentives for industries to improve their track record on environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics”. He does not condemn or criticize the plunder and destruction of the environment by monopoly capitalism, the global persistence of fossil fuel being 85 per cent source of energy and the accelerated worsening of global warming, which can now be termed as global heating because of more widespread droughts and heat waves.

Schwab is beside himself in hyping the fourth industrial revolution for blurring the lines between *“physical, digital and biological spheres”* and for fusing such technologies as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things,

autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage and quantum computing.” He ignores the fact that the digital revolution (electronics and information technologies) in the third industrial revolution since the mid-1990s has so automated the production process that it has aggravated the crisis of overproduction, the falling rates of profit and drastic fall in the income of the proletariat and other working people. One-sidedly in favor of the monopoly bourgeoisie, he simply celebrates the harnessing of technological innovations as inevitably resulting in the public good.

Prince Charles of Wales and state leaders of monopoly capitalist countries have been profuse in expressing expectations of benefits to the people from one or all components of the *“great reset.”* Prince Charles puts the stress on environmentalist initiative of the private sector in putting the world on the path of sustainability through carbon pricing. John Kerry of the US and other delegates has underscored rebuilding the *“social contract”* in a post-COVID world.

In relation to the Covid-19 crisis, the Brookings Institution favors a three-stage plan of response in the near term, recovery in the medium term and reset. For the near term it involves response, for the medium term this involves *“rebuilding economic and social activity in a manner that protects public health, promotes societal healing and preserves the environment and for the reset establishing through our “collective imagination” a “new equilibrium among political, economic, social and environmental systems toward common goals.”* So much academic and technocratic bombast, without confronting the privatization of the public health system and the shrinkage of public funds for a truly social health system for the benefit of the people.

The World Economic Forum itself holds the general view that the capitalist world and its crises are best managed by a self-selected coalition of multinational corporations, governments and civil society organizations (CSOs). It considers periods of global instability – such as the financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic – as windows of opportunity to intensify its programmatic efforts. Schwab himself thinks that the “*great reset*” would not change the economic system but could improve it to make it “*responsible capitalism*.”

The brains, the billionaires and bureaucrats that make up the World Economic Forum expose and condemn themselves as charlatans who use a lot of glittering generalities to assure the people that a better future is in store every time a catastrophic crisis of monopoly capitalism afflicts them. They seem to be unaware that their “*great reset*” is not effectively deceiving the intelligentsia and the people because the ever-worsening crises of the world capitalist system are generating the great resist.

They have aroused a great number of serious critics and have facilitated the task of criticism. They ignore the fact that all major contradictions of the world capitalist system intensifying and multiple crises are becoming worse and more frequent, generating anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles and creating the conditions for the global resurgence of the proletariat and the socialist cause. The epochal struggle between the monopoly bourgeoisie and the proletariat will continue until the vast majority of the people will win victory. The proletariat and other working people cannot accept but will always resist and eventually triumph over the continuing unjust and iniquitous system in which the social wealth is created by them but is in the main appropriated by the billionaires, the environment is plundered and

destroyed by monopoly capitalism, pandemics run rampant, the inter-imperialist conflicts are once more posing the dangers of annihilation to humankind through nuclear war and bio-chemical warfare and the further advances of sciences and technology and labor organization in the fourth industrial revolution are prospected for maximizing private superprofits and waging wars of aggression and not for truly serving the public good and realizing socialism. ###

US-LED WARS AND TYPES OF WEAPONS IN THE ERA OF MODERN IMPERIALISM

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Introduction

Since the advent of modern imperialism at the beginning of the 20th century, the monopoly capitalist states have engaged in wars of aggression or



counterrevolution of varying scales and such inter-imperialist wars as World War I and II. For the purpose, they have made use of military and private-sector science and technology to research and develop both conventional and nonconventional weapons of mass destruction of various types, including chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological. As one consequence, top US defense corporations emerged bigger and globally dominant and profited from government contracts as well as got “free” technology from government-funded research and development.

Conventional weapons are those weapons deployed primarily for their explosive, kinetic or incendiary potential, especially against combatants in the battlefield. But their scope of destruction can also cause widespread death among the civilians at the same time, such as through carpet bombing, firebombs, and the use of white phosphorous, napalm and cluster

bombs. Even if the intended main targets are military force and facilities, the nonconventional weapons of mass destruction have the potential to destroy in one moment entire civilian populations, the social infrastructure and the environment, and damage them in a lasting way.

Because of space constraint, I will give historical backgrounds very briefly and I will try to focus on the wars and weapons of mass destruction for which the imperialist states are responsible in recent times after the Cold War of the US and the now-defunct Soviet Union. The imperialist powers of today, including China, hold the biggest stockpiles of both conventional and nonconventional weapons of mass destruction.

The US stands as the supreme terrorist power in accordance with the Nuremberg principle for having produced both conventional and unconventional weapons of mass destruction and used them for blackmail, military blockade, and wars of aggression in ways similar to or even surpassing those used by Hitlerite Germany. In 2019, the US also remains the number one supplier in the global arms trade.

The US is heir to the violence and brutality of British colonialism in the conquest of what is the US, which involved genocidal campaigns against the native population. The white settlers used the most advanced conventional weapons of the time and brought smallpox, the bubonic plague, cholera, influenza, chickenpox, scarlet fever, syphilis and other diseases to afflict the Indians. Then they used guns, whips and chains to enslave the African-Americans and to kill them at will with impunity. The ideologues of Nazi Germany admired the white supremacist domination of the Indians and the African slaves.

US imperialism has the distinction of being the first and so far, the only power that has used the atomic bomb on the civilian populations of entire cities, such as those of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It has also used chemical, bacteriological and entomological weapons against the peoples of Korea, Cuba and Vietnam and radiological weapons in the more recent wars of aggression under the fascist and neoconservative policy of full-spectrum dominance, which gives full play to US superiority in high-tech weaponry. Extensive US nuclear tests have also damaged the people's health and environments in many Pacific islands and atolls, while medical tests in its clandestine laboratories have likewise damaged the health of numerous voluntary and involuntary human test subjects.

I shall not be distracted by the ideologues and propagandists of the US and other imperialist powers to ascribe the title of terrorist solely to individuals and small groups that use weapons of no comparison to the weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the imperialist terrorists. These super-terrorists circumvent and violate existing international conventions to produce these weapons and use them to threaten and attack their adversaries. Together with the Israeli Zionists, with whom they share certain weapons of mass destruction, they are also the main suppliers of handy chemical weapons to Al-Nusra, Al Qaida, Salafi and Islamic State (Daesh) as their terrorist agents.

I. World Wars and Wars of Aggression or Counterrevolution of Varying Scales

By themselves, wars fought even without the use of nonconventional weapons have involved the massive destruction of civilian lives, social infrastructures and the environment, creating the conditions for mass hunger and epidemics to arise and spread without sufficient health personnel and facilities to treat the sick and prevent the spread of diseases. In the US-Filipino War from 1899 onwards, US imperialism was responsible for the death of more than 20 per cent or 1.5 million of the Philippine population by torture and gunfire as well as by the spread of contagious diseases due to food blockades, forced relocation of people, mass hunger, and lack of medical care.

In the course of World War I, both the Allies and Central Powers used chemical and biological weapons extensively in addition to conventional weapons. Mustard gas, phosgene gas, and other chemical agents were used to cause lung searing, blindness, death and maiming. The army of the Imperial German government inflicted anthrax and glanders on its enemy.

The unchivalric use of such unconventional weapons would lead to the postwar Geneva Protocol of 1925 banning chemical weapons. Nevertheless, the massive disruptions in social life caused by World War I brought forth another horrendous but unintended result—the 1918 influenza



pandemic that infected one-third of the world's total population and killed more than 50 million people. During World War II, the Allied Powers and Axis Powers had stockpiles of chemical weapons. But the latter were the ones which used chemical weapons in the battlefield and in gas chambers to exterminate Jews and other adversaries in large numbers. To the German, Italian, Japanese and other fascists belong the discredit for the untimely death of tens of millions of people in the countries that they invaded and occupied, as a result of conventional battlefield violence, organized reprisals against civilian resistance, the lack of food and medical care, mass hunger and the spread of diseases.

But on the side of the victorious Allied forces, the US and its European Allies can be taken to account for disproportionate bombing at the expense mainly of the civilian population in Germany. There is however the rationale of the war victors that the so-called strategic bombing campaign was absolutely required to cripple Germany's cities and industrial belts which produced war materiel and that it was a just punishment for a population that adulated and supported fascist regimes and it was a necessary preemption of the local population from violently resisting the advance of the Allied Forces.

The US, taking advantage of the Allied Forces' having quickly achieved air superiority in the Pacific theatre by 1943 and in the European theatre by 1944, was the most outstanding in the use of firebombs and carpet bombing of fascist-controlled cities in Europe and Asia. Even the bombs used by its allies had been manufactured mostly in the US. But the most unique and most unnecessary use of violence in the closing year of World I was the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki despite the offer of surrender already made by Japan. The bombs totally destroyed the two cities and exposed all survivors to lethal radiation that later led to debilitating disease

and birth defects. The US argues that the atom bombing was to break decisively the certain resistance of the population to the US invasionary forces and therefore to save the lives of the US troops and ensure their victory.

For a while, the US had a monopoly of nuclear weapons and could use them to blackmail other countries or even as implied umbrella over the deployment of US military bases and forces in various countries of the world. The Soviet Union broke the US nuclear monopoly in 1949. Its arsenal of nuclear bombs was enough to deter the US from using nuclear bombs when it launched wars against the Korean people from 1950 to 1953 and against the Vietnamese and all Indochinese peoples from the 1960s onwards.

The US used extensively and intensively conventional weapons as well as bacteriological and chemical weapons in wars of aggression in Korea and Indochina. For generations, surviving victims of the germ warfare in Korea and Agent Orange in Vietnam have been living witnesses to the dastardly imperialist attacks on the civilian population. In assisting puppet governments in armed counterrevolution in the Philippines and other countries, the US has supplied chemicals to poison wells and streams used by the guerrilla fighters as well as mosquitoes carrying the deadly falciparum strain of malaria to bite them.

Only after learning about the Soviet research in biological warfare did the US become amenable to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention prohibiting offensive biological warfare. Despite the long precedence of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 against the use of chemical weapons under any circumstance, the imperialist powers agreed on the Chemical Weapons

Convention (CWC) on the Prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction only in 1993.

The Soviet Union reached strategic parity with the US in nuclear and other conventional weapons by the late 1970s during the Brezhnev regime. Between the two superpowers, a situation of nuclear stalemate and balance of terror arose and resulted in a candid recognition of mutual annihilation in case of nuclear war. A series of countries also made their own nuclear weapons: the UK in 1952, France in 1960, China in 1964, India in 1974 and Pakistan shortly thereafter. Later, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be known to have their own nuclear weapons. Several other countries are also known to have the technical capacity to build nuclear weapons.

In 1963 the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (otherwise known as the *Partial Test Ban Treaty*) was signed by the US, the Soviet Union and the UK. In 1968 the two superpowers agreed to the establishment of the UN Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed in 1996 and would not come into force. The US and its allied imperialist powers are the most insistent on keeping their nuclear stockpiles and the privilege of using them for war. They are most resistant to complete nuclear disarmament.

In May 2020, US President Trump stated publicly his unilateral willingness for the US to restart nuclear weapons testing. The US is continuing also to upgrade its nuclear weapons and delivery systems using the most recent

technological advances (related to, for instance, cyberspace integration, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and human-machine interface), while it develops as well new space weapons and related military hardware to be based in space, the Earth's orbit or outermost atmosphere. Among the biggest profiteering defense corporations making nuclear weapons are *Huntington Ingalls Industries* (US\$28.87 billion in contracts), *Lockheed Martin* (US\$25.1779 billion), *Honeywell International* (US\$16.5488 billion), *General Dynamics* (US\$5.8303 billion), and *Jacobs Engineering* (US\$5.3293 billion).

Conventional weapons, which are allowed by international law to be in the hands of the army, airforce and navy of each nation-state, are presumed to be more subject to calibrated and precision targetting and thus less destructive to the lives of the civilian population. But with the use of higher technology these conventional weapons have been enhanced to inflict far more casualties among civilians and destruction of the social infrastructure than ever before.

Even in the absence of a global inter-imperialist war, US imperialism together with its allies has been responsible for the death of 25 to 30 million civilians since the end of World War II. The bulk of the victims perished in the imperialist wars of aggression and imperialist-backed counterrevolution from China and Korea, to Indochina, Indonesia and other countries of Southeast Asia, to South Asia and the Middle East, all the way to Africa and Latin America. And since the end of the *Cold War*, the US and its NATO allies have used a wide range of weapons to inflict the biggest destruction in the shortest period to the civilian population and social infrastructure as in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Libya and Syria.

They have added to more destructive conventional weapons such new weapons as white phosphorus bombs and depleted-uranium munitions which continue to harm the civilians even after the war. They have also used far more “*efficient*” delivery systems, like long range as well as intermediate and short-range cruise missiles, supersonic planes, stealth bombers, AWACS surveillance and control planes, tactical drones, and electronic gadgets to trigger planted explosives. While some may consider that they are efficient in hitting their military targets, these systems also target many more unsuspecting civilians in residential, business, and open space locations.

The US cynically dismisses the destruction of civilian lives and infrastructure as mere “*collateral damage*”, despite the explicit and repeated provision in Protocol I for states to avoid such civilian damage. The unspoken mindset among US imperialist policy planners is to utilize such “*collateral damage*” to send a warning to civilian populations not to support anti-US forces so as not to be treated as fair game.

Apart from civilian deaths, displacement is also a major direct measure of civilian suffering due to imperialist-instigated wars. According to official figures, the number of people uprooted from their ruined homes and communities steadily rose from 1950 onwards, such that by end-2014 there were 19.5 million cross-border refugees and 38 million internally displaced people. A big bulk of these are from Middle East countries torn apart by US-instigated wars.

II. Nonconventional Weapons of Mass Destruction

As in the research and development of conventional weapons, the imperialist states use science and technology to research and develop nonconventional weapons of mass destruction of various types, including chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological. They have taken advantage of the duality in the use of science and technology to serve contradictory purposes, benign and malign, in a sense like the ordinary knife can be used for preparing food in the kitchen or murdering someone.

Whenever they admit to researching and prototyping or manufacturing an instrument of mass destruction, supposedly more deadly to the civilian population than the conventional weapons, they invoke certain non-offensive purposes such as self-defense, deterrence or developing antidotes. These are the usual terms used for preempting, preconditioning and then circumventing laws and conventions that ban or control such weapons.



Among the imperialist powers, the US is supreme in the research, development, and use of chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological weapons of mass destruction. According to its own judgment, it collaborates with one or more of its imperialist allies in research, development and use of these nonconventional weapons through treaties of military alliance, joint scientific research programs, academic exchanges, and naturalization of foreign scientists and technologists as US citizens.

It is a matter of history that the US made use of American and foreign scientists and engineers in the Manhattan Project to research and produce the atom bomb. The US also took advantage of its leading role among victorious Allied powers at the end of World War II to recruit German scientists, some of them with Nazi ties, to jumpstart its own rocket technology. At the same time, the US did a parallel scheme to recruit Japanese germ-warfare scientists based in China under Unit 731, exempting them from war crimes prosecution.

In the entire course of the Cold War, the US sought to maintain supremacy in the production of nuclear weapons, especially after the Soviet Union broke the US nuclear monopoly. As a result of the nuclear stalemate, the US strategic planners headed by Kissinger conceived of the idea of producing tactical nukes, which are low-yield nuclear munitions such as short-range missiles and artillery shells designed for battlefield use. Tactical nukes were supposed to make US nuclear power more credible to peoples engaged in revolutionary struggles for national and social liberation and states which were also without any nuclear power but threatened by the US for asserting national independence and socialist aspirations.

As it turned out, the bulk of tactical nukes were deployed in NATO areas facing the former Soviet Union and other Warsaw Bloc countries, supposedly to enhance superiority in case of a shooting war. But then there could only be a short leap from the use of tactical nukes to strategic nukes. Thus, the US adjusted to the battlefield use of depleted-uranium-tipped bombs delivered by planes and artillery, which were used extensively in the Balkan wars and the Middle East under the neoconservative policy proclaimed by the US after the *Cold War*. The US has openly boasted of

possessing and using depleted uranium and lasers as weapons although it denies using caesium which it has in abundant stock.

Under the false pretext of self-defense to circumvent the treaties banning the use of chemical and biological warfare, the US has always maintained research laboratories for developing and producing chemical and biological weapons in the US and abroad. It has been notorious in the widespread use of germ warfare in the Korean War and in the use of Agent Orange and other defoliant chemical agents in the Vietnam War.

The use of chemical weapons is attractive to the imperialists because of the low cost of producing them and also because of instant effects on the fatal victims and the maimed survivors as well as the shock effect on the entire population, whether the weapons be napalm bombs, white phosphorous bombs and aerosol-delivered toxins or pathogens. The US has most recently used these as covert weapons in the hands of its own personnel and terrorist agents like the Islamic State (*Daesh*) in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere, and then twists the story by blaming its adversary states as the culprits.

The use of biological weapons is attractive to the imperialists because they are the easiest to develop and produce and likewise they are easiest to ascribe to other states or small groups acting clandestinely as assets of the US, and to further smokescreen their deployment as naturally occurring or accident-caused "*viral outbreaks*". Biological weapons are in the form of microbes as pathogens, mainly in the form of bacteria and viruses. The only restraint on the user of these weapons is the problem of ensuring the immunity of his own forces from the epidemic.

COVID-19 is the latest type of viral contagion, which has rapidly affected and alarmed the entire world because it is as easily transmitted as the common cold by people who are already infected but show no obvious symptoms for several or even many days. COVID-19 may likely cause severe illness or even death especially among people who are elderly or immuno-compromised. Based on the latest scientific findings, mortality rates in most countries for people below 60 are comparable to or lower than seasonal influenza, and almost nil for people below 20.

It is also potentially far more deadly in poor countries with megacities or congested slum communities with poor nutrition, healthcare and hygiene systems. It is more easily transmitted in community and from country to country and it is potentially far more deadly than any previous epidemic. It has become pandemic, and it is still running its course in infecting millions of people and killing hundreds of thousands on a world scale.

It remains to be seen whether it can be promptly checked by a vaccine and to what extent it can be compared to the so-called Spanish flu of 1916 to 1918 which killed at least 50 million up to 65 million people, according to various reports. There is a distinct trend among reactionary states of bloating or misdirecting the real dangers to public health and fanning a parallel pandemic of fear to further their own narrow interests.

The chief imperialist rivals of today are accusing each of other of being culpable for originating and spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the COVID-19. China was the first to claim that the virus came from Fort Detrick in Maryland, USA and that the US military athletic delegation to the

World Military Games brought it to Wuhan in October 2019. US President Donald Trump and his State Secretary Mike Pompeo have countered in public that the virus leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology and spread in Wuhan and that China suppressed the information, thus allowing Chinese and foreign travellers to pick up virus in Wuhan and further spread it to many other countries.

Both sides claim to know the general state and pertinent details of biological research and development through previous exchanges of biological scientists and experts in four decades of close US-China cooperation as the main partners of neoliberal globalization. There are third parties that point to either country as the culprit or describe the COVID-19 virus as strictly zoonotic in origin, mutating from previous coronaviruses and probably resulting from the imperialist plunder of the environment and disturbing the ecological balance among organisms in their drastically decreased and degraded forest habitat.

Various scientific studies claim that 60 to 70 percent of recognized emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic or originating from forest-dwelling animals. COVID-19 is supposedly traceable to bats as the “*ultimate incubator*” for the virus because of their strong immune system which make them an excellent host to viral strains that mutate into pathogens that are highly infectious and deadly to humans. There is the claim that the virus leaped from the bats to humans who consumed bat soup or meat at the Wuhan wet market.

Meanwhile, due to the demand of Australia and an overwhelming number of other countries for an independent investigation of the origin and development of COVID-19, the recent assembly of the World Health

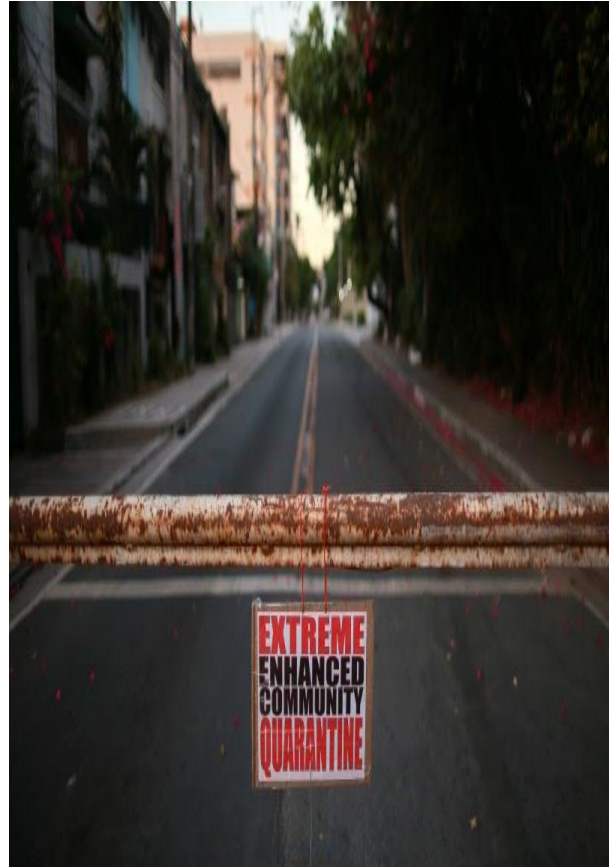
Organization has resolved that an independent investigation is to be conducted. China and the US have agreed to the investigation. Nevertheless, a recently-revealed secret 15-page research dossier shared among the U.S.-led “*Five Eyes*” Security Alliance that includes Canada, the U.K., Australia and New Zealand claims that the virus was leaked from a Chinese biodefense lab and that China suppressed information on the spread of the virus since December 2019.

Whatever is the outcome of the aforesaid investigation called by the WHO, the US and other imperialist states will continue to engage in bio-warfare research and development under such pretexts as self-defense, deterrence and production of the antidotes. Bio-warfare and pandemics will continue to be potent weapons as the crisis of the world capitalist system worsens and the contradictions among the imperialist powers, those between the imperialist powers and the oppressed peoples and nations and those between the proletariat and the monopoly bourgeoisie in imperialist countries intensify.

Furthermore, to the extent that bio-warfare and pandemics may spin out of control and endanger the entire system especially in the imperialist homelands, monopoly capitalist blocs and financial oligarchies will attempt to further entrench and expand their interests in big infotech, biotech, nanotech, space tech and other high-tech industries as the growing core of their respective military-industrial blackholes—which in turn will further sharpen all the contradictions among the imperialist powers and within the entire world capitalist system..

III. Far-Reaching Consequences and Prospects

The COVID-19 pandemic and the various state-enforced lockdowns on vast areas of the world have a strong impact on the world capitalist system, on the imperialist countries and client-states and the relations of the ruling classes, the governments and broad masses of the people. The pandemic and the resulting lockdowns have telescoped so many basic contradictions and defects of global capitalism into one monster storm of global scale. They have disrupted the usual



mode of existence of the ruling systems and the population, brought down drastically the level of production and unemployment, caused widespread hunger and disease and generated more social uncertainty and unrest.

It has aggravated what has become the chronic crisis of the world capitalist system which has continued to lurch from one level of economic stagnation and financial volatility to a deeper level since the financial crash of 2008. It has been moving in the direction of a plunge comparable to or even worse than the Great Depression from 1929 onwards, generating on a global scale anti-imperialist and democratic struggles as well as prodding the monopoly bourgeoisie and the reactionaries to adopt fascism and war as desperate ways to overcome their problems.

The imperialist states and their client states have used the COVID-19 pandemic as opportunity for taking and exercising emergency powers, imposing lockdowns, tightening control of the people and institutionalizing repressive measures. In various countries, the lockdowns have been used to suppress the right to free assembly and expression and to unleash harsher campaigns of military suppression where the oppressed peoples and nations are engaged in people's war.

In most of the imperialist countries and in all the client-states, the people are actually deprived of community-based medical surveillance, the effective, prompt and free testing testing for COVID-19 and the timely and adequate treatment of the virus and other diseases in violation of the supposedly medical reason for the lockdown. In the course of the lockdown, the people are deprived of public transport and the means of livelihood. And yet they do not get the food and economic relief that have been promised to them by their governments. They suffer hunger and lack access to medical testing and treatment, and basic household supplies as well, especially in poor countries and impoverished or migrant communities.

They also have to cope with difficulties of dealing with sudden and imposed physical restrictions and social deprivation especially in Western countries where many elderly people live alone or in institutional homes. The lockdowns have created many instant refugee shelters for migrant workers and other stranded people who are unable to proceed or return home and left to their own devices to survive. The lockdowns have also drastically disrupted production and distribution chains, leading to shortages in many basic goods and services.

The extremely damaging consequences to the 99.9% of the world's population of 7.5 billion of more than four decades of neoliberal economic policy are exposed. They include lack of savings for the overwhelming majority of the people to tide them over the crisis, the lack of job security and the prevalence of precarious means of livelihood and the scarcity of social services. The public health system is exposed as too thin or close to nil or skewed in favor of more lucrative fields of medicine, as COVID-19 cases mount and overload it. There are inadequate personal protection gears even for the doctors, nurses and other health workers, no sufficient bed spaces, face masks, respirators, medicine and disinfectants.

While the broad masses of the people suffer, the imperialist and reactionary states assure the big bourgeoisie of financial bailouts and stimulus packages to cover their temporary losses from the stoppage or sharp reduction of production and sales of their production. The ensuing global economic depression also provides a most golden opportunity for the biggest predatory corporations to buy at hefty discounts troubled companies with choice assets and further consolidate their already-awesome economic power. And of course, the class exploiters, their political agents and law enforcers enjoy the expanded opportunities for vulture capitalism and corruption yielded by the lockdown as well as the prolonged vacation in the wide spaces of expensive homes and resorts.

The pandemic and its resultant lockdowns have encouraged a stronger fascist trend in many countries, such as imposing stricter police-state measures in the guise of tighter public-health surveillance against new outbreaks; population control measures especially directed against migrant

labor and refugees as “carriers of new diseases”; and steamrolling unpopular legislation and budget priorities in the guise of resetting society into a “new normal.”

Both pandemic and lockdown have also produced deep cultural and ideological impacts. On one hand, the imperialists and other ruling classes have learned to weaponize the public’s fears of a “new, unknown and unseen enemy,” reminiscent of the post-9/11 hysteria against “terrorism” and the anticommunist hysteria of the Cold War era. On the other hand, they are now tightening their state-public or corporate-private hold on the digital or online channels of communication, mass media and entertainment which have proved to serve a critical social-control function and enjoyed massive expansion of user base in the last three months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a health crisis and has seriously aggravated the crisis of the world capitalist system. It has exacerbated inter-imperialist rivalry, especially between the US and China. While the US remains as the No. 1 imperialist power especially with regard to military strength, Russia and China are formidable opponents and continue to develop their military capabilities.

The inter-imperialist rivalry is more fraught than ever with the danger of regional wars and even that of direct inter-imperialist war. As Lenin has pointed out, imperialism means war. There is no peace in the world while imperialist powers ride roughshod over the proletariat and the people and they themselves are driven to struggle for a redivision of the world and enlarge their respective shares of economic territory and client states.

Even while the lockdowns are in effect, the broad masses of the people and their organized anti-imperialist and democratic forces have found ways to discuss the implications and consequences of the situation at various levels, draw up conclusions on the most important issues, make collective decisions and carry out concerted actions to make protests and demands. They have electronic and non-electronic means of communications at the level of local communities, countries and the entire world. They have used noise barrages from their homes and yards to make protests and demands.

They have used various Internet platforms such as independent progressive news sites and blogs, the social media and videoconferencing to spell out their position on the pandemic, unjust lockdowns and other issues involving their rights and the violations of these by the rulers who are daily exposed as incompetent, corrupt and repressive.

While the closing of schools and workplaces created conditions for many wasted hours in forced isolation, it also created conditions for intense study, online group interaction, cultural creativity and technical innovation especially among the youth, intellectuals and professionals who lent their talents and time in the service of people and public facilities in dire need, including embattled health workers in the frontlines against COVID-19. Even under strict lockdown rules or more relaxed quarantine rules, the people in various countries have engaged in mass protest action of varying scales. The masses of Hong Kong have gone back to the streets in great number to fight for democratic autonomy and other demands. Most remarkable of all the mass protests currently are those being held nationwide by African-Americans and the people of all races in the US against racism, police brutality and the unjust economic system as a result of the brazen murder

of George Floyd by the police. Mass actions of solidarity have spread worldwide.

For sure, after the lockdowns are lifted and mass assemblies are permitted, the broad masses of the people will rise even more extensively and intensively against their oppressors and exploiters. Since last year, they have been rising up on a world scale to condemn and oppose the most predatory and brutal manifestations of modern imperialism, such as neoliberalism and fascism. Having come under more oppression and exploitation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, excessive lockdowns and states of emergency, they are impelled to undertake ever more resolute and militant acts of protest and demand for the solution of basic social, economic, and political problems.

We can be certain that the proletariat and people in the imperialist countries will carry out all possible forms of struggle to win the battle for democracy against imperialism and all reaction, prevail over the worsening



crisis of capitalism, end the rule of unbridled neoliberal greed and fascism and the threat of inter-imperialist wars and to aim for the victory of socialism. The revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples for national and social liberation will also grow in strength and advance towards the goal of

socialism. This is the only way to end imperialism and all reaction in any country and in the whole world.

The imperialist and client-states reject and suppress the people's demands for national liberation, democracy, and socialism. But by doing so, they unwittingly arouse the people to wage revolutionary resistance, which is the most effective counter to imperialism and war. They undermine their own position in using tyrannical power, state terrorism and armed counterrevolution, in getting enmeshed in inter-imperialist conflicts and unleashing wars of aggression.

As the crisis of the world capitalist system becomes worse, the imperialist and client-states will escalate the oppression and exploitation of the people, and further plunder and degrade the environment. It is therefore necessary to fight for social, racial, and environmental justice in the comprehensive people's struggle for national liberation, democracy, all-round development and socialism. ###

OVERVIEW: HISTORICAL RISE OF FASCISM AND CURRENT MANIFESTATION IN PANDEMIC

*Contribution to the International Webinar:
Stamp Out Fascism, Build the People's
Resistance*

By **Jose Maria Sison**, *Chairperson Emeritus*
International League of Peoples' Struggle
May 14, 2022



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

After the institutionalization of patriarchy and the private ownership of the means of production (in agricultural land, domesticated animals, pastures and metals in the late barbaric stage of the primitive communal society) the interconnection of despotic leaders, wars by tribes and tribal confederations against each other, the execution of enemy combatants, famine and pestilence became obvious.

In the rise of civilization, larger societies (slave, feudal and capitalist) and even empires based on them arose. Metallurgy displaced the stone tools. Exploiting and exploited classes became well-defined, and the state arose as the coercive instrument for the ruling class to keep the social order. And literacy allowed the passage of mankind from prehistory to history and from lower levels of information and knowledge to higher ones.

The subjugation of the oppressed and exploited people became more “*human*” and “*civilized*”. The winning community in a war against another did

not execute the armed combatants of the defeated army but kept them alive as slaves or beasts of burden. These slaves were used to widen the agricultural fields. When they became too many and too difficult to manage the “*enlightened*” slave masters decided to become landlords and turn the slaves into serfs or rent-paying tenants of the land. Upon the rise of the new means of capitalist production, the bourgeoisie would use extraction of surplus value from the workers to realize wage slavery.

The larger and more complex the class-conflicted society became the greater need for a state as coercive instrument of the ruling class to be able to keep the social order. In history, we have seen the fluctuations of the ruling systems and chief rulers from peaks of tyranny and despotism to the less brutal or more benign. As a matter of course, the worst forms of tyranny and despotism were those that sought to wage war against other communities, suppress the the people in discontent and were incompetent in dealing with the problems of production, famine and plague.

You have huge libraries to read about the histories of the interconnected phenomena of wars of conquest in empire-building, pacification of rebellious people, famine and plague. But I assure you that even if the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in the Book of Revelations of the New Testament representing “*conquest, war, famine and pestilence*” and in the Book of Ezekiel of the Old Testament the “*sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague*” are more products of the literary or religious imagination than history, they reflect the worst that have arisen from class-conflicted societies, whether at war with themselves or with others.

I. Historical Rise of Fascism

At any rate, while there are historical phenomena which we can refer to, such as the open rule of terror, tyranny, despotism, autocracy or authoritarianism from the advent of class-



conflicted society to the present era of modern imperialism and world proletarian revolution, we are concerned with fascism as the topic of discussion in relation to pandemic and other pertinent terrible phenomena that victimize humankind.

The term "*fascism*" directs us to the time that it arose as a movement in 1919 in the aftermath of World War I as the first inter-imperialist war or among monopoly capitalist powers and in reaction to the *Great October Socialist Revolution* of 1917 by the monopoly bourgeoisie and landlord class of Italy. The term was adopted by Mussolini after the fasces, the symbol of power of the Roman empire, and subsequently became the generic term for subsequent brutal and despotic regimes in the industrial monopoly capitalist countries as well as for such regimes of the bureaucrat capitalists and big compradors in underdeveloped countries.

At the outset, let me describe fascism as the advocacy, movement and realization of the open rule of terror by the most reactionary political agents of the monopoly bourgeoisie who are flagrantly anti-communist, ultra-nationalist, racist, irredentist, patriarchalist and misogynist. And then let me try to show the connection between the rise of fascism and the possible stimulus given to it by the so-called Spanish flu of 1918.

The Spanish identity arbitrarily given to this pandemic has overshadowed for a long time the fact that soldiers from Spain, Italy, Germany and other countries who fought in France during World War I had picked up the virus from there. As a consequence, the influenza spread in Spain in the spring of 1918 and became extremely virulent in the summer and autumn of 1918.

But recent research in 2021 also shows that the same influenza pandemic that began in 1918 had a devastating health impact in Italy: 4.1 million Italians contracted influenza and about 500 000 died. And the researchers have discovered and concluded that said pandemic contributed to the rise of fascism in Italy on the basis of the contents of Mussolini's newspaper // *Popolo d'Italia*. Refer to *Am J Public Health*. 2022;112(2):242–247.

In a staff report published on 6 May 2020, researchers from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that German regions with higher mortality rates from the flu virus had a higher vote share for the Nazi Party in the elections of 1932 and 1933. The study showed that high death tolls from the 1918 influenza pandemic had earlier helped the Nazis gain power in “*crucial*” German elections.

The share of votes won by the Nazis was higher where a greater share of the population had died during the pandemic. Around 287,000 people died of influenza in Germany between 1918 and 1920. The research analyzed the link between death rates and other “*extremist*” parties but referred to the Nazis as the most benefited as a “*clear party of the extreme right.*”

In contrast, the Communist Party, saw their vote share decreased where the pandemic had caused more deaths. The author of the report, Kristian Blickle, an economist at the bank's Financial Intermediation Function, said the change in demography caused by the pandemic, coupled with a historical tendency for German society to blame disease outbreaks on foreigners, may have increased support for extremist right-wing politicians.

Given the perceived foreign origins of the virus, a resentment arose for foreigners who were seen as responsible for the pandemic. The vote share won by right-wing extremists was stronger in regions that had historically blamed minorities for medieval plagues. The link between flu fatalities and right-wing support was seen even when cities and regions were controlled for ethnic and religious makeup, unemployment, previous right-wing voting and other characteristics that could be assumed to drive extremist voting. Refer to: *Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism, 1918–1933*
<https://www.ushmm.org> › learn › holocaust › chapter-1

Soon after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Wuhan, China, the Royal United Services Institute of the United Kingdom noted that far-right groups and individuals were exploiting the pandemic by “*promoting disinformation and conspiracy theories to enhance their anti-immigrant or anti-government agendas and attract a new range of followers.*” In the first place, US President Donald Trump, the loudest voice in the entire Western propaganda system, deprecated Covid-19 as the Chinese virus.

In fact, there is more proof to show that the virus was first developed in the US Army's biological warfare laboratory in Fort Detrick in Maryland USA sometime before October 2019 when the US sent a US military athletic

delegation to the participation in the Wuhan Military Olympics. There had been a leak of the deadly virus and the laboratory had to be shut down. Five members of the US military athletic delegation, who circulated in their hotel and market in Wuhan, had been afflicted by the virus earlier in the US and had to be flown out of Wuhan by special US military plane during the military Olympics.

Reports of xenophobia toward people of Chinese and Asian descent have been on the rise in the US and other countries of the Western world. Early on, NBC News reported that more than 30% of Americans have witnessed someone blaming Asian people for the coronavirus pandemic, while a surge in attacks on Asian students occurred across Europe, North America and Australia. Ironically, incidents of xenophobia also arose in China, blaming “*foreigners*” for the spread of coronavirus in the country.

II. Covid-19 Pandemic in Conjunction with the Worst of Monopoly Capitalism

The Covid-19 pandemic emerged after a series of major historical phenomena after World War II in which US imperialism sought to reverse the revolutionary advances of the working class and oppressed peoples and nations in defeating fascism and pushing back colonialism and imperialism, in engaging in socialist revolution and construction, in establishing newly-independent nation states and in pushing forward the national liberation movements.



After War II the US emerged as the No. 1 imperialist power and headed its traditional imperialist allies and client-states in carrying out a *Cold War* to contend with the Soviet Union and defeat the socialist cause and the national liberation movements with anti-communism and neocolonialism.

The *Cold War* would have allowed the US to use nuclear weapons had not the Soviet Union succeeded in making them in 1949 in order to neutralize the US nuclear blackmail and put the US on a nuclear stalemate.

But the US and its traditional imperialist allies still succeeded in waging wars of aggression against the oppressed peoples and nations in the underdeveloped countries and killed 25 to 30 million people from the Korean War to the wars of the “*new world order*” of Bush the senior, especially under the US neoconservative policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Since the latter half of the 1970s, US monopoly capitalism was already reeling from the crisis of overproduction due to the recovery of other imperialist countries previously ruined by World War II as well as due to the high costs of aggressive wars as in Korea and Vietnam. It was baffled by the problem of stagflation and started how it could use monetarism and neoliberalism to solve this problem and how it could use to its advantage the already conspicuous phenomenon of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China.

The conclusive defeat of the *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* in China in October 1976 and the continuous full-blast restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, capped by the collapse of the Soviet revisionist regime and the disintegration of the revisionist-ruled regimes in Eastern Europe in 1991 made the US the winner in the *Cold War* and the sole superpower until the

global capitalist financial crash came in 2008 to start a global economic depression, generate a multipolarity among the old and new imperialist powers (China and Russia) and aggravate the strategic decline of the US.

Since 1991, the world has reverted to a landscape of no socialist power to contend with the imperialist powers but the two big socialist countries themselves have become capitalist adjuncts of the traditional imperialist powers. However, it would not take long before the modern revisionists to be shamed by their false expectations of peace and prosperity as a result of capitulation to the traditional imperialist powers. Yugoslavia was destroyed in a war of aggression by the US and NATO even before the end of the 20th century and the blatant expansion of the US and NATO to the borders of Russia.

The global partnership of the US and China as promoters of neoliberal globalization did not last long as the US criticized the economic and military rise of China during the time of the Obama regime and the Trump regime castigated China for maintaining a two-tier system of state monopoly capitalism and private monopoly capitalism, for manipulating the Chinese market and currency and for stealing US technology from US subsidiary companies as well as from research and development institutes and departments in the US.

Since the second decade of the 21st century, we have become increasingly aware of a world of inter-imperialist contradictions and conflicts. And in the passage from the second to the third decade, we have become sharply aware of the multiple crises afflicting the entire world capitalist system, such as the following:

1. Neoliberalism or the dogma of unbridled private greed has generated a world in which the billionaires of a few countries have grown rich at the expense of more countries and in which the billionaires of specific countries have grown rich at the expense of the people. The billionaires have the utmost freedom to accumulate profits from the depression of wages, tax cutbacks, privatization of public assets, shrinkage of social services, liberalization of trade and investments and denationalization of client-economies.

But at the level of competing and rival imperialist powers, there is now an increasing tendency of protectionism and the use of sanctions by imperialist powers against others in contention. Take note of the trade war now developing between the US and China and the battle of sanctions between Russia and the US-NATO imperialists. With regard to the Covid-19 pandemic, the shrinkage of social services, especially through the privatization of the health system, the rulers increasingly use the coercive apparatuses of the state to impose lockdowns and suppress the freedom of expression.

2. Fascism and war are concomitants of monopoly capitalism as we have seen in the inter-imperialist wars of World War I and II and in succeeding historical periods when US imperialism took the initiative to unleash wars of aggression and used anti-communism, fascism and war hysteria within the imperialist countries as well as within the countries under attack during the *Cold War* and thereafter.

By themselves, the exploiting class use fascism to oppress the people and to compel them to be conscripted and to render their goods and services for the war effort. But long before fascism and war can arise, the suppression of democratic rights by way of monopolizing disinformation or infodemic and enforcing lockdowns in the campaign against Covid-19 can be the pretext, cover and preparation for fascism and war. Just look at the way how Duterte has used the campaign against Covid-19 to enact the so-called Anti-Terror Law and to escalate the armed counterrevolution and the bogus war on illegal drugs.

3. Environmental catastrophe (in the form of global warming and pandemics) has become conspicuous as a result of the rapid and widespread plunder of the environment by monopoly capitalism for the purpose of drawing super-profits from extractive enterprises (mining, logging, plantations and the like). Pandemics have arisen because of the widespread deforestation and disturbance of the various organisms in the forest. To aggravate matters, the imperialists have engaged in experiments of biological warfare

4. The threat of nuclear war has become again more recurrent and louder than ever before because monopoly bourgeois leaders have their trigger fingers on the nuclear bombs, unlike in the past when a major pile of such bombs was under the control of proletarian revolutionaries or communists who had the existence and welfare of humankind in their social conscience. With imperialist powers totally in control of the nuclear bombs, with the exception of those few ones with the DPRK, they are prone to be crazed by fascism and war and to use weapons for annihilating humankind.

It is absolutely necessary for the proletariat and people of the world to rise up and fight for national liberation, democracy and socialism under the present conditions in which the inter-imperialist conflicts are escalating and the Covid-19 pandemic is being used as a pretext for suppressing basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and enabling fascism to arise in the traditional and new imperialist countries and in their puppet states.

As early as on April 2020, the UN Secretary General António Guterres's warned the UN member-states not to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext for repressive measures. He urged Governments to recognize that the threat was the *"virus, not people"*.

As early as December 2020 Civicus Monitor, an alliance of civil society groups which assessed 196 countries, reported a number of governments had used the pandemic as an excuse to curtail rights such as free speech, peaceful assembly and freedom of association. The state of civil liberties around the world is therefore bleak, with 87% of the global population living in countries deemed *"closed"*, *"repressed"* or *"obstructed"*.

The report further states: By using methods such as detention of protesters, excessive use of force, censorship, attacks on journalists, and harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders, many governments have used Covid-19 to "introduce or implement additional restrictions on civic freedoms". It states further: *"The use of detention as the main tactic to restrict protests only shows the hypocrisy of governments using Covid-19 as a pretense to crack down on protests, [as] the virus is more likely to spread in confined spaces like prisons."*

In September 2021, the Amnesty International reported that Covid 19-related restrictions have been used to suppress human rights and constrict civic space, spread misinformation undermining the fight on Covid-19 and infringe on the right to freedom of expression and the right to health. The report called for stopping the use of the pandemic to silence independent reporting, debate and scrutiny; and for lifting all undue restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and guarantee the free flow of information as a key approach to protecting the right to health and enabling an inclusive recovery

According to the report of the International Security (2021): “Across the globe, states have attempted to contain COVID-19 by restricting movement, closing schools and businesses, and banning large gatherings. Such measures have expanded the degree of sanctioned state intervention into civilians' lives. But existing theories of preventive and responsive repression cannot explain why some countries experienced surges in repression after states in Africa initiated COVID-19-related lockdowns. While responsive repression occurs when states quell protests or riots, “opportunistic repression” arises when states use crises to suppress the political opposition. In the US, as millions of protesters took part in the Black Lives Matter movement, the Trump administration responded with excessive force, police



violence and mass detentions. In recent years, several states have enacted restrictive laws which limit people's right to peacefully protest, while across the US, journalists, human rights activists and social activists have been increasingly detained or injured under measures previously adopted to carry out lockdowns and fight the pandemic.###

Paris Climate Talks Are Predetermined By Monopoly Capitalism To Aggravate Climate And Social Injustice And Crises

By **Prof. Jose Maria Sison**

Chairperson

International League of Peoples' Struggle

November 23, 2015

The 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held in Paris from November 30 to December 11, 2015, has been touted as a make-or-break meeting that will produce a new agreement, one that will supposedly serve as bridge after Kyoto Protocol and govern long-term global climate action from 2020 onward.



All roads may lead to Paris in the coming days, but the climate talks are predetermined by monopoly capitalism to aggravate climate and social injustice and the maelstrom of global crises caused by imperialism, especially at a time when Europe and surrounding regions are reeling from worsening economic troubles, political turmoil, massive influx of displaced peoples, and a conflagration of terrorist and rightist violence.

Nevertheless, a great number of people worldwide are determined to hold various protest actions in their own countries and cities, and in Paris as well, to convey their collective call for climate justice and social justice, and to reiterate their resistance against imperialist plunder and onerous impositions of the global capitalist system. The International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) expresses its solidarity with the people, calls on its member organizations to participate in the protest actions, and reiterates its stand against the imperialist system that is behind the climate crisis.

The main greenhouse gas culprits

In every annual COP after the UNFCCC was signed in 1992 and went into force in 1995, the most industrialized nations have vowed to cut down on their carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to arrest runaway global warming. But twenty years later, on the eve of COP21, the world is suffocating and roasting at even higher levels of GHG emissions and global warming, while the ecological crisis has reached unprecedented proportions.

It is now well-established by the scientific community, as represented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that has issued its latest Fifth Assessment Report in 2014, that climate change has reached dangerous levels, with massive and rising emissions of CO₂ and other GHGs as the main culprits. GHG emissions are increasing at ever-faster rates, having surpassed the upper limit for climate balance (350 parts per million in volume) almost 30 years ago, and now hitting a record 402.80 ppm as of mid-2015. This is the result of relentless production and consumption typical of the global capitalist system, especially its long-standing

dependence on fossil fuels for large-scale industrial processes, construction, corporate agriculture, and major transport and communications.

Until recently, the United States remained the topmost producer of GHGs. Because of China's rapid industrial rise, it has become the world's topmost emitter at 29% as of 2013, followed by the US at 15%, and the 28 EU countries taken as a whole at 11%. But since GHGs can stay in the atmosphere for centuries, historical emissions are even more important. The US remains the most responsible in this regard, having the highest cumulative share of GHG emissions in the 1850-2011 period (27%), followed by EU countries (25%). GHG emissions computed per person would also show that the biggest per-capita emitters are the highly industrialized countries led by Canada, the US, Russia, Japan and EU, followed by a few large and fast-developing countries such as China, Brazil, Indonesia, India and Mexico (dubbed as "*emerging economies*").

The impacts of a worsening climate crisis

Rising global average temperatures, as the direct result of high GHG levels, are causing drastic changes in our climate systems and wreaking havoc on ecosystems and peoples. Experts warn that the world has less than a decade to take drastic action before climate change becomes irreversible. Even with all countries working double-time to reduce GHG emissions under the UNFCCC's best-effort scenarios, it is likely that global temperature increases may exceed 1.5°C or even much higher over the rest of the 21st century.

Climate change is most evident in the warming of the atmosphere and ocean, shrinking of the polar ice sheets and worldwide glaciers, and the concurrent rise of sea levels. Year 2014 is the hottest year on record since 1890, with average temperatures 0.74 °C higher than 150 years ago.

Ice cover in the Arctic has been shrinking at 2.7 % per decade. Sea level increases have leaped to an annual average of 3.3 mm from 1993 to 2009.

Consequently, all ecosystems are now adversely affected by extreme weather events, such as intense heat waves, extended droughts, super-cyclones, record-breaking rainfall and snowfall, extensive floods, freak windstorms and tornadoes, and by slow-acting impacts of climate change such as shifts in global wind and water cycles, warmer and longer ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation) cycles, changes in sea ice and river discharge patterns, ocean acidification, permafrost degradation, inundation of low-lying coasts, landslides and other geo-hazards.

Ecosystem disturbances have become more prevalent such as forest fires, pest outbreaks, fish kills, disrupted migratory habits, coral bleaching, and a generally faster rate of species extinction. With ecosystems faltering, human communities and livelihoods face all types of disruption and degradation, especially those dependent on agriculture, forestry, hunting and fisheries. Crop failures, water shortages, desertification, famine and epidemics are becoming more widespread and frequent, affecting particularly the poor and marginalized communities. Women, children and the elderly shoulder the greater cost of these circumstances.

The broader ecological and socio-economic crisis

The climate crisis is at the core of a broader global ecological crisis, and both are tightly intertwined with the recurring and worsening socio-economic crises, geopolitical crises and wars, which in turn are deeply rooted in the capitalist system. The rule of monopoly capital has further intensified all these crises.

Climate change is already wiping 1.6% from the global GDP, and if current trends continue, may lead to 3.2% loss of global GDP by 2030. The losses are especially devastating for poor countries (estimated to lose up to 11% of GDP by 2030), and particularly poor people and poor communities. On top of these severe climate change impacts, neoliberal policies and imperialist globalization have opened up all countries and all ecosystem types to the unabated entry, control and plunder of natural, human, economic and financial resources by monopoly capitalist giants.

In the pursuit of superprofits, the monopoly capitalists ruthlessly plunder forests, minerals, energy reserves, freshwater supplies, agricultural lands and marine areas. In areas already depleted of natural resources, they set up enclaves of sweatshop factories, playground resorts of the rich, and dumping grounds for their toxic wastes. All these lead to more ecological failures, widespread land grabs, breakdown of national economies and traditional livelihoods, rising unemployment, forced migration, distortion of local culture, rampant human rights violations, human trafficking, and other social ills. Existing inequalities based on class, race and gender oppression are thus magnified by climate change impacts.

Of special mention is the emerging and expanding trend of climate refugees, as climate change impacts have started to combine with economic pressures, political turmoil and wars of aggression. The number of people displaced by environmental disasters between 2008 and 2013 has been estimated at 27 million each year on average, spanning 161 countries. At least one leading scientist has already identified a three-year drought that began in 2007, affecting the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, as a major factor that aggravated political conflicts and population movements especially in but not limited to Syria. Studies have shown similar confluences of severe droughts and simmering social conflicts in the Sahel-belt countries of Africa and in Mexico.

Monopoly capitalism offers false climate solutions

On the other hand, monopoly capitalism continuously attempts to avoid the impacts of its self-inflicted crises through various strategies. In facing the climate crisis, the international community had signed the UNFCCC's Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which bound the most industrialized countries to cut their GHG emissions and provide climate finance for underdeveloped countries. But the Protocol, weakened by imperialist states during its entire existence, eventually unraveled. First, its overall GHG reduction targets were too low compared to the much deeper cuts (60-80%) needed to effectively stop global warming. Second, the US did not ratify the Protocol, while Canada withdrew from it. A number of industrialized countries have also balked from signing a second commitment period beyond the expiry of the first commitment period in 2012.

And third, the other monopoly capitalist states also undermined the Protocol by using loopholes under the so-called "*flexibility mechanisms*" and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation action

plan or mechanism) supposedly enhanced in the 2008 COP-14 Poznan to cover three other areas of climate mitigation: conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. This merely created thus a global carbon market that allowed the biggest GHG emitters to wiggle out of their mitigation commitments while creating new forms of financial control.

The UNFCCC's climate finance efforts have turned out to be mostly a corporate-driven and profit-oriented scheme rather than a measure for climate justice. More than ever, monopoly capitalist-driven commodification and financialization have invaded not just goods and services, not just "*intellectual property*" and genetics as in the 1990s, but also increasingly, even the realm of public ecological instruments as expressed in carbon markets, debt-for-nature swaps, and so-called "*payments for ecological services*" (PES).

The monopoly capitalists are conjuring one false climate solution after another, in order to open up new profitable investments while distracting people from addressing the real and deeply rooted social causes of climate change. The same old industrial-style agribusiness schemes are being repackaged and promoted under the "*climate-smart*" label. Geo-engineering schemes, often combined with biotech or nanotech innovations, are made to rely on ultra-high-tech, ultra-large-scale, and ultra-expensive facilities supposedly to fix our ailing biosphere, but which merely expand monopoly-capitalist profiteering while creating new environmental risks.

Dirty and discredited sources of energy such as big dams, nuclear power, biofuels, and even "*redesigned*" fossil fuels are being aggressively

repackaged as clean and renewable sources. Worst of all, imperialism continues to expand the fossil fuel industry through the most destructive and violent means, such as widespread fracking, arctic and deep-sea drilling, and laying down of new pipelines in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

The forthcoming COP21 in Paris has been touted as a milestone because it is mandated to produce a new, comprehensive, and legally binding protocol to deal with climate change beyond 2020. However, the same defects and disputes that hounded Kyoto Protocol to an early demise continue to work against this new agreement. The Paris Summit will predictably fail to satisfy the long-standing demands of the peoples of the world for climate justice and social justice—or even just to satisfy the moderated expectations and demands of most UN member-states.

The real solution in the hands of the people's movement

The International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) joins the rest of the world's peoples, social movements and organizations in calling for a higher level of global climate action not tied to any new protocol that will come out of COP21. People's climate action aspires for climate justice, which demands that the most industrialized countries seriously commit and move to achieve effectively high targets in GHG emissions cuts and compensatory (not predatory) climate finance.

We assert that the global struggle for climate justice is interconnected with the global struggle for social justice, with a common enemy in monopoly capitalism and the imperialist powers as the ultimate causes of climate and social injustice. The real solutions to the climate crisis, and the economic, financial, political and social crises that are intertwined with it, lie in the hands

of the people and movements that are struggling to resist imperialist control and plunder of the world, and which are seeking alternatives to the rotten system of global capitalism. In this regard, the ILPS commits itself to unite and seek solidarity and cooperation with these other forces and movements.

The people should struggle against imperialism, and for climate justice, social justice and democracy on all fronts: through mass campaigns and mobilizations to defend specific rights and win specific reforms within the system, and through national mass movements that can install new governments and build alternative systems based on the people's democratic power. As people's struggles for national liberation and social emancipation advance, draw from each other's strengths and gain victories, we gain more ground in resolving the ecological and social crises in significant stages.

The struggle for climate justice and social justice and against imperialism is ultimately for the world's peoples to establish an alternative social system that is centered on the emancipation of the billions of toiling masses, and national liberation for countries long oppressed by the neocolonial system. Ending monopoly capital's dominance over the planet and people's lives ultimately means building a socialist future for all.###



Burning Questions: Talking With José María Sison About Climate Change, Capitalism and Revolution

Jose Maria Sison

by **Quincy Saul**

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/09/09/burning-questions-talking-with-jose-maria-sison-about-climate-change-capitalism-and-revolution/>

José María Sison is a living legend. Born in 1939 in Cabugao, on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, to a wealthy and connected family, his education and compassion led him to become a revolutionary activist by the age of 20. Today he remains, at the age of 76, a leader of what has been called by the New York Times “*the world’s longest running communist insurgency.*”



1969 he founded the *Communist Party of the Philippines* (CPP) with 12 delegates, representing only a few scores of party members, and he has stayed the course through thick and thin – today it has 10s of 1000s of members. And at no easy price: his revolutionary works earned him nine years in prison, including a year and a half in solitary confinement. Released in 1986, he has lived in exile ever since, and remains on the US terrorist watch list. While no longer involved in operational decisions, he remains a

chief consultant for the *National Democratic Front of the Philippines*, and chairperson of the *International League of Peoples' Struggle*. Not just a politician, Sison was also a professor of English literature, is an esteemed poet, and a winner of the *Southeast Asia WRITE* book award.

Some have recently alleged that the CPP has stagnated intellectually. However, the party's ideological leadership seems to be effective, as even the detractors admit. As previously reported on Counterpunch, the *New Peoples Army* operates throughout 20% of the countryside of the Philippines, on 100 fronts, across 70 provinces, 800 municipalities, 9000 barrios and 8000 villages. Is this 21st century Maoism a blast from the past, or is it the only promise of a future for a country with the highest income disparity in Asia, where a quarter of the population lives on less than \$1 a day? Benedict Anderson has written of the "*historical vertigo*" of the Philippines: as visionary forerunner of anti-colonial movements in the region, today it is home to arguably the strongest Left in Southeast Asia. Here we learn from Sison about how he translates vertigo to victory, as he responds the burning questions of 21st century politics and revolution.

How have ecological crises, and particularly the catastrophe of Haiyan, effected the ideology and practices of revolutionaries working above and underground in the Philippines?

JMS: The revolutionaries in the Philippines who work in both the urban and rural areas have always been conscious of the necessary relationship of nature and society or that of the environment and the people who produce new things of use and exchange value from the objects, means and conditions provided by the environment. The ecological crises and

particularly the catastrophe of *Haiyan* serve to raise and sharpen the consciousness of the revolutionaries about the environmental issue and the urgent need to act on it.

The monopoly capitalist firms have been responsible for the wanton use of fossil fuel and carbon dioxide emissions in the Philippines, for the rapid deforestation – which has removed the shield to typhoons, caused soil erosion, prolonged droughts and floods together with landslides – and for the rapid expansion of mining and plantations, which use chemicals that poison the streams and kill marine life. Due to global warming, the surface of the Pacific Ocean has warmed and become the speedway for more frequent and stronger typhoons hitting the Philippines.

As a revolutionary strategist, what advice do you offer to those who are dedicating themselves to the global struggle for climate justice?

JMS: I wish to advise all those who dedicate themselves to the global struggle for climate justice to stand for it militantly as a distinct cause, and at the same time, to seek solidarity and cooperation with those who dedicate themselves to the struggle for social justice. They face a common enemy in monopoly capitalism and the imperialist powers which are the cause of climate and social injustice.

The global struggle for climate justice is interconnected with the global struggle of the people for social justice. The environmental crisis and the threat to the very existence of humankind are coming to the fore, concurrently with the recurrent and ever worsening economic, financial and social crises of the world capitalist system. The constant attempts of

monopoly capitalism to seek superprofits and accumulate capital by increasing the organic composition of their capital – adopting higher technology, disemploying so many workers everywhere and using cheap labor and buying dirt cheap raw materials from the underdeveloped countries – have wrought havoc on the people and the environment.

The grave abuses and injustices inflicted by monopoly capitalism and by its local agents are driving the broad masses of the people to revolt against their exploiters and oppressors and to fight for a fundamentally new and better world. Thus, the forces of anti-imperialism, democracy and socialism are resurgent. Within this context, the exponents of climate justice must unite with those of social justice. In this regard, I invite them to participate in the 5th International Assembly of the *International League of Peoples' Struggle*, because this league pursues the struggle for both climate and social justice.

What are your perspectives on ecosocialism as an emerging ideological orientation at the intersection of social and environmental crisis and struggle? (For instance, The Ecosocialist Manifesto / Belem Declaration of 2009, The Enemy of Nature, by Joel Kovel, or The Plan Patria 2013-2019 of the Venezuelan government.)

JMS: Monopoly capitalism is the plunderer of both the labor power of the working class and the natural resources used in the process of production. It is driven by the profit motive to exploit, pollute and destroy the environment without minding the lethal consequences to the very existence of humankind. As the social and environmental crisis worsens, it is necessary for the working class and the rest of the people to struggle against monopoly

capitalism, to establish the power of the working class, to protect the environment and fight for socialism.

The *International League of Peoples' Struggle*, which I chair, studies the various perspectives, like those in publications that you have mentioned, to adopt points for strengthening our own perspective. We advocate the most effective line and measures for stopping and rolling back global warming, and we strive to arouse, organize and mobilize the working class and the people for the anti-imperialist and socialist cause against monopoly capitalism, which is clearly the biggest culprit responsible for the social and environmental catastrophe that we face.

What should the ideological orientation of the revolutionary movement be to mining in the Philippines? Many indigenous peoples and environmentalists oppose mining altogether, in favor of an ancestral mode of production in harmony with the ecosystem, a perspective which found internationalist expression this year around the International People's Conference on Mining 2015. Others in the revolutionary movement see mining not only as an indispensable source of revenue, but as prerequisite for passing through the necessary "stages" toward socialism (primitive accumulation, industrialization, formation of proletariat, etc). This is also a burning issue from India to Ecuador, where indigenous cosmovision confronts proletarian developmentalism over what course the revolutionary movement should take. As Arundhati Roy asks about the future of revolution in India, "can we leave the bauxite in the mountain?"

JMS: The given situation in the Philippines under the hegemony of the US and other imperialist powers and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords, is that mining firms can be owned totally by foreign monopoly firms. Limitless truckloads of raw mineral ores from so many parts of the country are being shipped out at a rapid rate to China, Japan and other countries for processing. Some mining firms specializing in precious metals like gold, silver, platinum and palladium fly them out by helicopter to ships waiting at sea.

Under the present circumstances, it is just for the indigenous peoples and for environmentalists to oppose totally the unrestricted mining by the imperialist and local reactionaries for their own narrow benefit at great damage to the entire people, economy and environment. But it is wrong to glorify underdevelopment and condone the social environment of widespread poverty, malarial swamps, malnutrition and disease in the name of a romantic, idyllicized communalism. The new democratic or socialist system shall guarantee the wise utilization of natural



resources, protection of the environment and the free and prior informed consent of the indigenous communities as well as the prior provision of benefits and sharing of prospective benefits.

There would be wiser utilization of natural resources and a higher level of environmental protection and conservation of the national patrimony if the

Filipino people themselves, under a people's democratic or socialist government, process the raw materials from the primary stage to the secondary and tertiary stages. It is sheer nonsense to reduce the Filipino people to a choice of underdevelopment under Filipinos who merely keep their rich natural resources in the ground or foreign monopoly capitalists who take away the nonreplaceable raw mineral ores. Socialism entails a further development of the forces and relations of production.

Under present conditions of big comprador-landlord rule in the Philippines, the foreign monopoly capitalists freely get large areas of mining concessions from the national government. And in collusion with corrupt government officials, they often use traditional chieftains of indigenous communities to circumvent the requirement of free and prior informed consent of the entire community and get a series of small mining permits to escape formal environmental regulations by the national government and cover large areas to mine. But when the revolutionary forces are around to arouse, organize and mobilize the people against the mining companies, then the indigenous peoples, their revolutionary kinsmen and even the traditional leaders unite against the mining companies.

What are your perspectives on the left-wing governments of South America? Is it just state capitalism and bourgeois democracy, or do you see genuine revolutionary potential and promise in the governments of Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, etc?

JMS: I see a certain measure of what is revolutionary in the left-wing governments in South America. They are assertive of national independence against imperialist impositions, and they carry out feasible

measures of social justice and social welfare. But the Left in power co-exist with the exploiting classes in society and these also have representatives in government who are in active opposition. No revolution has yet brought down the exploiting classes definitively. Such exploiters make trouble against the Bolivarian government in Venezuela, especially because the oil income has decreased. They also do so against the other progressive governments.

But while these left-wing governments stand and fight for the interests of their people, they have our solidarity and support. We cannot give them up, especially because the imperialist powers are now being buffeted by a new crisis that is worse than the one that started in 2008. The revolutionary potential of workers and the rest of the people is growing and can become a real force on an unprecedented scale. The neoliberal policy has been so extremely exploitative and so destructive that social upheavals and revolutions can burst out soon enough on an unprecedented scale.

What are your perspectives on the recent ideological transformation of Kurdish revolutionaries (in particular the YPG) in Rojava and other parts of Turkey, towards a feminist, ecological and anti-nationalist ideological orientation?

JMS: Even if the Kurdish revolutionaries speak of stateless democracy and repudiation of the nation-state and nationalism under their concept of democratic confederalism, I would still say that they have what amounts to organs of political power at various levels. Otherwise, there would be anarchy and no sufficient level of political unity, government and command over armed personnel in order to fight powerful enemies. In fact, I am hoping

that the Kurds in Iraq, Syria and North Kurdistan will compose a confederation of states someday. The very prospect of that should be terrifying to Erdogan and the Turkish reactionaries. As regards feminism, gender equality and concern for ecology, these can be adopted as guiding principles and as active factors in any coherent and effective system of governance or administration.

Many credit the Zapatista uprising of 1994, and subsequent international gatherings hosted by them, as game-changers in the world of radical politics, from repudiating traditional vanguardist parties to affirming the revolutionary subjectivity of indigenous peoples. How was the Zapatista uprising received and understood by the movement in the Philippines?

JMS: The revolutionary movement in the Philippines welcomed the Zapatista uprising of 1994 and was impressed for a number of years by the ability of the Zapatistas to receive so many foreign visitors and even host international gatherings. But subsequently we also became concerned that the leadership of the Zapatistas was assuring the Mexican central government that they had ceased to extend or encourage armed struggle beyond Chiapas and were already receiving big amounts of NGO funding from abroad.

It can suffice to have a broad united front to bring about a successful popular uprising against the local authority in Chiapas, or even against an authoritarian government like that of Somoza, Duvalier, Marcos, Mobutu or Suharto. But there is yet no proof of a fullsome socialist revolution without the leadership of a revolutionary party of the proletariat. The party form of

political organization is still the favored way of concentrating the revolutionary will of the proletariat for socialism. And of course, there is yet no class other than the proletariat that is most determined to wage a socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie.

In the fields of art, culture, and literature, what do you believe are the most important and inspiring works which help us to comprehend and confront the challenges of 21st century?

JMS: I am sure that there are already important and inspiring works in the fields of art, culture and literature which help us to comprehend and confront the challenges of the 21st century. These works are being created as a reflection of and in conjunction with the suffering, sacrifices, struggles, successes and aspirations of peoples, such as those in the Philippines and India, who are waging new democratic revolutions, with a socialist perspective. Such creative works are waiting to be recognized and appreciated on a global scale.

I am most acquainted with revolutionary literary and artistic works in the Philippines. These are imbued with the spirit of serving the people. They expose the forces of oppression and exploitation and inspire the workers, peasants and the rest of the people to wage revolutionary struggle against imperialism and reaction, and for a fundamentally new and better world of greater freedom, democracy, social justice, development, cultural progress and international solidarity. There are many excellent writers, artists and cultural workers. They are well organized and join the protest mass actions as well as the people's war in the countryside.

They are guided by Marxist aesthetics and by Mao's Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art and his other works on cultural work and propaganda. They have studied the works created under the guidance of socialist realism when the Soviet Union was still socialist, the creative works of Left American writers in the 1930s and the revolutionary works in socialist China up to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. At the same time, they break new paths in adopting and developing subjects and styles in the various literary and art forms.

It is not surprising that the most important and inspiring works are being done in countries where the revolutionary struggles are most intense. In this regard, I am optimistic that as the social and ecological crises worsen, more people will rise up in both underdeveloped and developed countries. Their revolutionary struggles will generate the impetus for literary and artistic creations by the people and for the people through various forms and means – real and digital. The writers, artists and cultural workers are a growing major component of the revolutionary movement on a global scale.

Intensify the people's struggles against imperialism to address the root cause of global warming – International League of Peoples' Struggle

Statement of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS)

Issued by the Office of the Chairperson

For nearly ten days starting this November 28, 2011, governments, industry, funding institutions will be meeting in Durban, South Africa for the 17th Conference of Parties (COP17) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).



Concurrently, thousands of people from around the world will hold protest actions and various other activities to convey their collective resistance against the root cause of global warming—imperialist aggression and plunder. People's organizations and social movements will converge in Durban to unmask the hypocritical character of the conference and seek an end to the continued destruction and unrestrained plunder of the environment by monopoly capital.

Since the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, governments kept on making promises from conference to conference to safeguard the environment and curb greenhouse gas concentrations to stop arrest global warming. From 1995, when the UNFCCC entered into force, the world is

brought no closer to reducing emissions as the global ecological crisis reaches colossal proportions.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has also noted that the year 2010 is one of the top three warmest years since 1850 with the decade from 2001-2010 being the warmest ten-year period on record. Concentration of the main greenhouse gases has reached the highest level recorded since pre-industrial times despite the global recession and slowdown in previous years.

In pursuit of monopoly profits, transnational corporations and their governments continues to pump massive amounts of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere. Their continuing plunder and breakdown of the world's ecosystems coupled with global warming will bring more calamities, disasters, destruction, and deaths to entire communities and countries. Even the International Panel on Climate Change of the UNFCCC has linked global warming to increased extreme weather events.

The stage for the failure in Durban has been set long before this week. The United States, the only industrialized country that refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, succeeded in derailing the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen and in Cancun. There the total carbon emissions cut pledged by capitalist countries are much lower than the pledge made by developing countries and are insufficient to limit global temperature increase to below 2°C.

Experts are now warning that the world has less than a decade to alter our current emission rates before climate change becomes irreversible. Instead

of committing deep and drastic cuts, monopoly capital and their governments push profit-driven and market- oriented responses that have dismally failed to stem the increase of greenhouse gas emissions. The false technological solutions they promote and carry out instead further endanger the world and aggravate global warming until one more global catastrophe occurs.

Oceans are fast acidifying and terrestrial ecosystems are failing. Current commitments are expected to cause 2.5 to 5°C global temperature increase towards the end of 21st century which will be catastrophic and devastating to nations and peoples of the world. The planet is heading towards environmental catastrophe under monopoly capital: climate change, ocean acidification, ozone depletion, global freshwater use, loss of biodiversity, and chemical pollution all threaten our future unless we act immediately.

Various initiatives from people's movements and progressive sectors to influence the talks will be seen to come to fruition this coming week. We support the call to Occupy COP and other such actions in Durban to highlight the unequal relations between the imperialist and developing countries in both historical emissions and their voice inside the COP 17 framework. The poor people of the world remain more vulnerable to enhanced hazards due to climate change.

We should make it clear that the problem is that as those who pay lip service to environmental concerns but deliberately refuse to come up with a binding international agreement on climate change, the monopoly capitalists wantonly continue unabated control, exploitation, and consumption of world

resources at the expense of the impoverished people and ravaged environments of the world.

The imperialist countries use and manipulate the Conference of Parties to push and adopt their interests and schemes to profit more on climate issues such as the clean development mechanisms (CDM), the multi-billion dollar Green Climate Fund to be handled by the World Bank and REDD+ or Reduction of Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation schemes that can be utilized by private companies like oil, mining and logging companies for further resource extraction and not for forest protection.

Changing this situation and stopping global warming goes beyond Durban. We must expand and intensify the worldwide resistance of the people in order to stop the global overproduction for profit and enable the world to move towards a model that is centred on ending poverty, improving the quality of life, and ensuring basic material and social needs for all.

END MONOPOLY CAPITALISM TO ARREST CLIMATE CHANGE

Jom Bie

By **Prof. Jose Maria Sison**

Chairperson, International League of Peoples' Struggle

7 December 2009

Human societies have created the bases of our survival, sustenance and advancement through the use of our natural resources in production with rudimentary tools and rising levels of science and technology. Yet in no time in history has environmental destruction been systematically brought about in most parts of the world.

The people of the world face today global poverty, economic wars and environmental crises. They are confronted by an escalating, more rapacious and vicious campaign of plunder by monopoly capitalism. This aggravates the already devastated and polluted natural environment.

The massive dumping of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere by the operations of monopoly capitalist firms in the energy industries, manufacturing, transportation, industrial agriculture, mining, construction,



etc. is now generating climatic changes that are causing massive devastation and loss of human lives around the world.

The unprecedented rise in GHG emissions coincided with the onset of the capitalist system at the industrial revolution and its attendant intensive use of machines, fossil fuels for transportation and energy. The anarchic, wasteful and pollutive capitalist production for profit has put our world into the brink of destruction. Under a system where profit is the primary objective of social production, the environment and our ecosystems are reduced to being a source of raw materials and dumping grounds for wasters.

Plunder and pollution of the environment have made victims of poor communities many times over. These are the same communities that are also the most vulnerable to environmental backlashes, which come in the form of floods, droughts and other occurrences triggered or heightened by the prevailing imbalances in the ecosystem. Women and children shoulder the greater cost of these circumstances because of wider risks to their health and added complications to their productive and reproductive functions.

The trend of rapid environmental changes both at the global and national level is expected to bring about even more massive devastation and loss of human lives in the future. It is clear from the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report, and subsequent studies, that warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea levels.

The increase in global surface temperature has made the past decade and a half the warmest years since the 1850s. An increase of 0.75 degrees Celsius in the past century was observed over the world. Rates of sea level increase have leaped from an average of 1.8 mm annually (from 1961) to 3.1 mm/yr (from 1996). The rate of shrinking of ice cover in the Arctic was observed to be 2.7 % per decade, which more than double in summer to 7.4 %. Recently, the Northwest passage was clear throughout the Arctic circle. Increased incidence of intense tropical cyclones and sea level rise has been observed putting coastal areas at risk.

The climate has been altered by changes in greenhouse gases (GHGs), aerosols, land-cover and solar radiation input. It was clear in the Nobel Prize winning report of the IPCC that GHGs have increased due to human activities with an increase of 70% in the last 3 decades. CO₂ emissions have increased 80% in the same period.

While global warming has already brought extreme impacts on livelihood and survival, especially on vulnerable communities, “free market” globalization policies have opened up the rest of the world to the unhampered entry, control and exploitation of raw natural resources and of people by monopoly capitalist banks and firms. Atrocious campaigns of wars of aggression have been waged especially by US monopoly capital to expand its economic territory and gain direct or tighter control of land and natural resources.

Systematic and unabated deforestation through rampant industrial logging has multiplied at ever increasing rates. The destruction of the world’s forests has also led to the conversion of agricultural plantations for export-oriented

crops, farms for cattle raising or monoculture tree plantations. The relentless extraction of mineral ores and wanton destruction by mining multinational corporations (MNCs) in Asia Pacific, Latin America and African countries that are naturally endowed with rich mineral deposits persists while they leave massive environmental destruction and pollution, widespread landlessness and displacement, loss of livelihood, distortion of local culture, and rampant human rights violations to the peoples of these regions in their wake.

Asia, which holds more than half of the world's population, has less than 36% of the world's water resources and almost half of the population in developing countries are exposed to polluted water sources. The contamination of air, water and land brought about by products and production processes mainly from the industrial and manufacturing plants of MNCs continue. These large-scale factories remain the top contributors of significant pollutants such as toxic and hazardous wastes in the world.

More and more underdeveloped countries (including India and China) have also become major dumping grounds for the wastes of industrial countries. The dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes are mounting and alarming. Additionally, chemicals and obsolete technologies proven to be harmful to the environment and/or human health and that are already banned in the industrial countries are continually foisted on underdeveloped countries.

The occupation of Iraq by the US (and the 'Coalition of the Willing') has given the latter direct control over the vast oil resources of Iraq and has consolidated US domination over the world's oil resources. After toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the US has gained more political foothold in

Central Asia and South Asia and further access to the oil and gas resources in these parts of the world. The US launched its “second front against terrorism” targeting the Philippines, Indonesia and Southeast Asia— a region known for its oil, natural gas and other natural resources. It has unceasingly undermined the government of Venezuela, which has the biggest oil resources in Latin America and is continuously expanding its influence in other Latin American countries (Colombia) and several African countries to tap potential oil and other mineral resources.

Foreign direct investments in energy all over the world are increasing and control over these resources are transferred from nations to a few energy companies. Even the technologies needed for the use of alternative energy in solar and wind are limited to industrialized countries. The drive for biofuels has raised concerns over its long-term sustainability and actual contribution to climate change. Large tracts of forests have been lost in Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia due to conversion of forests to oil-palm plantations and more biofuel plantations have been earmarked in other countries like the Philippines.

The recent wars of aggression of the US and its allies have not only increased the production, sale and use weapons of mass destruction but have also caused the massive destruction and contamination of human property, health and environment (i.e. use of depleted uranium, etc.) in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and other war-ravaged countries. Forest clearings and land conversions necessitated by continued military exercises in different parts of the world led by the US pollute the environment and the destruction of natural habitats. Toxic wastes from current and previous US military bases continue to wreak ecological havoc in the surrounding areas.

US military joint exercises bring with them not only direct US military aggression but the dangerous weapons and waste from these activities.

The United States is currently the number one producer of GHGs, emitting more than 28% of all the historical GHGs emitted since 1840 worldwide. About 84% of US GHG emissions arise from the petroleum related energy and electrical power sectors. The US is also the biggest processor and unregulated user of oil and petroleum products all over the world.

Yet the US government has refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty signed by 169 countries which aims to reduce global levels of carbon dioxide and five other GHG emissions by 5.2% from their 1990 levels. It is also the US that remains adamant in refusing to commit to long-term and rapid reductions of emissions in the ongoing negotiations for new commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen.

Primary emitter countries such as the US and G8 countries have the principal responsibility to change their production activities and consumption of energy for genuinely sustainable solutions to the ecological crisis. At the same time, they must also bear the cost of reducing GHGs and building the capacity of vulnerable communities in poor countries to withstand climate change impacts which they have caused. Developing countries still require adequate energy and infrastructure for the basic needs and social development of their people, hence, should not be denied genuine sustainable development and must not be forced to carry the burden of meeting carbon emission reduction targets for the world while industrialized countries refuse to do so.

Instead of pursuing comprehensive mitigation of their emissions by engaging in changes in social production, industrialized countries use carbon offset mechanisms and emissions trading projects that offload the burden of carbon mitigation and reduction towards developing countries. These distort development activities in these countries while maintaining the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production activities of industrialized countries. Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) and carbon trading effectively marketize carbon emissions and essentially shuffles around responsibility to curb emissions.

International financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank (WB) and other regional banks are becoming more aggressive in pushing for “free market” and business-friendly false solutions to climate change related problems. Programs such as the Climate Investment Fund of the WB do not differ from their previous so-called development projects that have violated human rights, displaced communities, destroyed the environment and supported militarization in the past. These initiatives of the IFIs also give them leverage to influence the outcome of the UNFCCC negotiations in Copenhagen to provide new opportunities for profit-making by monopoly capitalist firms who want to take advantage of the climate crisis.

These include proposals such as massive geo-engineering solutions that do not address the root cause of the emissions and instead push untested and unproven but potentially profitable technologies without due consideration of their ecological and social consequences. On the other hand, personal and individual reduction of carbon emissions such as shifts to compact fluorescent light bulbs, switching to biodegradable products are mere token responses and short sighted if they are not framed within larger political and

economic conditions which have vastly accelerated the rate of global warming. In any case, poor communities would not have the capacity to engage in these actions unless their immediate economic and social problems are first addressed.

Indeed, climate change already aggravates other environmental problems that poor communities have to face as a result of imperialist globalization's ever-increasing destruction of our ecology. It is no longer a question that human activity has produced dangerous climate interference but on how to avoid catastrophic effects that could affect more than half of the world's population that are most vulnerable to climate change. Industrialized countries should commit to real targets and not shift the burden to underdeveloped countries. The capacity of local communities to respond to disasters should be strengthened. Community-based disaster response, monitoring and mitigation should be undertaken, and livelihood should be provided for those who are vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Great advances have been made in information technology, robotics, genetics, agriculture, and medicine, yet are not being applied towards solving fundamental problems of humankind, such as the breakdown of health systems, famine and hunger, ecological destruction, and social decay and disintegration. Instead, unbridled monopoly capitalist globalization has opened up third world resources for the use of TNCs extracting raw materials while leaving their pollution and emissions to the host communities.

The rapid destruction of the environment is a direct result of the rapid, unchecked appropriation of the world's resources for the benefit of a few.

Increased pressure for the quest for wealth places increased pressure on the environment and environmental destruction. The poor, who are most vulnerable, are subjected to these environmental impacts while trying to provide subsistence level production for themselves. Existing environmental and social problems aggravated by global warming will not abate until the plunder of the world for monopoly capital's greed for profits end.

In order to preserve the world's intrinsic and practical value for human development, we need to fundamentally reorient production and consumption based on human needs rather than for the boundless accumulation of profit for a few. Society must take collective control of productive resources to meet the needs of sustainable social development and avoid overproduction, overconsumption and overexploitation of people and the environment which are inevitable under the prevailing monopoly capitalist system.

We have seen how communities throughout the world have remain resolute and determined to struggle for their rights and defend their natural resources because it is not only their present but also their future at stake. The oppressed peoples and nations are more determined than ever before to wage revolutionary struggles for national liberation and democracy and look forward to this socialist future. As the imperialist powers scrambling to preserve global capitalism, we, the people, must struggle harder and be more effective in waging militant anti-imperialist struggles for greater freedom, democracy, social justice, development, ecological sustainability, solidarity and peace.

To arrest climate change, we need to put an end to this systematic plunder of the environment for the superprofits of corporations in industrialized countries. To arrest climate change, we need to organize and defend our future against this parasitic and moribund system. To arrest climate change, we need to end monopoly capital's dominance over our lives and build a socialist future.###

From John Bellamy Foster, Marx's Ecology in Historical Perspective, Monthly Review.



MARX ON ECOLOGY

Marx's concept of the metabolic rift is the core element of this ecological critique. The human labour process itself is defined in */Capital/* as 'the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between man and nature, the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence'.¹⁰ <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj96/foster.htm#10> It follows that the rift in this metabolism means nothing less than the undermining of the 'everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence'. Further there is the question of the sustainability of the earth—ie the extent to which it is to be passed on to future generations in a condition equal or better than in the present. As Marx wrote:

/From the standpoint of a higher socio-economic formation, the private property of particular individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as private property of one man in other men. Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not owners of the

earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations as **boni patres familias** / [good heads of the household].¹¹
<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj96/foster.htm#11>

The issue of sustainability, for Marx, went beyond what capitalist society, with its constant intensification and enlargement of the metabolic rift between human beings and the earth, could address. Capitalism, he observed, 'creates the material conditions for a new and higher synthesis, a union of agriculture and industry on the basis of the forms that have developed during the period of their antagonistic isolation'. Yet in order to achieve this 'higher synthesis', he argued, it would be necessary for the associated producers in the new society to 'govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way'—a requirement that raised fundamental and continuing challenges for post-revolutionary society.¹²
<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj96/foster.htm#12>

In analysing the metabolic rift Marx and Engels did not stop with the soil nutrient cycle, or the town-country relation. They addressed at various points in their work such issues as deforestation, desertification, climate change, the elimination of deer from the forests, the commodification of species, pollution, industrial wastes, toxic contamination, recycling, the exhaustion of coal mines, disease, overpopulation and the evolution (and co-evolution) of species.

After having the power and coherence of Marx's analysis of the metabolic rift impressed on me in this way, I began to wonder how deeply embedded such ecological conceptions were in Marx's thought as a whole. What was

there in Marx's background that could explain how he was able to incorporate natural-scientific observations into his analysis so effectively? How did this relate to the concept of the alienation of nature, which along with the alienation of labour was such a pronounced feature of his early work? Most of all, I began to wonder whether the secret to Marx's ecology was to be found in his materialism. Could it be that this materialism was not adequately viewed simply in terms of a materialist conception of /human/ history, but also had to be seen in terms of /natural/ history and the dialectical relation between the two? Or to put it somewhat differently, was Marx's materialist conception of history inseparable from what Engels had termed the 'materialist conception of nature'?¹³ <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj96/foster.htm#13> Had Marx employed his dialectical method in the analysis of both?

I first became acutely aware of the singular depth of Marx's ecological insights through a study of the Liebig-Marx connection. In 1862 the great German chemist Justus von Liebig published the seventh edition of his pioneering scientific work, /Organic Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology/ (first published in 1840). The 1862 edition contained a new, lengthy and, to the British, scandalous introduction. Building upon arguments that he had been developing in the late 1850s, Liebig declared the intensive, or 'high farming', methods of British agriculture to be a 'robbery system', opposed to rational agriculture.¹⁶ <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj96/foster.htm#6> They necessitated the transportation over long distances of food and fibre from the country to the city—with no provision for the recirculation of social nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, which ended up contributing to urban waste and pollution in the form of human and animal wastes. Whole countries were robbed in this way of the nutrients of their soil.

For Liebig this was part of a larger British imperial policy of robbing the soil resources (including bones) of other countries. 'Great Britain', he declared:

/ ...deprives all countries of the conditions of their fertility. It has raked up the battlefields of Leipsic, Waterloo and the Crimea; it has consumed the bones of many generations accumulated in the catacombs of Sicily; and now annually destroys the food for a future generation of three millions and a half of people. Like a vampire it hangs on the breast of Europe, and even the world, sucking its lifeblood without any real necessity or permanent gain for itself./⁷ <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj96/foster.htm#7>

International League of Peoples' Struggles Commission 13

Concern on science and technology for the people and development, environmental protection against plunder, pollution and the destruction of the basic foundations of human life

www.ilps2001.com

On Climate Change and the Environment

Throughout the ages, human societies have created the bases of our survival, sustenance and advancement in using our natural resources through science and technology. Yet in no time in history has environmental destruction been systematically brought about in most corners of the world. We encounter a situation today that while the world faces global poverty, economic wars and environmental crises, we face a



renewed, more rapacious and vicious campaign of plunder that aggravates the already devastated and polluted natural environment.

While global warming have already brought extreme impacts, especially on vulnerable communities, free market globalization policies have opened up the rest of the world to pave the way for the unhampered entry, control and exploitation of raw natural resources and of people. More recently, atrocious

campaigns of wars of aggression have been waged to expand its economic territories and gain direct or tighter control of land and natural resources.

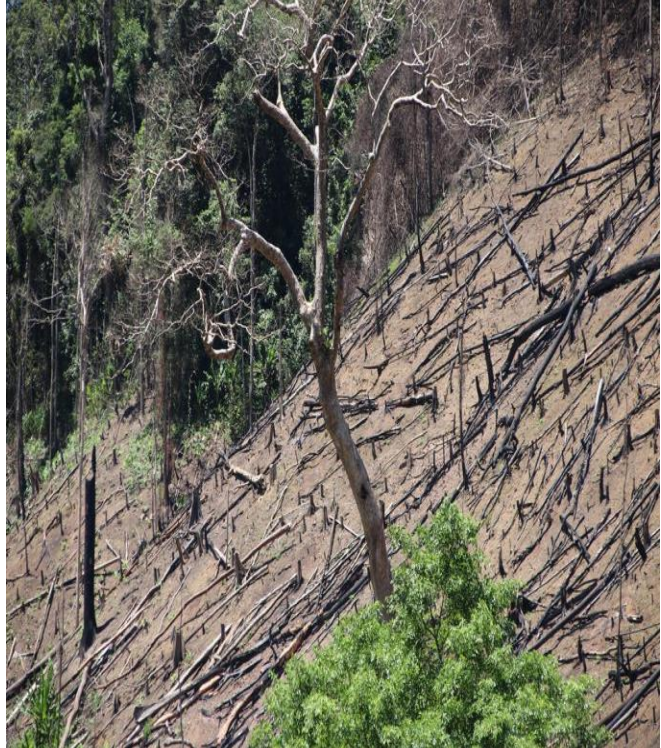
This plunder and pollution of the environment has made victims of poor communities many times over. Large-scale use of pesticides have resulted in the poisoning of workers, peasants, and their families, who barely have the means to protect themselves from their hazardous effects. These same communities are also the most vulnerable to environmental backlashes, which come in the form of floods, droughts and other occurrences triggered or heightened by the prevailing imbalances in the ecosystem. Women and children shoulder the greater cost of these circumstances because of wider risks to their health and added complications to their productive and reproductive functions.

Deforestation

Systematic and unabated deforestation through rampant industrial logging has multiplied at ever increasing rates. The destruction of the world's forests also led to the conversion of agricultural plantations for export-oriented crops, farms for cattle raising or monoculture tree plantations.

For underdeveloped countries (especially in Asia and Latin America), the forests remain as one of the main resources available for exports that meet

the increasing demand for cheap and plentiful wood in Europe, Japan and the United States. About three quarters of the world's commercial timber output is utilized by only one quarter of its population.



Over the period 1980-1990, the loss of total forest area in Asia reached 8.2%, 6.1% in Latin America and 4.8% in Africa leading to the loss of 15

million hectares of forests every year. The *FAO's State of the World's Forests 2007* reports a net forest loss of 20,000 hectares per day globally.

Mining

The relentless extraction of mineral ores and wanton destruction by mining multinational corporations (MNCs) in Asia Pacific, Latin America and African countries that are naturally endowed with rich mineral deposits persists. These mining MNCs are ever more determined to continue their destructive and exploitative commercial mining in these regions.

Like logging, commercial mining by these MNCs does not lead to development but only brings massive environmental destruction and pollution, widespread landlessness and displacement, loss of livelihood, distortion of local culture, and rampant human right violations to the peoples of these regions.

Water

The most alarming trend is the move to control one of the most essential necessity of man: water. Only 2.53 percent of the water in the world is freshwater and two-thirds of these are in glaciers and snow cover. The biggest MNCs in the water industry have initiated the privatization of water distribution services in both the developed and underdeveloped countries as the first step toward the privatization and commodification of all aspects of water.

Asia, which holds more than half of the world's population, has less than 36% of the world's water resources and almost half of the population in developing countries are exposed to polluted water sources. Already, the multi-national corporation-instigated construction of mega-dams and other water infrastructures have put them in a strategic position to eventually gain total control of the water resources. Iraq's occupation by the US has positioned the former to control not only Iraq's oil resources but also the largest water resources found in the Middle East.

Pollution

The contamination of air, water and land brought about by products and production processes mainly from the industrial and manufacturing plants of MNCs continue. These large-scale factories remain the top contributors of significant pollutants such as toxic and hazardous wastes in the world.

More and more underdeveloped countries (including India and China) have also become major dumping grounds for the wastes of industrial countries. The dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes are mounting and alarming.

Additionally, chemicals and obsolete technologies proven to be harmful to the environment and/or human health and that are already banned in the industrial countries are continually foisted in underdeveloped countries.

Oil, energy and natural gas

The occupation of Iraq by the US (and the '*Coalition of the Willing*') gave the latter direct control over the vast oil resources of Iraq (estimated at 112 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and over 250 billion of potential reserves), the biggest in the world and, consolidated their domination over the world's oil resources.

After toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the US gained more political foothold in Central Asia and South Asia and further access to the oil and gas resources in these parts of the world. The US launched its "*second front against terrorism*" targeting the Philippines, Indonesia and Southeast Asia- a region known for its oil, natural gas and other natural resources. It has unceasingly undermined the government of Venezuela, which has the biggest oil resources in Latin America and is continuously expanding its influence in other Latin American countries (Colombia) and several African countries to tap potential oil and other mineral resources.

Investments in energy all over the world is increasing and control over these resources are transferred from nations to a few energy companies. Even the technologies needed for the use of alternative energy in solar and wind are limited to industrialized countries. The drive for biofuels has raised concerns over its long-term sustainability and actual contribution to climate change. Large tracts of forests have been lost in Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia due

to conversion of forests to oil-palm plantations and more biofuel plantations have been earmarked in other countries like the Philippines.

Wars of aggression, nuclear weapons and the environment

The recent campaign on the wars of aggression of the US and its allies have not only increased the production, sale and use weapons of mass destruction but have also caused the massive destruction and contamination of human property, health and environment (i.e. use of depleted uranium etc) in the Afghanistan, Iraq and other war-ravaged countries. Forest clearings and land conversions necessitated by continued military exercises in different parts of the world led by the US pollute the environment and the destruction of natural habitats.



The US, for example, has accused Iraq of having weapons of mass destruction as a pretext for invasion and occupation despite the US having the largest nuclear arsenal in the world. It has no less than 10,600 nuclear warheads in its possession with around 3,000 ready to deploy from its *"Enduring Stockpile"*.

Furthermore, the US is the only country that has used weapons of mass destruction in war - no less than 300,000 died as a result of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in 1945. The US has also used 320 tons of depleted uranium artillery in the 1990 Gulf war and in the Yugoslavian conflict. These

are still being used in the current Iraq war despite the numerous health risks to soldiers and especially to civilians in target areas.

Since the 1990 to 2008, the US has exported USD 152B worth of weapons (in sales and military aid). In 2001, it exported war material to no less than 170 nations and earned USD 13.1B in that year alone. The "*war against terrorism*" is used as a pretext to increase these military sales and/or aid. In the guise of counter terrorism, it has increased military aid and activities such as training exercises in more countries than before.

Toxic wastes from current and previous US military bases continue to wreak ecological havoc in the surrounding areas. US military joint exercises bring with them not only direct US military aggression but the dangerous weapons and waste from these activities.

Climate change

Much has been said about climate change and its impacts on the environment and the people. The trend of rapid environmental changes both at the global and national level, is expected to bring about massive devastation and loss of human lives. Already, this impending threat is seen in the way that temperatures and sea water levels have risen in the Philippines, along with extreme weather patterns.

It is clear from the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report that warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea levels.

The increase in global surface temperature has made the past decade and a half, 11 of the 12 warmest years since the 1850s. An increase of 0.75 degrees Celsius in the past century was observed over the world. Rates of sea level increase have increased from an average of 1.8 mm annually (from 1961) to 3.1 mm/yr (from 1996). The rate of shrinking of ice cover in the Arctic was observed to be 2.7 % per decade, which more than double in summer to 7.4 %. Recently, the Northwest passage was clear throughout the Arctic circle. Increased incidence of intense tropical cyclones and sea level rise have been observed putting coastal areas at risk.

Climate has been altered by changes in greenhouse gases (GHGs), aerosols, land-cover and solar radiation input. It was clear in the Nobel winning report of the IPCC that GHGs have increased due to human activities with an increase of 70% in the last 3 decades. CO₂ emissions have increased 80% in the same period.

Asymmetric risk and responsibility

There are risks associated to vulnerable ecological systems such as polar and high mountain communities and ecosystems, biodiversity hotspots, corals, and small island communities. Extreme weather events such as droughts, heat waves, and floods are also expected to increase. Sea level rise can lead to loss of coastal area and associated impacts.

Management and adaptation to the impacts of weather and climate-related events is dependent on social and economic development. The most vulnerable to climate change are also those in the most vulnerable economic position in society: the poorest peoples in the poor countries. The United

States is currently the number one producer of Green House Gases (GHG), emitting more than 25% of all the GHGs worldwide. About 84% of U.S. GHG emissions arise from the petroleum related energy and electrical power sectors.

The US is also the biggest processor and unregulated user of oil and petroleum products all over the world. Yet the US government has refused to sign the *Kyoto Protocol*, an international treaty signed by around 169 countries which aims to reduce global levels of carbon dioxide and five other GHG emissions by 5.2% from their 1990 levels. Using the same consumption pattern in the US or Canada, we would be needing nine planets to absorb the consequent carbon emissions of the rest of the developing world. The UK emits more CO₂ than Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Vietnam combined.

These asymmetric climate change emissions indicate an inverse relationship between climate change vulnerability and responsibility. Primary emitter countries must change their production activities and consumption of energy and seek sustainable solutions. Basic human needs, economic and social development need adequate energy and infrastructure. Reducing poverty means providing adequate energy to developing countries while building capacity to withstand climate change impacts. We should avoid the extreme end of denying development to developing and poor countries just to meet carbon emission reduction targets for the world.

Carbon offset mechanisms should be rethought, especially GHG reduction and emissions trading projects that shift out carbon mitigation and reduction out of industrialized countries towards developing countries. These can

distort development activities in these countries while keeping the consumption and production activities of industrialized countries. Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) and carbon trading effectively marketize carbon emissions and essentially shuffles around responsibility to curb emissions.

The personal/individual reduction of carbon emissions shifts to compact fluorescent light bulbs to curb the effects of climate change and switches to biodegradable products are more effective if these individual actions become more widespread and are incorporated into state policy. Campaigns to use energy efficient lighting, to conduct energy audits and household reductions of carbon emissions can be undertaken but these should also be framed within larger political and economic conditions which have vastly accelerated the rate of global warming. Incentives and support for poor communities to engage in these initiatives should be done because the poor usually can only provide for their short-term day-to-day needs and would not have the capacity to buy new technologies.

Biodiversity, health, poverty, rural livelihoods and food security are affected by global warming primarily in underdeveloped and developing countries where mitigation is not affordable. Fuel wood and biomass are still the primary fuel for around 2 billion people without access to adequate energy to meet their basic needs.

The use of alternative fuels with low or no carbon dioxide emissions should be encouraged and made accessible. However, the policies of privatization and investment liberalization of these alternative fuels would make these unaffordable. Subsidizing these alternative energy resources to make them

accessible to the poor should be considered. Fuel production should be secondary to food production and security.

Interim technologies and fuel substitutes that are relatively cleaner than coal or oil should also be entertained. Research for new and cleaner technologies should be undertaken. Research on making nuclear energy safe and viable for energy production, if ever considered as an option, should be continued. Other options such as fuel cell technologies, better and more efficient solar energy converters, wind turbines should also be undertaken.

Transportation efficiency and reduction of energy use in moving people and product should be improved. Mass public transit to reduce the number and distance of journeys should be prioritized. Better urban planning integrated with transport efficiency goals should be undertaken. Economic penalties such as road pricing schemes and fuel taxes are effective only for car owners and should be secondary to improving mass public transit and better educational outreach to highlight the need to eliminate unnecessary car journeys, the benefits of public transportation use, carpooling, etc.

Climate change already aggravates other environmental problems that communities have to face as a result of globalization's ever-increasing destruction of our ecology. It is no longer a question that human activity has produced dangerous climate interference. Our goal should be to avoid catastrophic effects that could affect more than half of the world's population that are most vulnerable to climate change.

Initiatives to directly pressure industrial countries to commit to real targets and not shift the burden to underdeveloped and developing countries should

be supported. We should strengthen the capacity of communities to respond to disasters. Community based disaster response, monitoring and mitigation can be undertaken, and livelihood should be provided for those who are vulnerable to climate change events.

Conclusion

The people will not wait for Copenhagen nor tolerate the sabotage by the US and G8 countries of the climate change negotiations. The member countries of the UN, especially those from the developing countries, should not let the US and the G8 sabotage the negotiations for their benefit. Their goal should be to avoid catastrophic effects that could affect more than half of the world's population that are most vulnerable to climate change.

The rapid destruction of the environment is a direct result of the rapid, unchecked appropriation of the world's resources for the benefit of a few. Increased pressure for the quest for wealth places increased pressure on the environment and environmental destruction. The poor, who are most vulnerable, are subjected to these environmental impacts while trying to provide subsistence level production for themselves.

Great advances have been made in information technology, robotics, genetics, agriculture, and medicine, yet are not being applied towards solving fundamental problems of humankind, such as the breakdown of health systems, famine and hunger, ecological destruction, and social decay and disintegration. But as unbridled globalization has opened up third world resources for the use of multinationals extracting raw materials while leaving their pollution and emissions to the host communities.

Our stewardship on the earth to preserve its intrinsic and practical value for humans calls for a substantial redefining the production of our needs without the current system of overproduction, overconsumption and pollution for the motive of profit for a few. We have seen how communities throughout the world remained resolute and determined to struggle for their rights and defend their natural resources because it is not only their present but also their future at stake.###

