

# “Jive 8” and Poverty in Africa: Bob Geldof does Damage Control for War Criminal

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✘ The last few weeks have seen a gigantic propaganda onslaught by the state and corporate interests to confuse, misdirect and finally channel peoples' concerns anywhere except where they truly belong, that is, directed at big business and the political class that represents them, that has for hundreds of years raped Africa and the rest of the poor of this planet that in turn, made possible the obscene wealth we in the developed world not only possess but squander. A squandering that is directly responsible for the other major crime of our age, climate change.

But for a few weeks, sandwiched neatly between the tennis, cricket and the competition to win the 2012 franchise for the biggest business in the world, the Olympics, Africa will be fashionable for Warhol's fifteen minutes, then it'll be back to business as usual.

Which brings me to the crux of the entire media/propaganda behemoth that is 'Jive8' namely, that it has 'Sir' Bob Geldof doing a neat bit of damage control for his old mate Tony Blair, whereas Blair should be indicted as a war criminal, 'Jive8' has Blair as near as dammit, beatified for 'saving' Africa, largely it seems, from itself, or at least its 'corrupt' leaders.

Lacking a real alternate political leadership to the one offered by international war criminals Blair, Bush and co, we have been subjected to the disgusting spectacle, 24/7 of a bunch of 'celebs' parading around the planet, upping their CD sales (one artist involved in the Live8 concert by over 1800%) and generally having a jolly good time creating a warm and woolly feeling all over the damn place and in the process, making Tony Blair and his cronies smell sweet.

Of course I have been following the events of the past few weeks leading up to the meet this week of the seven biggest capitalist powers on the planet, the so-called G8 but until now have held off passing comment on the circus of fools, largely because I don't like to let anger get in the way of analysis. (Seven because the eighth, Russia really doesn't count. If any country should be counted as the eighth by rights it should be China but that's (almost) another story.)

Here in the UK, not coincidentally, the BBC has 'discovered' Africa all over again and we have been blitzed with programmes on the 'dark' continent. Channel 4 even went as far as to move its nightly news to Africa, no doubt giving the news benders a nice warm and woolly feeling there as well. As ever, the BBC is more than ever, nothing more than a mouthpiece for the British political class, peddling the latest line in re-writing the history of British colonialism.

Far from revealing the real relationship between Africa and imperialism, we have been overwhelmed with a carefully crafted disinformation campaign that sought to shift the responsibility from the capitalist world to all those corrupt African leaders, not that some are not corrupt but look around you folks, are not the 'leaders' of the free world mired in corruption from Blair's relationship to the government of Saudi Arabia to Bush's incestuous relationship to Halliburton and of course the criminal act of invading Iraq and Afghanistan.

The leading multi-national corporations would have us believe that they will voluntarily make good the theft of the past decades but any analysis of the past crimes of capitalism reveals they give up nothing, not an inch without being forced to so what makes you think anything has changed?

We need only look at the Anglo-American corporations involved in the giant con-game called debt cancellation and 'aid' to Africa:

Halliburton, Exxon Mobil, Coca-Cola, General Motors, Starbucks, Raytheon, Microsoft, Boeing, Cargill, Citigroup, Anglo American, Shell, British American Tobacco, Standard Chartered Bank, Barclays and De Beers are just a few of the alleged philanthropic corporations who overnight, have acquired a startling 'change of heart' concerning Africa.

But it is a fact that the leaders of the 'free world' have been forced to recognise the reality that the poor are poor because we are rich, the problem for capitalism has been how to sideline the exposing of the real cause of Africa's problems and of dealing with this reality. Enter Live8, Make Poverty History etc and of course, Blair's much lauded 'debt relief'.

Blair's propoganda campaign around reducing debt is nothing more than that, propoganda. Let's take a close look at what all the hot air about reducing debt boils down to.

To become eligible for help, African countries must bring about "a market-based economy that protects private property rights", "the elimination of barriers to United States trade and investment" and a conducive environment for US "foreign policy interests". In return they will be allowed "preferential treatment" for some of their products in US markets.  
'Africa's new best friends', George Monbiot, Tuesday July 5, 2005, The Guardian

Monbiot's article continues

The important word is "some". Clothing factories in Africa will be allowed to sell their products to the US as long as they use "fabrics wholly formed and cut in the United States" or if they avoid direct competition with US products. The act, treading carefully around the toes of US manufacturing interests, is comically specific. Garments containing elastic strips, for example, are eligible only if the elastic is "less than 1 inch in width and used in the production of brassieres". Even so, African countries' preferential treatment will be terminated if it results in "a surge in imports".

Monbiot's article ends with perhaps the most incisive comment on 'Jive8' I've read so far

At the Make Poverty History march, the speakers insisted that we are dragging

the G8 leaders kicking and screaming towards our demands. It seems to me that the G8 leaders are dragging us dancing and cheering towards theirs.

The vaunted \$50 billion of alleged debt cancellation is a complete fiction. In order for any of the eighteen theoretically eligible African countries to get their debt cancelled, they have to comply with so many conditions, that it will be a miracle if a single country actually benefits. In fact the latest 'offer' goes much further than the Structural Adjustment policy of the World Bank/IMF in that in return for the alleged cancellation of debt, African countries will have to hand over their governments to the West, privatise public services, introduce 'public/private initiatives', means testing, in other words, 'new age' colonialism.

When you break down the numbers which sound so enormous, not only is the 'debt cancellation' a small fraction of the total owed by African countries (estimated to be in the order of \$300 billion) it amounts to something like 5¢ per day, per person at most, hardly likely to make a difference. Compare the 'aid' to the amount extracted from Africa by the multi-nationals that according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), at current prices the value of the goods and services Africa produces in a year is \$773 billion.

And to 'benefit' from 'debt cancellation' they will have to open their markets completely to Western capital; guarantee that the 'free market' operates without let or hindrance; reduce their governments to little more than branch offices for the multi-nationals in the name of fighting corruption and in the case of the US, agree to become forward bases for US military penetration of Africa in the 'war on terror'.

The bottom line is as it has always been, the raw materials that Africa possesses in abundance especially strategically important materials that aside from oil of course, consists of manganese, cobalt, fluorspar, germanium, diamonds and gold. According to the World Bank, Africa offers "the highest returns on foreign direct investment of any region in the world".

By 2015 it is estimated that 25% of US oil will come from Africa, more than double the current level. Corporations such as Shell have already extracted more than \$50 billion in oil from Nigeria alone and in so doing wrought untold environmental and social destruction on the country.

Hidden carefully from public view through the presentation of fundamental disagreements between the USUK and the other major powers of the EU, France and Germany, as nothing more than personal 'spats' between individuals, is the stark reality of competing capitalist states.

The real crime is the way Blair and his gunsels have fooled the British public into supporting what amounts to nothing more than a publicity stunt designed to deflect attention away from the disaster that is the occupation of Iraq and the fact that the G8 meeting is nothing more than the AGM of the multi-national mafia whose public face will be that of magnanimous benefactors but in private will be arguing over how best to continue dividing up the spoils of empire and even more importantly, how to avoid economic catastrophe as the seven 'families' argue amongst themselves about how best to deal with what is to some of the more realistic leaders, the coming environmental disaster brought about by an out-of-control capitalist behemoth called the United States of America.

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