THE WEST HAS FAILED IN BOTH HUMANITARIANISM AND CAPITALISM

The basis of all suffering, namely greed, hatred and delusion are exemplified in Western philosophies, as evidenced over the last two centuries. Money itself has been an abstraction, lacking in utilitarian value and exchanged for profit. Millions of people in poor countries are killed each year as a direct result.

Western leaders are fighting to guarantee the privileges of citizens of the West, and therefore the west must accept this mission and acknowledge their indebtedness. They in fact serve Western interests under various pretexts. Their struggle is a reflection of their socio-political interests, which help maintain the double standards that deny reality and perpetrates injustices upon the less fortunate. More than a million and a half people have needlessly died in Iraq and a quarter of its population are refugees; yet the publics of the West are reluctant to accept any responsibility for the cruelties wrought by their militaries.

NATO is now the perfect cover for launching these types of wars. However, if America is to recoup even a modicum of its former respect, the man for the moment would have been none other than Barack Hussein Obama, who had boldly endorsed negotiating with Iran, for example. On the contrary, Obama exponentially escalated the reviled Bush doctrine. Disarmament from the US militaristic encirclement of the globe would have been a natural next step under a sane US government under Obama. It would have brought a huge reprieve to billions of third world peoples, whose share of the world's wealth has inexorably diminished.

America and its allies have been directly responsible for millions of deaths of innocent people around the world, while the rest of the West are culpable in ensuring an enduring state of indescribable misery for entire regions that creates markets for not only "blood diamonds", but blood commodities that range from fossil fuels to primary produce. Exploiting the basic human rights of third-world citizens in their perpetual quest for natural resources has for generations seen their

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hands tainted with the blood of the innocents.

We must acknowledge that Western citizens are not interested in changing this status quo, as it continues to feed their inflated egos, when they "donate" to third-world crises like in Somalia, Bangladesh or Bolivia. Life is still quite comfortable and "cool" in the West, despite the hikes in petrol prices. No one is forced into prostitution or slavery and no one dies of hunger. Social systems and economic frameworks are stable. The media ensures that the knowledge of the connection between human misery in the third world and growth strategies for global corporations is limited to a few quiet intellectuals who have no public profile.

No honest discussion of these issues is ever encouraged in mainstream forums for obvious reasons. For example, there is no legitimacy afforded to the voice of the workers in the world-wide movement of the "99%" in "Occupying the precincts of Finance", whereas the corporate executives have open season. While politicians and industrialists work together, they rarely reflect the thoughts of the people.

Token gestures that the common people in rich societies make from time to time to show their solidarity with their oppressed counterparts in poor countries smack of false morality and include anti-war demonstrations for apparent justice. Lasting a few hours, accompanied by musical shows and impassioned pleas by some celebrities, the participants then leave, to return to their comfortable homes and forget everything for perhaps a year. That is usually the extent of their commitment.

Farmers commit suicide in India when genetically modified food crops fail. Afghans market narcotics to etch out a living. Haitians eat animal fodder as food prices soar. Western companies buy large tracts of fertile tropical African land for a pittance, depriving them of a livelihood and accelerating starvation. Gaza inhabitants endure collective punishment and live without proper amenities while children die of treatable conditions as they wait for days in queues at Israeli check-points. Iraqi intellectuals work as labourers in Syria and Jordan, taking orders from illiterate locals. World-wide food riots are predicted as crude oil prices reach new records each day.

Naive migrants reaching the West from third-world countries stare in awe at the comforts of Western existence. Great monuments to the successes of capitalism shimmer in bright lights, while clean and even roads carry cars protecting their precious passengers from the pot-holes so common to third-world roads as their poor counterparts there huddle squashed together in dusty tuk-tuks. Glamorous shopping centres boast symbols of affluence so lacking in the rural villages of the poor.

Everything seems civilised, to the uninitiated. It would indeed be so, if the affluence was honestly achieved. Deep down in the hidden recesses of the collective conscience of the West lurks the guilt associated with the comforts so brazenly exhibited, never being allowed to surface, lest they weaken the resolve to maintain perpetual injustices.

How can Westerners feel superior to the rest of humanity in the belief that their crusades, experience with colonial empires and cruelty have led them to a greater understanding of kindness, notions of equality, love or compassion?

We are all very comfortable and materially fulfilled, here in the West. Even the most deprived amongst us is not as desperate as ordinary citizens in countries destroyed by the West, by way of colonialism or war, fomenting of rivalries, or economic sabotage. Libya has been just one of the many examples of places where a whole population is on its broken knees pleading for mercy as we enjoy the fruits of our "morally evolved" societies, believing in "humanitarian intervention" that wiped out sixty thousand civilians and destroyed a vibrant economy.

How can Westerners feel superior to the rest of humanity in the belief that their crusades, experience with colonial empires and cruelty have led them to a greater understanding of kindness, notions of equality, love or compassion? Can they honestly claim to be on a higher plane of intellectual achievement, collective knowledges or spiritual attainment?

My claim does not preclude similar tendencies on the part of other cultures with similar or worse prejudices, but geo-political realities in the last century have an indisputable record, which supports my claim. We need to escape from biased histories indoctrinated into our colonised minds, which have clouded objective judgment. Narrow analysis of current realities will only perpetuate the status quo in favour of the guilty. ▪