

DECOLONIAL INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

"How colonialism f*cked up the climate"

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Decolonizing The Mind
 A guide to decolonial theory and practice
 AMRIT

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What is colonialism?

- Colonialism is not just a system of economic and political domination through occupation.
- Colonialism is the global world civilization that has arisen since 1492. This civilization has divided the globe into two worlds: the world of the colonizer that exploits and try to dominate the world of the colonized. The cultural basis of the colonial world civilization is the European Enlightenment that has created economic, social, cultural and political institutions to ensure that domination.

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The climate and the living environment

- Colonial view of ecology is based on the concept of climate: climate is the long-term weather pattern in a region. Ecology movement is CO2 movement aimed at reducing CO2 emission. Only animals are part of the CO2 movement. There is more sympathy for the suffering of animals than for the suffering of humans.
- Decolonial view of ecology is based on the concept of the living environment: the unity of humans and nature (living and non-living parts of nature). Climate is just one small part of the living environment. Ecology movement is a movement for restoring the balance between humans and nature. Humans, not only animals, are part of the living environment.

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How colonialism f*cked up the living environment

- By brutal occupation
- By colonizing science

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Brutal occupation

- Land occupation
- Mineral extraction
- Deforestation
- Genocide
- Agricultural exploitation

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Land occupation: 1513 Requerimiento (Requirement) as a foundational pattern


"Acknowledge the Church as the Ruler and Superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Dona Juana our lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands. If you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can."

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Mineral extraction: gold and silver in Abya Yala

- Esthetic value of gold for Abya Yala
- Commercial value of gold
- Genocide: Hispaniola, Antilles

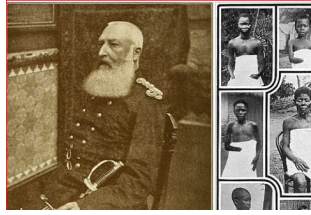
"They required all natives over the age of fourteen to deliver a supply of gold every three months. Whoever complied with this assignment received a copper medallion that he or she had to hang around the neck. Whoever did not wear a valid badge, but both hands were cut off. Most of the victims bled to death."



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Rubber extraction Congo 1885 to 1908

In the Congo Free State, Congolese hands were systematically amputated when enslaved Africans failed to meet quotas for extracting rubber. Belgian colonists collected and smoked these severed hands to preserve them for later counting and recording.



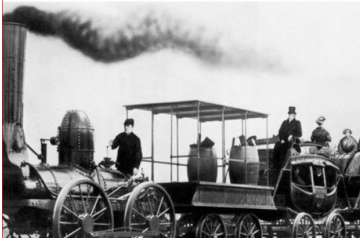
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Deforestation in India and the railway system

One of the most important causes of deforestation in India was the building and expansion of the railways, promoted by the colonial state, which was an arm of the British state... The total number of railway miles grew from 20 in 1853 to 23,627 in 1900. The expansion was not only massive, but also rapid...

Deforestation was not an inevitable consequence of the building of the railways. In other words, there is no necessary connection between the railways and the forests. First, sleepers can be made of materials such as metal or stone. Second, if wooden sleepers are used they need not be obtained from the local forestry/area. Third and most importantly, if railway construction and expansion takes place within ecological limits, then deforestation is not a necessary outcome.

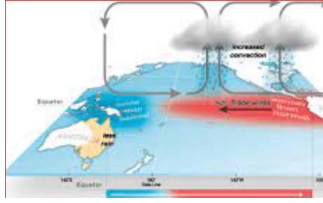
When the colonial state created fuel reserves, it restricted the forest communities' access to firewood and also denied the local communities any control over the fuel woodlands.



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Genocide in the era of ENSO - 1

El Niño and the Southern Oscillation, also known as ENSO is a periodic fluctuation in sea surface temperature (El Niño) and the air pressure of the overlying atmosphere (Southern Oscillation) across the equatorial Pacific Ocean. El Niño is so termed because it generally reaches full strength toward the end of the year, and early Christian inhabitants of western equatorial South America equated the warm water current and the resulting impacts with their holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ (known as El Niño in Spanish).

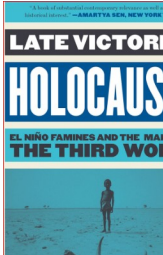


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Genocide in the era of ENSO - 2

"Although rice and wheat production in the rest of India ... had been above average for the past three years, much of the surplus had been exported to England. Londoners were in effect eating India's bread. 'It seems an anomaly,' wrote a troubled observer, 'that, with her famines on hand, India is able to supply food for other parts of the world.'"


"Mogul India was generally free from famine until the 1770s. There is considerable evidence, moreover, that in pre-British India before the creation of a railroad-girded national market in grain, village-level food reserves were larger, patrimonial welfare more widespread, and grain prices in surplus areas better insulated against speculation."



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Genocide in the era of ENSO - 3

India 1876-1902:
12.2-29.3 mln death



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Genocide by colonial diseases

The population of Abya Yala around 1492 is estimated to have been between 75 and 145 million. D. Stannards describes the Abya Yala Holocaust: "Within no more than a handful of generations following their first encounters with Europeans, the vast majority of the Western Hemisphere's native peoples had been exterminated. The pace and magnitude of their obliteration varied from place to place and from time to time, but for years now historical demographers have been uncovering, in region upon region, post-Columbian depopulation rates of between 90 and 98 percent with such regularity that an overall decline of 95 percent has become a working rule of thumb. What this means is that, on average, for every twenty natives alive at the moment of European contact – when the lands of the Americas teemed with numerous tens of millions of people – only one stood in their place when the bloodbath was over."



Agricultural exploitation -1

Whenever cotton was grown in pre-colonial Africa it was invariably intermixed with a range of food crops such as beans, yams, rice, cassava, or maize. All in all, these mixed cropping systems were well attuned to subsistence needs and local ecologies, and in the pre-colonial period they managed to supply substantial quantities of cotton to indigenous spinners and weavers throughout most of the continent. The problem, as colonialists saw it, was that such methods afforded little scope for raising exports to the levels they envisaged. In order to achieve that you need forced labour of former peasants, land privatization and capital intensive production. You get plant diseases, pests forcing peasants to neglect their own fields during planting and harvest time. Production grows but on the long term.



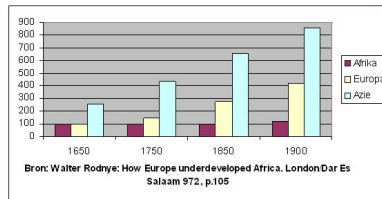
Agricultural exploitation - 2

The effects of the plantation economy in Abya Yala on African population

	Minimi
Transported by ships	
Ratio number died per arrived transported person	
Absolute number died	
Number arrived alive in the America's	
Ratio born per person in 1 generation	
Number of generations (25 in 250-300 years)	
Total number born	2
Absolute numbers	
Died in Africa	
Transported by ships	
Born during slavery	2
Total number of victims	2
Percentage	

Agricultural exploitation – 3

Effect of European enslavement of Africans on Africa and its living environment: population growth per continent



Bron: Walter Rodney: How Europe underdeveloped Africa, London/Dar Es Salaam 972, p.105

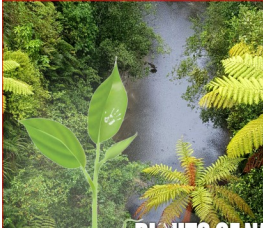
The relationship between colonizing science and the environment

- Science provides the rationalization for colonialism to f*ck up the climate
- The rationalization consist of:
 - Covering up the history of how colonialism f*cked up the climate
 - Blaming environmental damage to humans in general, removing the responsibility of the West in creating the mess.
 - Introduce the concept of superior and inferior civilizations with the West as the superior civilization

The critique of Eurocentric knowledge production

- Philosophical critique: epistemology: truth and lies
- Historical critique:
 - Racism is embedded in Enlightenment
 - A different view of world history
- A critique of two schools of the European Enlightenment: Liberalism and Marxism
- A critique per discipline:
 - Economic theory
 - Social theory
 - Political theory
 - Cultural theory
- The concept of a new world civilization in which the balance between humans and nature is restored.

Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, Bolivia
April 22, 2010 - World People's Conference on Climate Change
and the Rights of Mother Earth



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Thank you!



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