

All diamonds are blood diamonds The truth about the diamond trade

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The true story of diamonds

Most of us blithely take for granted the resources available to us in our daily lives. We don't give much thought to the brutality and suffering it takes to extract those resources for our use at the expense of the people to whom they belong.

Even as the U.S. war against the Iraqi people rages on, we continue to mindlessly pump gas into our cars without thinking of the deadly violence in the Middle East being waged so that the American people can continue to use all the oil we want.

The same holds true for diamonds, the glittering rocks of crystallized carbon worn by millions.

Long revered as rare, benign gems symbolizing the ideals of beauty and everlasting love, diamonds are the desired gift for engagements, anniversaries, graduations, or simply as an expression of love. Diamonds are thought to be the makings of heirlooms, something to pass down from generation to generation with ever appreciating value.

These myths about the diamond trade, however, couldn't be further from the truth. This is a look into the reality of diamonds and the real price of this seemingly innocent stone for millions of African people and others who live on the other end of the equation.

Perhaps these facts about the diamond trade can help open our eyes to the deeper reality of an entire social system built on violence, slavery, genocide and the degradation of others in order to create a generous lifestyle for us, the white people.

Maybe we can begin to wake up to the fact that nothing in our daily lives is innocent or exempt from the bloodshed and terror necessary for conquest. Not, for example, our cell phones and computers that

require the mineral coltan from the Congo, where 5 million people have been slaughtered since 1998 in U.S.-backed coltan wars.

Not even our food, colleges, gas, electricity, water, banks, running shoes, or housing. Everything on this land stolen from the indigenous people, in an economy built on African slavery and colonialism around the world, has an ugly story just under the surface.

The story of diamonds is just one of them.

Certified diamonds are blood diamonds too!

In recent years, as a result of U.S. backed wars in Western Africa there have been popular campaigns against buying “conflict” or “blood” diamonds. Rap songs, movie stars and articles in cyberspace warn us against these tainted stones. No conscious, progressive American would buy such a diamond.

These campaigns insist that anyone buying diamond jewelry must be careful to select only those diamonds certified by the accepted, legal Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS). This scheme supposedly protects Africa from diamonds mined by the perpetrators of the deadly wars in West Africa characterized by rape, mutilations, displacement and outright slaughter carried out over the past 15 years or so.

The fact is though, it was the powerful DeBeers diamond cartel itself that created the concept of “blood” diamonds, fearful that diamonds coming out of the war-torn areas of West Africa would flood the market and undermine their long standing worldwide control of the price of the stones. The Kimberley process scheme is just that—their scheme to maintain control of the world’s diamond supply.

All diamonds are blood diamonds. All diamonds are conflict diamonds. The brutal Western imperial proxy wars in West Africa over diamond mines have been horrific. These wars, however, are only another chapter in the last hundred years of colonial terror as it has been represented by the diamond trade, controlled by the DeBeers cartel.

The legacy of the diamond is steeped in the slavery, colonialism, genocide and terror that built and maintains the Western capitalist system. We are the beneficiaries of this genocidal system.

Today, diamonds from African soil are worth billions of dollars, wealth that is concentrated mostly in the U.S., Europe, Israel and the white population of South Africa. African people on their own land, laboring in the mines under slave-like conditions for pennies a day have no control over the diamond trade whatsoever and see no benefits from its profits.

DeBeers founded by British colonizer Cecil Rhodes

In the 1870s, during the period called the “scramble for Africa,” the brutal Cecil Rhodes was colonizing Southern Africa, setting up the African front of British imperialism.

One of Rhodes’ primary endeavors was the large diamond mine in Kimberley, South Africa. The gems from this mine made Rhodes a multi-millionaire and consolidated his power in the region. The price to African people was mass slaughter of tens of thousands and the seizure of their territories. Whole populations were dispersed when Rhodes dynamited them off their lands. African families were destroyed as African men were rounded up by the thousands in forced labor concentration camps near the diamond mines, a practice that continues today.

The British colonial exploits in Africa and around the world followed on the heels of more than three centuries of the trade in African people themselves. The immeasurable wealth generated by the slave trade catapulted England out of the poverty and ignorance of feudalism and transformed it into a wealthy industrialized nation. It was this process that brought about the birth of the capitalist system itself.

In his book *Capital*, written in the 1860s, Karl Marx raised the question, how did capitalism actually begin? Where did it get its start up money? He surmised that the capitalist system must have had a first or “primitive” accumulation of wealth or capital coming from outside of Europe—which was barren, impoverished and unproductive.

Marx observed: “The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation.”

Omali Yeshitela, leader of the Uhuru Movement and Chairman of the African People's Socialist Party, pointed out more than a hundred years later, however, that Marx's statements about primitive accumulation of capital were a "definition of the significance of the enslavement of African people only as it impacted on development *inside* Europe, a development which necessarily means what has come to be called the *underdevelopment* of Africa, Asia and Latin America."

This is true because if Marx really understood his own observation he would have come to the conclusion that the force that could overturn the capitalist system of workers and bosses would not be white workers in Europe, but the Indigenous people entombed in the mines and the Africans whose homeland had become a warren for the hunting of black skins.

"Marx's world was white," Yeshitela asserts. "The enslaved Asian, African and 'Indian' of North and South America were essentially *objects* of history, having more or less significance for European development."

As white people we habitually ignore the unfathomable suffering inflicted on African and other peoples that bring us the resources and standard of living we take for granted. We happily deny the fact that those resources, wrested at a price of hideous suffering to so many, make up the foundation of the prosperity and opportunities of our society.

The DeBeers diamond cartel has always done what the U.S.-backed rebels of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Congo have done to African people, and even worse. DeBeers simply had the power to hide it from the view of the white world, for whom the fate of African people has never been a concern in any case.

This is the context for the definition of "blood" or "conflict" diamonds. It's not just a particular atrocity that comes to our attention at any given moment. It's a centuries-long institutionalized process of ripping the humanity, the beauty, the resources, land and independence out of the soul of Africa for our benefit.

Blood was dripping from diamonds long before the slaughter began in West Africa in the 1990s.

The lust for resources

The sixteenth century Aztecs wrote of the Spaniards, "They lifted up the gold as if they were monkeys, with expressions of joy, as if it put new life into them and lit up their hearts. As if it were certainly something for which they yearn with great thirst. Their bodies fatten on it and they hunger violently for it. They crave gold like hungry swine."

The Aztecs could have said the same thing for white people and diamonds, except that the lust had to be prompted a little by a DeBeers' marketing campaign. To bolster a sagging diamond economy in the 1940s the cartel hired a public relations firm that launched DeBeers' now-famous slogan, "a diamond is forever," convincing every American woman that she must have a diamond ring to get engaged or married.

The DeBeers cartel was built on their fabrication that diamonds are a rare commodity. Diamonds appear anywhere in the world that there is carbon—and that is almost everywhere. They also are easily manufactured. DeBeers has used its own private armies and other forms of intimidation to manufacture diamond scarcity by forcing countries to keep them off the market.

Unlike other precious gems and metals, the price of diamonds is always going up but the resale value is very low, no matter how much one pays for them in the first place.

In the third century BC, diamonds were found and used in India for religious and artistic purposes. In China, because of their hardness, diamonds were mounted on the tip of an iron tool as an engraving instrument. Traditionally diamonds were considered by many cultures to have healing properties.

When diamonds were found in Africa all that changed.

In 1875, despite the ravages of the slave trade, 90 percent of Africa was still controlled by African people.

Ten years later the colonial era was officially consolidated. In 1884-5, without a single African present, the heads of European governments sat in a conference in Berlin for the sole purpose of carving up every inch of the African continent. The objective of this gathering was to parcel out all of Africa to Europeans to exploit all possible resources--human beings, gold, land, animals, rubber, iron, ivory, tourism, fishing, farming and of course, diamonds.

The conference was a move on the part of the European powers to attempt to reduce conflict within Europe and inside European countries themselves by sharing the vast stolen loot of Africa. Every European country wanted a piece of Africa to elevate their standard of living, not just for the already wealthy, but also for the workers, who for the past 40 years had been in a state of rebellion for a greater share of the stolen loot of slavery and colonialism.

Even the Catholic pope, the moral authority of Europe, gave his tacit blessing to the Berlin Conference and the plans to colonize all of Africa. All the imperialists had to do now was defeat the powerful African resistance and then slaughter, subdue and enslave the Africans who survived. Multitudes of white people volunteered enthusiastically for that task.

Imperialist diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes was passionate about colonialism as a solution for the English masses.

Rhodes once wrote, "I was in the East End of London yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread, bread!' and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism...My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40 million inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists."

Terror and resistance

Ambitious to consolidate British imperialism in Southern Africa, Rhodes set out for Zimbabwe in 1886 where gold was thought to have been discovered. The Shona and Matabele people launched a fierce resistance to defend their lands from Rhodes' invasion.

Rhodes recruited hundreds of British men into his army that he organized to defeat the Matabele and Shona. With the use of just four Maxim machine guns, Rhodes's army slaughtered more than 5,000 African people in one engagement alone. As payment, each of Rhodes'

672 soldiers were given 6,000 acres of land in what would be known as the colony of Rhodesia for the next hundred years.

A similar story was playing out all over Africa. African people were fighting desperately for their land, independence, culture and dignity. Europeans overpowered them with machine guns, cannons, concentration camps and the theft or destruction of the resources needed for life.

Today there are diamond mines in the Congo that are highly profitable for imperialism, but Belgium's King Leopold did not know that in the 1890s when he was colonizing African people there. Leopold was interested in rubber, an increasingly significant commodity at the dawn of the automobile age.

Africans in Congo resisted the Belgian invasion fiercely. The Chokwe people, for instance, fought for 20 years, inflicting heavy casualties on the Belgians.

In order to force the Africans to harvest the rubber, the Belgians killed ten million people in the Congo. Women were rounded up, raped and held as hostages as an attempt to force men to work. Villages were burned. Children were kidnapped into concentration camps to be trained as soldiers for the Belgians. Men were chained at the neck and used as beasts of burden until they dropped dead.

The signature mark of Belgian conquest in the Congo was the massive cutting off of the people's hands to force them to kneel down to the colonial power. Men, women and children were mutilated in this way, and huge mounds of hands piled up throughout the land.

One Belgian soldier wrote home that he had "killed 150 men, cut off 60 hands, crucified women and children, and hung the remains of mutilated men on the village fence."

The profits were excellent however. The Anglo-Belgian India Rubber and Exploration Company reaped a profit of more than 700 percent as bicycles and automobiles in Europe and America were outfitted with rubber tires.

No such word as genocide

In Namibia today alluvial diamonds are gathered from ships off the coast by Africans forced into near slave-like conditions. Alluvial means

that the diamonds do not have to be mined, they can simply be picked up off the ground or from the water.

When the Germans colonized the land they called South West Africa at the turn of the twentieth century they knew nothing of the diamonds. They made money from fishing, hunting and farmland and saw their African colonies as their "place in the sun," hoping to eventually rival Britain's empire upon which "the sun never set."

The Herero and Nama peoples rose up in 1904 and '07 to fight courageously against the German colonizers. With the backing of Deutsche Bank, Germany sent in General von Trotha with orders to exterminate the Africans.

Von Trotha declared: "Any Herero found within the German borders [sic] with or without a gun, with or without cattle, will be shot. I shall no longer receive any women or children; I will drive them back to their people. I will shoot them. This is my decision for the Herero people."

Von Trotha was true to his word, even as the Herero were careful in their resistance to spare German women, children and missionaries.

The Germans machined-gunned the Herero people of all ages, poisoned their wells, killed their cattle, ran human experiments on them and rounded them up in the Kalahari Desert to die a slow, torturous death without food, water or shelter. Eighty percent of the Herero were killed and half of the Nama.

Namibia today has only 1.8 million people in an area bigger than Texas, one of the smallest populations in the world. It is a chilling irony that websites for Namibian tourism targeting Europeans promote its sparse population as one of the country's selling points.

When Africans throughout Africa were being slaughtered by the millions a century ago; when countless Africans died during the middle passage of the slave trade; when hundreds of millions of Indigenous people were wiped out in the Americas there was no word for "genocide."

Genocide, as a crime against humanity, as a moral and legal concept in the consciousness of Europeans was only invented following the second world war after white people had inflicted mass murder on other white people. When the Germans were slaughtering Africans in

Namibia, Jews were good Germans, happily enjoying the benefits of German colonialism.

It is telling that General von Trotha's wife, Lucy Goldstein von Trotha, was Jewish.

The survivors of the Herero people have filed a \$4 billion lawsuit against the German government and corporations as reparations for the genocide. The Germans have paid over \$100 billion to the Israeli government and Jewish people as reparations, while they scoff at the just demand from the Herero people.

The DeBeers Diamond Cartel—an empire inside of imperialism

Cecil Rhodes named his Kimberley diamond mines DeBeers, after the farmer who had previously colonized the land. In 1888 he formed the DeBeers Consolidated Mines, a diamond cartel. This means that he sought to control the entire world market for diamonds. He bought up all other diamond mines in southern Africa, restricted supply and raised prices.

When Rhodes was alive the diamonds at Kimberley were still alluvial, easily picked up from the ground. Africans, enslaved on their own land, had tin cans tied around their necks. They were lined up and forced at gunpoint to get down on their hands and knees to pick up the diamonds and put them into the cans.

After the death of Rhodes, the German Jew Ernest Oppenheimer took over the ownership of DeBeers in the 1920s and it has remained in the control of his family ever since.

Today DeBeers is a multi-billion dollar operation that acts like a state power with armies of its own.

DeBeers and the Oppenheimer family are the real reigning power behind South Africa. DeBeers was the driving force behind the setting up of apartheid and the system that violently forced African people off their land in order to create the workforce for the mines in highly profitable slave-like conditions.

DeBeers pushed for multiple taxes to be imposed on the people to drive them into the mines to earn money to pay the taxes. DeBeers backed the pass laws and the concentration camp-like conditions for the mine workers who were virtually imprisoned for months working at

least 60 hours a week, forced to sleep out in the open with no protection from the weather.

For every 10-hour shift Africans were given a crust of bread and a flask of cold tea. They were housed in bunkers with 20 men to a room and forced to eat out of aluminum buckets. If an African worker somehow managed to scrape together the means to buy a car or house he was arrested on suspicion of stealing diamonds.

DeBeers and South Africa were forced to end the apartheid system only when the armed mass African liberation movement made it necessary, as a means of saving imperialism.

Africa still under colonial conditions

Life for African diamond workers today has changed very little. In the past few years DeBeers has slashed the wages of South African mineworkers. They now live in the shanty towns that have burgeoned in South Africa since the fall of the apartheid system and the rise of neocolonialism, the system in which white imperialist power installs indigenous puppets as its front in Africa and other former colonies.

African men are still stuffed into compounds and ramshackle huts near the mines, while African women who work as cleaners must stay in the women's barracks. If a husband and wife are found sleeping together they are fired.

In Namibia the unionized diamond workers live in abject poverty in hovels without running water, electricity, health care or education for their children. The men live in compounds separated from their families. They are given bunk beds without mattresses to sleep in and are exposed to radiation and other health hazards.

In the past century since the genocidal Belgian colonialism in Congo, African people have been subjected to ongoing war, bloodshed and powerlessness. The poverty is so severe that most African people have nothing to eat for days at a time.

Yet Congo alone holds immeasurable wealth from diamonds, coltan and a wide variety of other valuable minerals essential to the daily functioning of the capitalist world. By all rights, every single resident of the Congo should enjoy the highest standard of living in the world. Every child should grow up in a prosperous family with a lovely house,

with access to the highest quality education and the best possible health care.

In the past 10 years proxy wars financed and backed by the U.S., other imperialist powers, including DeBeers, have ravaged the Congo to get or maintain control of those bountiful resources whose benefits never reach the average African person.

Five million people in the Congo have been slaughtered in those wars so that life in the white world can go on in peaceful, prosperous, hi-tech tranquility. No one in America protests this new generation of genocide in the Congo. No one even talks about it.

Most of Africa is blessed with this profuse wealth of natural resources. Yet half the people in diamond rich West Africa live on less than a dollar a day. It has the lowest life expectancy at birth in the world—in 10 countries in Africa the life expectancy is 46 years. Sierra Leone has the highest infant mortality rate in the world with 284 deaths per every thousand live births.

DeBeers and the U.S.-backed defeat of African liberation

In the 1960s the colonized world rose up to challenge the fact that the Western powers had for hundreds of years built themselves with the resources of nonwhite people for the benefit of white society. Because of this plunder the average white family in Europe, North America, Africa or Australia, who may not be as rich or powerful as the Rockefellers could nevertheless count on this process to enjoy by far the highest standard of living for working people in the world.

The sixties are remembered for the valiant struggle of the Vietnamese people who fought for generations to control their own country, first defeating France and then sending the U.S. out with their tails between their legs.

In the U.S. the Black Power Movement shook this system to its very foundations with the demand for more than civil rights. It was a revolutionary demand for black political and economic power and African liberation. On the continent of Africa itself the call for a unified and liberated Africa gave hope to the suffering masses.

In the late 1950s Kwame Nkrumah became the first elected president of Ghana. With the supposed ousting of British colonial control, Nkrumah pursued his ideals of attempting to eliminate all the

imperialist-imposed borders and creating one continental African nation working for the benefit of each and every African.

In Ghana, as in most of colonial Africa, centuries of expropriation by colonial powers left the nominally independent nations without an industrial infrastructure to process those resources. Nkrumah began to talk about nationalizing Ghana's resources and beginning to build its own production capabilities. In the few short years of his power he made enormous strides in this direction.

In the early sixties Nkrumah decided to begin to market Ghana's diamonds independently, rather than through the process demanded by the DeBeers cartel. Profits from diamond sales could help develop the country. Nkrumah also did not want to sell diamonds to the company behind the apartheid regime of South Africa. Not long after Nkrumah began taking steps towards this end the U.S. attempted a failed coup against him. In 1966 the U.S. was finally successful in ousting Nkrumah and he died in exile.

Diamonds and the assassination of Patrice Lumumba

A major player immediately involved in the coup attempts against Nkrumah was CIA operative and DeBeers emissary Maurice Tempelsman (who was romantically linked with Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis until her death and is today linked with the former Secretary of State Madeline Albright).

Following the first unsuccessful coup attempt against Nkrumah, the popular young anti-colonial leader Patrice Lumumba was elected prime minister in Congo. Like Nkrumah, Lumumba was committed to his promise that the resources of Congo would benefit the workers and peasants.

During this period Congo was very important to DeBeers, because a third of the world's known diamond supply was located there. This was during the Cold War and the U.S. was stockpiling industrial diamonds needed for airplanes and armaments.

The U.S. could not deal directly with DeBeers because they had indicted the diamond cartel during the second world war for violating U.S. anti-trust laws. Maurice Tempelsman became the middleman for DeBeers, supplying millions of dollars worth of diamonds to the U.S. from Congolese mines on the behalf of DeBeers.

As soon as the courageous and much-loved Lumumba took office in 1960 he made it clear that Congo's resources were for African people. Tempelsman immediately began working under the Kennedy administration to plot the U.S. and Belgian assassination of Lumumba which took place in January 1961, just months after his election.

White power in black face

Much is being written these days about "corruption" among the African ruling elite being the cause of Africa's problems today.

The reality is that the African politicians are simply doing what they were set up to do—maintain the interests of the imperialist financial interests regardless of the cost to the people. These are the neocolonialists and they are paid quite well.

After the murder of Patrice Lumumba, Tempelsman secured a diamond deal with Congo that was extremely lucrative for both the U.S. and DeBeers. It also allowed him to end up with control of several profitable mines while giving some of the biggest, most valuable diamonds in the world to Joseph Mobutu, the pliable new puppet who would brutally do the bidding of U.S. imperialism in Congo for the next 30 years.

Despite the fact that Lumumba was only in power three months, his leadership had sparked the enthusiasm of the masses of the people and the confidence that they could begin to control their own destiny as African people on their own land.

For many years following the assassination of Lumumba, Congo (known as Zaire under Mobutu) was in a state of mass rebellion. Well-organized resistance fighters held liberated territory in some areas, prompting Che Guevara to take a brigade of Cuban revolutionaries to join the struggle there.

It took all of Mobutu's military force and a reign of terror to subdue the peoples' resistance. Mobutu's forces were trained, armed and paid by the U.S., with the CIA operating both openly and covertly throughout the country, often with its own mercenary forces.

As a U.S. puppet, Mobutu was vicious to those who challenged him. He was known to gouge out the eyes of opposition leaders or cut off their

limbs while they were still alive. He tortured and locked up hundreds of thousands of African working people and students.

Mobutu was paid well for his terror, raiding the coffers of the country and amassing nearly \$5 billion, which he stashed in Swiss banks, while the African masses starved and suffered. The fact that the Western powers would allow Mobutu to expropriate \$5 billion gives us an inkling of how much the resources of the Congo are worth to imperialism.

Neocolonialism is the way that the U.S. keeps its control over the resources of the world while hiding behind handpicked leaders from the colonial people.

When Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa, signaling the end of the apartheid era, he was heralded by the media as a beacon of justice.

To the African People's Socialist Party and the Uhuru Movement it was always clear that Mandela was nothing but another neocolonial puppet working for the interests of the imperial powers.

Today, 12 years after the end of apartheid in South Africa, 40 percent of Africans in the cities are unemployed and 70 percent in rural areas. Sixty-one percent now live below the poverty level, while only about one percent of whites live in poverty. Ninety-six percent of arable commercial land is still in the hands of white farmers.

It should be no surprise that as a new movie called "Blood Diamond" is scheduled to open in the winter of 2006, Mandela recently came out with a public statement in support of DeBeers. Mandela stated that the diamond industry is "good for South Africa."

When DeBeers Chairman Harry Oppenheimer died in 2000 and the reigns were passed to his son Nicky, Mandela wrote Harry's obituary in *Time* Magazine, hailing Oppenheimer as "monumentally instrumental in helping our country become the economic leader it is today."

Diamonds wars of Sierra Leone

A British colony since the late 18th century, Sierra Leone is rich in coffee, bauxite and diamonds, which were found there in 1930. By 1937 one million carats had been extracted and exported to Europe. According to a recent study by the Canadian government, between

1937 and 1996 \$15 billion worth of diamonds have been exported and sold from Sierra Leone. Yet the people of Sierra Leone live on about 30 cents a day.

The DeBeers group of diamond companies have controlled the diamond interests of Sierra Leone since 1935. Sierra Leone was granted nominal independence in 1961. Ten years later Sierra Leone nationalized the diamond mines—again nominally. Since DeBeers controls the world diamond market, the national diamond industry of Sierra Leone still had to sell its diamonds through DeBeers.

Since the 1970s rebel armies, most of them backed by the U.S. or other European powers, have fought for control of Sierra Leone. Since the 1990s the rebel armies have inflicted terroristic violence against the people of Sierra Leone, cutting off limbs, raping women, killing and displacing thousands and forcing tens of thousand of young children to fight as soldiers.

During this period the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) took over some of the diamond mines and used smuggled diamonds to fund their violence. Although the actions of the RUF are no different than the hundred year legacy of DeBeers' violence against African people, DeBeers calls these the "blood" diamonds—i.e., diamonds they can't control.

In the end who profited from the so-called blood diamonds?

The U.S. most certainly did. It enabled them to flood the diamond market and to poke holes in the long-standing diamond monopoly held by DeBeers, which even the U.S. had never successfully controlled. It destabilized the entire West Africa region, making it difficult for any genuinely progressive force to rise up in the interest of the people. The diamond wars left West Africa wide open for another long orgy of Western expropriation of all of Africa's vast resources.

Follow the money

Today the DeBeers cartel still controls at least 80 percent of the world diamond trade. As we see, the other 20 percent are the ones they call the "blood" diamonds.

It would be very difficult to calculate the total wealth of DeBeers because of its worldwide holdings on a multitude of fronts. The billions of dollars of wealth from the diamond industry benefit the white

population as a whole. The diamond trade makes huge profits in the U.S., Israel and Belgium and South Africa with hundreds of thousands of lucrative jobs and spin-off businesses for white people.

The former British colony of India, on the other hand, has more than a half million diamond workers, but the working people do not profit from it. Seventy percent of the world's diamonds set in jewelry are cut and polished in India, a \$3.3 billion industry.

Most of the Indian workforce is comprised of farm boys who earn tiny wages at small diamond-cutting sweatshops in the most impoverished sections of Mumbai, Surat and Ahmadabad. Almost 30 percent of this jewelry is imported to the U.S., which then turns them over for \$11 billion annual profit.

The Oppenheimers are a Jewish family and most of the worldwide tentacles of the DeBeers cartel, including the cutting, polishing and retail fronts of the diamond industry are controlled by Jewish sub-firms of DeBeers. In Europe everything pertaining to gems and diamonds has been in the hands of Jews since the middle ages.

Diamond dealers the world over, regardless of religion, are called by the Hebrew term Yahalom Manin (Yahalom means diamond in Hebrew). Rough diamonds are shipped from the mines to the Jewish areas of Antwerp or to Israel to be cut and polished.

In New York the billion dollar diamond trade is centered around 47th Street where 25,000 mostly Hasidic Jews are selling, cutting, polishing and marketing diamonds—from the most expensive to the cheapest mail order jewelry. Many of these diamond workers live in the Hasidic community of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, where they work with the police to gentrify the area at the expense of the African community.

Despite the fact that the diamond trade is supposedly based on Jewish brotherhood, it remains a cutthroat process with no loyalty to other Jewish people when it comes to making money. During the second world war the Oppenheimers sold industrial diamonds, needed for planes and armaments, to both sides—Nazi Germany and the U.S. government.

Today, the Israeli diamond industry, built after Israel seized Palestine as a colonial power, is doing everything it can to put the Jewish diamond traders in Belgium out of business.

Israel's bloody West African diamond trade

Diamonds are Israel's second largest industry bringing in at least \$13 billion. Israel buys half of the world's rough diamonds, two-thirds of which then go to the U.S.

Before the 2001 assassination of Congolese neocolonial leader Laurent Kabila, Israeli diamond traders had brokered an exclusive deal with Congo for their diamonds. It was similar to the deal Tempelman had made with Mobutu 40 years earlier.

The deal was worth \$600 million worth of diamonds for the Israelis in return for arming and military training for Kabila's troops. Even without this monopoly, certain firms in Israel still control 50 percent of Congo's diamonds exports, or a billion dollars worth.

Control of the trade in African diamonds may have played an underlying role in the recent deadly Israeli war against the people of Lebanon as well.

Lebanon also is said to have its fingers in the diamond trade, importing rough diamonds from Congo. More than 100,000 Lebanese live in Sierra Leone, and according to reports, are the "market-dominant minority" in the alluvial diamond trade of that country.

In Sierra Leone, Lebanese traders control the majority of diamond buying shops, allegedly also smuggling diamonds out of the country off the books.

According to an article by J. Peter Pham of World Defense Review, profits from some of these smuggled diamonds go to the Hezbollah resistance forces. We don't know if that is true or simply allegations of U.S. and Israeli backed journalists to justify Israel's deadly attacks.

One thing is clear though. African resources are used as a feeding ground by just about everyone in the world except African people themselves. As the white world and others get richer and richer off of the bounty of Africa, African people face genocide and ever deepening poverty.

The African People's Socialist Party and African people around the world intend to change that.

Africa and all its resources belong to African people everywhere

During the 19th century Belgian genocide of African people in Congo, an observer wrote, "This rubber traffic is steeped in blood, and if the [Africans] were to rise up and sweep every white person on the Upper Congo into eternity, there would still be left a fearful balance to their credit."

Across the globe oppressed peoples are again rising up and challenging the U.S. and imperialist control of their resources and the accompanying slaughter and poverty. This is the basis for the crisis of imperialism that we see all around us.

It's simple. People are not going to just sit back and watch the resources that ought to be feeding their children and raising their miserable standard of living going to North America and Europe for our benefit. They want their diamonds back. They want their oil back. They want their land and culture, and their sovereignty to determine their own lives and destinies back.

African people want reparations for centuries of stolen labor and for the crimes of genocide and terrorism against them. They want U.S. and Western imperialism out. They want the U.S. military, the CIA, proxy armies and neocolonial puppets out of their land and out of their lives. They want peace without the interference of any thieving, ravaging force.

The white population of the world sits on the pedestal of their suffering, but the oppressed peoples are going to turn this equation around now. It's a life and death question. They will be free by any means necessary, just as they were enslaved and colonized by every means possible. The terror represented by the U.S. and the West won't just go away. It has to be destroyed. There has to be the violence of the just to end the violence of the oppressor, or the people will not survive. This is the struggle for national liberation.

Any progressive minded white person ought to support national liberation for oppressed peoples. We had better, because there will be no peace ever on this planet until the oppressed peoples win their liberation from the grip of imperialist power.

The resistance in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq represent the future. The longevity of Fidel and the Cuban revolution despite ongoing U.S.

attacks represent the future. The swagger and confidence of Hugo Chavez who identifies himself as African and indigenous in Venezuela represents the future. The power and determination of Omali Yeshitela as he organizes African people around the world to unite their homeland and come back for what is theirs represents the future.

For half a millennium Africa has been a bottomless pit of wealth and resources for us, for our world, our dreams, our opportunity to climb the ladder of success. Now the growing movement for African liberation will make the aspirations of African people a reality.

The movement to unite and liberate Africa

The African People's Socialist Party, along with African people in Africa and throughout the world, is building the African Socialist International.

African people are Africans wherever they have been dispersed by slavery and colonialism.

The problem is not racism in the U.S. It's not bad ideas in our heads that supposedly can be eradicated by a weekend workshop. The oppression of African people in the U.S. is political and economic. It's colonialism and neocolonialism for African people here, just as it is in Congo, South Africa and Kenya.

African people were brought to this stolen land as a commodity! The primary commodity, the primitive accumulation. Before the diamonds, before the rubber, before the bauxite, oil and coltan, it was the human beings themselves! There were no Dow or NASDAQ reports then but the stock market started with African people in chains on sale on every Market Street in every town in the U.S.

There are thousands of African people from the era of enslavement buried under the high-rise buildings of Wall Street. What could be more explicit than that? The enormous weight of our lifestyle rests on the backs of their worn and beaten bodies.

America is built on the backs of African people. African people are not U.S. citizens and never have been. They have been bought and sold and rounded up like cattle, leased and worked to death. They have been lynched and scapegoated and degraded. Every time they amassed a bit of money, acquired skills or started a successful

businesses, which was quite often, they were attacked and burned out and shot, or pushed out, urban renewed and gentrified.

They were granted the nominal right to vote in 1965, a century after the slavery system was supposed to have ended. Less than 35 years later the vote was taken away by the Bush election of 2000.

One in every three African men of childbearing age is tied to the prison system in the U.S. That has nothing to do with crime. The crime is what we have been talking about on these pages, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. The real criminals don't go to prison or face the death penalty. At least not yet.

Africa and everything in it and everything that has been taken out of it for the past 500 years is the birthright of every African person anywhere in the world.

The African Socialist International is an organization of African people from throughout Africa and all over the world. Its mission is to unite all of Africa and all of the African people and to liberate Africa for the benefit of its people. Nothing could be more right or more just. Africa is not going to be anybody's hunting ground anymore—not for diamonds or lions or rubber or human beings.

Chairman Omali Yeshitela who is leading the effort to build the African Socialist International put it this way:

"We are Africans. We place our future in Africa. The future of all black people on earth lies in Africa! Not in England, not in America, not in the Caribbean! You may end up staying there, but if you are going to be free, it will be because Africa is free and united and in our control...

"We need to have power and we can only have that power if we have Africa. I'm saying that if we are going to feed our babies, then we've got to regain our resources that white power is taking to feed its babies. They take the birthright of our children and feed their babies.

"We are socialists and we are Africans, and Africa's going to be free. As long as we are conscious and we can draw breath, every waking moment must be about how we can free Africa and how we can free our people!"

Solidarity with African people

The African People's Solidarity Committee is a white organization that was formed by the African People's Socialist Party and works under its leadership. We go into the white community as the voice of the oppressed out of the mouths of the oppressor.

This is a strategic function, a strategic relationship. The African Liberation Movement needed to win allies to their struggle from behind the enemy lines. We are there to break the assumed unity that this government expects us to have with its imperial policies that it enacts in our name.

We are there to build a movement of white people who can see our future in the future of African people, and the Iraqi people and Palestinians, Lebanese, Mexicans, Indigenous and Venezuelan and everyone else struggling for their liberation.

This year we are building African People's Solidarity Day, with events in Philadelphia, Boston, Oakland and St. Petersburg. African People's Solidarity Day will feature speakers from all over the African world to educate us about the real history, the real possibilities for the future.

These are events to tell this truth that we are speaking here on these pages. To urge others like ourselves to look at the bitter reality of the crimes and violence committed by us directly or in our name against African people and the peoples of the world for centuries, so that we could enjoy the lives we so take for granted.

Through African People's Solidarity Day we can begin to talk about reparations to African people. Not just from the government or from corporations but from white people ourselves. Support for African reparations is a stand to begin to rectify the wrongs done to African people, to build a principled relationship with African people. This is the process by which we can join humanity instead of policing it, exploiting it and attacking it for our own benefit.

As part of the stand of reparations you can return your diamonds to African people to be used as resources to develop Africa in their own interest. Reverse the flow of the past 500 years. Send the diamonds back. This is the real certification process—liberated diamonds in the hands of African people who are calling on us to stand in solidarity.

This is not about charity. This is not about movie stars having babies in Africa or rock stars having concerts for Africa. This is the united

African people themselves working to liberate their country and rebuild it brick by brick.

This is our chance to join humanity's forward motion and be part of building a new world in which peace and mutual respect among all the human family can finally become possible.

For more information on the African People's Solidarity Committee see www.apscuhuru.org or call 215-387-0919 or 727-894-6997.

Uhuru!

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Patterns of Inequality"

Omali Yeshitela, *One Africa! One Nation!* www.burningspearuhuru.com

Omali Yeshitela, *The Road to Socialism is Painted Black*

Penny Hess, *Overtaking the Culture of Violence*

www.burningspearuhuru.com