

If one were to consider the sensationalised view of oil or the opinion that holds that oil is an uniquely suitable source of energy, then the case may be that the expansion of population from around 2 billion in 1925 to 7 billion (currently) could not have been possible without the energy that oil had provided. However, that is a perspective that bestows upon oil, the commodity itself, a life of its own, when in fact our dependence on oil is ordained by a set of social relationships that necessitates the use of oil for profit making as opposed to alternative sources of energy that respect social and environmental concerns. When our way of reproducing society (maintaining the needs of society from one period to the next by social measures) shifts from being dictated by the profit criterion to the social value criterion (as in goals which are common to society as a whole), research into the employment of other sources of energy may lead to equal or maybe better sources of energy.

Nevertheless, oil and fuels represent the foremost traded commodity globally. Oil is also important because variants on the initial commodity make up the inputs of nearly all the manufactured commodities. But oil is a strategic commodity because countries that depend on oil imports for their energy and have no immediate sources to replace oil become extremely vulnerable on the security front, if and when oil shortages arise. Hence, for the hegemonic powers, especially the US, controlling the sources of oil in the Arab world by subjugating or subverting the governments of oil rich countries can become a source of immense power and/or a weapon of strategic value. For the US, the power emanating from hegemony over oil resources underwrites the issuance of the world reserve currency, the dollar, and many other imperial rents wrought as a result of its imperial status.

Oil is relevant to human rights because it provides the energy with which many rights-based essentials for sustaining life are produced. Food, shelter, water and health, etc. require energy and

produced); subsequently, with openness the import bill also rises (roughly for the Arab world imports rose from around 20% of GDP to nearly 50% of GDP between 1970 and 2010). So, the national governments themselves get locked into a vicious cycle from which their moneys are only valuable if measured against the dollar and their governments are only reliable if they collect enough of the national currency to stabilise the exchange rate with the dollar. This is anything but freedom. The contraction in fiscal and monetary policies at home demobilise resources, people and physical capital (by demobilise, I mean to disengage from production because development is best defined as the mobilisation of real resources, as in putting people to productive work). To make matters worse, the freedom to move people, money and resources abroad ensures that both capital and people leave their countries year after year. Certainly, the backlog of tremendous pools of idle labour and forced refugees keeps up the ideological downward pressure on wages. Throughout this process of usurpation, one sees no measures taken by governments to arrest the drainage. This implies that the ruling class in control of national resources is benefiting from the way neoliberal policies are channelling resources. It also means that the neoliberal policy package itself is not an unbiased interface between agent and policy framework; it is a premeditated framework that serves as the conveyor belt for the vested interests of the ruling classes and their international alliances, albeit to the detriment of the national economy.

This takes us to the next level of exploration into neoliberalism. How do soBTc,8(eis)-1010(c)TJETBT1 0 0 1 4547)-

an even-distribution, public sector led economy to a highly uneven economy led by the private sector and a

The neoliberal obfuscation peaked in the years just prior to the Arab uprisings, as the World Bank spewed out a litany of literature ludicrously recommending good governance to Arab rulers. ignorance or naïveté of idealism;

transmuted into a reality by the power of free market ideology. If the success of any development policy hinges on an a priori set of

the thought that those Arab ruling classes, which had clasped state and economy, had filled prisons with prisoners of conscience, and had allied themselves to international financial capital would even

snatch). The debilitation of states is the medium by which the under-valorisation of national assets takes place. Capital devolves funds and sustains the ideology that uses the immiseration of all, their poverty which knows no sect, in a selective way, designating for instance, Sunnis or Shias as the victims and in as much as fanning the winds of civil wars dislocates people and assets. In the Arab world poverty criss-crosses the sects and is dependent at times upon levels of regional development. In certain distraught areas, all sects would be poorer than the well to do region and, hence, the underlying basis for poverty would be regional underdevelopment. However, from a classical political economy perspective, poverty of course has no sect; the poor are poor prior to and irrespective of their sect. There is a primacy of poverty over sect or identity in general. A specific identity may collide with a specific poverty condition or abjection. One may say the Sunnis, on average, are poorer in this country than the Shia or vice versa. A statistical observation would not explain why there is poverty first and why some of certain identities are inflicted with more of the poverty. Poverty is a symptom of exploitation, uneven development and the social arrangements particular to the distribution of the wage share within the working class. These distributional arrangements are the result of the struggle for power between capital and labour. How equal the wage rates between men and women, Shia or Sunni is a matter related to the power of organised labour over capital. The success of capital can be partly gauged by the lowering of the wage share altogether and the accentuation of working class differences between labour itself on the basis of identity. Purposefully, the language of sectarianism bestows upon oppression a sectarian identity, which flourishes in relation to the power of the ideology that draws the contours of the political process as a sectarian one. The presence of theocratic or semi theocratic states such as Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia contribute by their very state of being to othering, structural and differentiated racism. So, sowing divisions is an orchestrated process that pushes identity above class, causing the working class along with their state to implode. The petro dollar funds from the Gulf, which are anything but sovereign because none of the Gulf States are sovereign, have aided and abetted the divisions and the fissure lines of the Sunni/Shiite divide that now threatens to devour much of the Fertile Crescent. In so far as transfers of value from the Arab world are concerned, destroying states, cheapening resources and leaving working people without the state-

stripping them of their sovereignty over national resources - depriving the national working class of owning its resources in violation of the first common articles of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ((1966, entered into force 3 January 1976, General Assembly res A/RES/2200A (XXI), 993 UNTS 3) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, entered into force 23 March 1976, General Assembly res A/RES/2200A (XXI), 999 UNTS 171). The money earned from natural resources re-circulate abroad or do not buttress the living conditions of the working class.

Of all the means of dispossessing the working classes of their resources, war is the most powerful tool for disengaging and leaving up for grab Third World assets. Far worse than foreclosures that evict peasants from their property so that they join the non-owning, waged labour force, wars prevent whole populations from owning their natural resources. War is useful in resource grab, or the process by which developed formations garner the resources of the Third World under highly inequitable terms imposed, more often than not, by military superiority. In a strategic region targeted for imperialist control, the Arab ruling-class alliance with US-led capital promotes the reproduction of war because, apart from the oil hegemony factor, war for the sake of war, is all on its own, a principal tributary of global accumulation.

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independence autonomy (the 1960s to the late 1970s), state dirigisme, high public investment rates and more egalitarian redistribution characterised all Arab states. A particular set of Arab states that is, nationalised industry, and finance and implemented agrarian reform as in Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, Libya and Syria which resulted in significant welfare gains. However, half-hearted Arab socialist egalitarian processes, initiated from the top down, excluded the working class from participating actively in defending their gains and authoritarian labour-process regimentation remained in place. Two principal military defeats in wars with Israel (June 1967 and October 1973), several open and implicit aggressions against Arab countries, and the 1979 Camp David Accords by which Egypt joined the US constellation, gravely weakened Arab and African national and joint security. In due course and under neoliberalism, many of the passed-down working-class benefits were lost to the old ruling classes or their reconstituted variants. One ought to clarify: the discourse faulting import substitution policies is misplaced. Policies do not go wrong. They serve interests. It is not the policies that stopped delivering development, but it is the class in charge, which as the state faltered, shifted its allegiance away from the national working class towards foreign capital. At the latter stages of neoliberalism, the Arab ruling class intensified

Arab socialism. In dynamic terms, however, a massive redistribution redressing the concentration of wealth that the Arab merchant classes undertook when they hijacked the state is necessary. Historical comparisons, like all comparisons, are lame. The past cannot be re-enacted. Account taken of the development in technology akin to the progress of time, one may say that the _____ and _____ exhibited higher growth rates, aspects of egalitarianism but were no ages of popular democracy. However, the neoliberal age was an age of lower

The canon of orthodoxy may flirt with the idea of human rights, but it cannot integrate it within its hypotheses because it is neither un-ideological nor neutral as is professed. It would be straightforward to model mathematically an economy with disengaged persons or persons residing below subsistence as receiving state incomes to meet their basic needs or wages to engage in socially rewarding activity. That equality of condition should come first is a right. The mass of unemployed people are so because the market economy itself cannot provide full employment and, hence, society and the international community owe people who are forced into poverty a decent minimum subsistence. The solution to mathematical models that incorporate a hypothesis of needs-based rights to the unemployed and or people working at below poverty wages in their analysis would still be 'rigorous', since rigour itself is a convention and not an objective criterion. However, by overlooking needs-based rights, power and interrelated forms of social organisation, the discipline of economics overlooks the objective and impersonal forces of history. In any case it has to, because its constructed history is personal and subjective. It begins with an individual possessing a miraculous agency and ends with a history which is the sum of these subjective miraculous tastes and inclinations taken at successive intervals in chronological time. Nothing could go wrong when the world is conceived as such, every point is Pareto optimal and all resources are efficiently allocated within a given level of technology. Social disaster, unemployment and wars are ascribed to choice or cultural reasons. A few decades ago, they were attributed to race.

The question why the Canon of orthodoxy cannot be superseded in mainstream literature when addressing the ferment of social conditions, can be answered under the rubric of the subordination of science to power. But in social science generally, the continued departure of theory from its empirical referents and/or the overly empirical nature of addressing concrete social problems had sacrific

