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The New Rulers of the World, by John Pilger, Verso (London), 2002, 254pp, \$CD21, ISBN 1 85984-412-X

Book review by Julian Samuel

John Pilger's *The New Rulers of the World* shows us how the rich-and-getting-exponentially richer are responsible for producing land dispossession, poverty, blindness, and death. We learn about the effects of recent imperialism such as the holocaust of communists and others in

Indonesia (1965-66); this particular slaughter was backed by many Western leaders including Prime Minister Harold Macmillian and John F. Kennedy who agreed to 'liquidate President Sukarno, depending on the situation and available opportunities.' pp. 30. (Our smiling Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, in 1997, in front of TV cameras put his arms around Indonesia's

killer of millions - Suharto). Many politicians and corporations - Tony Blair is one of Pilger's central targets - are presented as killers who are really no different from Hitler. Blair approved "eleven arms deals with Indonesia under cover of the Official Secrets Acts and Cook's declaration of an 'ethical' dimension to foreign policy." p. 23

This ethical dimension or understanding between western greed - embodied in corporations - and third world dictators is developed in four fast chapters: "The Modern Pupil"; "Paying the Price" "The Great Game." The final chapter, "The Chosen Ones" shows Australia's genocide against the Aborigines. Pilger's Australia is incurably racist. The Aussie Olympic Co-ordination Authority used stellar sellouts to stay the charge of racism in the eyes of the world; the political elites continually use illegal land rights traps that have reduced many Aborigines to suicide. Many become blind: "...up to 80 per cent of Aboriginal children have potentially blinding trachoma because of untreated cataracts." pp. 169 Does one want to boycott Australia and Australian products after reading Pilger's book? Their prime minister, John Howard, has made the colour of one's skin a life and death issue.

As a Canadian, I am aware that we do not have a single journalist who is as courageous or as well-informed as Pilger. Canadian journalists exactly know how and why the Jewish State is killing Palestinians and snatching their land in the West Bank and Gaza but are either censored by editors

(especially at The Montreal Gazette) or self-censored. Pilger, however, is unequivocal: "We need an awareness of lethal double standards...while more than 400 UN resolutions calling for justice in Palestine are not worth the paper they are written on." pp. 11-12.

Michael Ignatieff, a Canadian who works in the human rights industry at Harvard, is "an enthusiastic backer of the West's invasions and bombing (as a way to 'feed the starving and enforce peace in the case of civil strife'), prefers 'liberal intervention'." pp. 161
Ignatieff is given full access to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Pilger's inexorably attacks academics. I quote him at length on these high priests of silence: "Those with unprecedented resources to understand this, including many who teach and research in the great universities, suppress their knowledge publicly; perhaps never before has there been such a silence." (pp. 3) and, "By keeping silent, they have allowed government to diminish a wealth of knowledge of how the world works, declaring it 'irrelevant' and withholding funding. This is not surprising when the humanities departments - the engine rooms of ideas and criticism - are close to moribund. When academics suppress the voice of their knowledge, who can the public turn to? ... By never recognizing western state terrorism, their complicity is assured. To state this simple truth is deemed unscholarly; better say nothing (my emphasis)." pp. 163

Despite the useful lessons on western state terrorism and imperialism (Pilger uses 'imperialism' not 'globalization') a few questions persist. Is it fair of him to *not* point out how imperialism should be counter-attacked? He knows its weaknesses deeply. Why is he silent on how to actually *do* something to turn back the ravage of Africa, the Arab world Asia et al? Would a tax revolt be a relevant or useless strategy? It is clear that street protests accomplish nothing. What would he answer?

In Iraq, America's current-day Nazis as well as others are directly responsible for the current holocaust of about 6000 children a month (pp. 9). Let's put that figure in another context: A goateed cultural studies academic takes 20 minutes to read a paper on Inuit Hip Hop at an Queer Theory conference in Melbourne; by the time he finishes his presentation 2.6 Iraqi kids will have been killed. It takes approximately eight hours or 62.4 deaths to read "The New Rulers of the World".

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