

“The Capitalist Lie”: A Postcolonial, Marxist Analysis of *The Extreme Centre*

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Abstract:

This research presents a postcolonial analysis of Tariq Ali’s non-fictional work. The ‘Extreme Centre’ focusing mainly on the Marxist and Althusserian theoretical perspectives of the self and the other. The notions of Marxist social divide between the bourgeoisie and the proletarians, and the Althusser’s Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses have been applied to decipher Tariq Ali’s standing as a postcolonial writer. The strong impact of the imperial and neo-imperial Ideology has been influencing the subjectivities of the masses around the world, including the masses in the West through the spread of imperial and neo-imperial Ideology. The interpellated subjectivities of the western proletarians are constructed by making them believe that the Western ideological and physical supremacy over the world would herald a golden age. However, the illusion of growth, opulence, and liberty is blemished by the outcomes of the imperial wars and capitalist greed. A critical reading of Ali’s work reveals that heralding of a Global revolution is indispensable yet not imminent, until the initiation of dissent from within the Empire.

Keywords: Post colonialism, Neo-imperialism, Interpellation, Hegemony, Marxism, Ideology, Ideological State Apparatuses

1. INTRODUCTION

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means

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of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of production are on the whole subject to it. (Marx and Engels cited in Easthope and McGowan, 2004, p.39)

Tariq Ali in many of his non-fiction works seems to reverberate Lenin's words: "our main efforts should now be concentrated on explaining to the proletarian masses their proletarian problems, as distinguished from the petty bourgeoisie which has succumbed to chauvinist intoxication" (Lenin, 1964, p.111). The "shameless capitalist lie" (Lenin, p.110) propagated by the colonial, neo-imperial, capitalistic, and bourgeoisie powers alike is that their interests and the interests of the colonized, neo-colonized and proletarians are one and the same; therefore, the growth, wellbeing or development of the capitalist elites is in fact the development of the proletarians as the growth of capital opens up more employment opportunities. The bourgeoisie class and its Ideology are both equally harmful for the rest of the society and "to deprive the bourgeoisie not of its art but of its concept of art, this is the precondition of a revolutionary argument" [Macherey, (1985, p.vii)].

Horvat (1982) rightly asserts in this regard, "capitalist development leads to the concentration of capital, employment and power" and in its severity, it may even lead to "complete destruction of economic freedom" (p.11). A majority of people or the proletarians so to say have least control over democratic, political and economic processes while the power and wealth concentrates in the hands of a small bourgeoisie, bureaucracy, or the Power Elite. Marxism critically emphasizes upon this phenomenon and points out the inequalities in terms of distribution of wealth and power between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat which ultimately gives birth to contradictions or class struggle, encouraging the proletarian masses to initiate struggle against the Power Elite (Gamble, Marsh, and Tant, 1999). In the Western capitalist, imperial democracies, the corporate culture, due to its overwhelming possession of wealth and power, influences the governments and their regulatory agencies for making policies that bring more profit for them, though mostly at the cost of broader social or economic good of the proletarian masses [Abeles (2006, pp.484-86)]. Macherey (1985) attaches his only hope with the proletariat class claiming that "only the proletariat class is capable of destroying the old world and its systems" (p.317). Post-

colonial theory further enhances the questions raised by Marxism about the relationship of the rulers and the ruled as it offers a critical response to the literary, political, and socio-cultural legacy of colonialism and provides a critique of the costs and outcomes of the colonization and even neo-colonization of the world by colonial and neo-colonial powers of the West [Schwarz, Slemon, Young, and Moore, (2005)].

Tariq Ali's, *The Extreme Centre (TEC)*, published in 2015, is an austere denunciation of the politics and politicians of the United Kingdom and other western countries that are responsible for maintaining the status quo in the Western world. They are the dictators in essence and they have turned their political parties into the living dead [Taylor (2015)]. Focusing on Britain, Ali suggests that the Labour Party has needlessly focused on imperial wars and deregulated capitalism. Ali very harshly elaborates Britain's relations with the US as “a dog-like coital lock” wherein both the countries are working together to fulfil their desires through imperial designs. Ali's censure on privatization of health facilities and the NHS, NATO's imperialism and the role of the media that has been made compliant to serve the purposes of the ruling elites raises serious questions regarding legitimacy of the actions taken by the ruling elites. While criticizing the US imperial strategies around the world, he postulates that optimism about the decline of the US hegemon is nothing more than wishful thinking as there is no serious threat to the US Empire from abroad. Even China, at this point of time, does not pose a serious military threat to the US neither there are any signs of China's desire to gain a proto-imperial status. The signs of a change from within are also not visible; thus, the decline of US Empire seems more of a myth than reality. The economic conditions both in Europe and America faced trouble during the 2008 crash, yet the breakdown in the capitalist system has not been irretrievable and the economic situation cannot be termed terminal though it is serious [Taylor (2015)]. The contradiction between the huge accumulation of capital among the elites and the needs of the general public is growing intense. Tariq Ali sees no solution coming from the top as the ruling elites are not capable of bringing change; the revolution may, however, come from below but for that mass mobilisations and creation of new parties and movements is essential. Ali sees the revolutions taking place in the South American countries

through the movements of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela as a ray of hope and links these patches of hope with what is happening in Scotland where the government had to administer a referendum to see whether people wanted to stay with the Great Britain or they wanted independence. But initiation of a socialist revolution in Europe would not be an easy task as the whole system of governments would hinder any such move [Taylor (2015)].

The growing neo-colonial impact of the United States in the world reveals that capitalism, militarism, and imperialism go hand in hand. The desire for imperial hegemony is not new to the US hegemon. It has its roots in the US history and the logic created by political-economic capitalism. The act of buying the Louisiana Territory by Thomas Jefferson, the conquering and colonizing of lands during the US-Spanish or US-Philippine War in the late nineteenth century and informal control of the foreign countries after the second World War through economic and military threats are a few examples from the past that fostered the imperial impact of America around the globe. The new kind of imperialism creates “subsovereignty” which means that the states remain independent only in theory, not in practice [Foster (2001, 1-2)]. Capitalism has divided the world into centre and periphery since its birth during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The major capitalist countries endeavour to open up new economies in the world in order to have low priced raw materials from the peripheral economies. The third world economies also serve as reservoirs of cheap labour. This scenario, controlled by the core countries in the world system, favours conditions in which the third world poor nations remain dependent and under debt burden of the imperial power [Foster (2001, pp.3-4)]. The document vividly proposed that dominance of the entire world should be the goal of the empire. The US will wage pre-emptive war against any nation that would pose threat to the US hegemon or its allies or any nation that is declared an enemy by the Empire [Foster (2001, p.2)]. With this new paradigm, the US has waged wars against Iraq and Afghanistan and interfered on many levels in the Libya, Middle East, and Pakistan. The European countries are no exception in this regard as the US imperial designs also include maintaining hegemonic authority over NATO and the EU.

The Marxist notion of Ideology in this study refers to Louis Althusser’s use of this term in his work *Lenin and Philosophy* (1971) wherein it is link with the notion of Ideological State Apparatuses. The word was originally used in *The German Ideology* (1840) written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, called Orthodox Marxists. Althusser’s notion of Ideology differs with the Orthodox Marxism as he refused to equate Ideology with false-consciousness based on his opinion that access to truth cannot be unmediated and consciousness is inscribed within Ideology. Althusserian notion of Ideology is open to possibility of revolution but to initiate emancipation through revolution a relentless critique of Ideology is necessary [Strickland (2012)].

By carrying out a qualitative, textual analysis of *The Extreme Centre*, the study strives to answer the following questions:

1. What is Tariq Ali’s stance on neo-liberal and capitalist values practiced by the Western imperial and neo-imperial powers?
2. How does Ali see the conflict of interest between the bourgeoisie (ruling elites) and the proletariats (masses) in the western world?
3. What solution does he propose for betterment of the western politics and society?

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study carried out textual analysis using the qualitative content analysis technique. In this context, content analysis helps in testing theoretical issues for a better understanding of texts or documents. Furthermore, textual entities such as books are distilled into smaller categories, assuming that the same phrases or words share the same meaning when they are classified under the same categories [Cavanagh (1997)]. In another study, Vimal and Subramani (2017) have described the following three different approached for carrying out qualitative content analysis: a) conventional: codes and various categories of coding are derived from the data itself; b) directed: coding is done through guidelines provided by a theory or some existing findings; and c) summative: comparisons and counting techniques, based on numbers, are used. In this perspective, this research employed the

directed approach to analyse the text as the codes while the coding categories were derived from the postcolonial theory. With this, a categorization matrix was created utilizing the model proposed by Polit and Beck (2004) and the process suggested by Marshal and Rossman (1995). The matrix was grounded in the themes taken from the postcolonial theory delimited to Marxist and Althusserian notions of Ideology, interpellation, and Ideological State Apparatuses. The categories were further divided into generic and sub-categories to accommodate the minor themes stemming out of the major themes. The textual data i.e. *The Extreme Centre* was coded on the basis of themes (neo-imperialism, Ideology, ideological state apparatuses, interpellation, and subversion) derived from postcolonial theory. In the end, analysis of the text through the coded material was carried out with the objective of answering the questions posed by the research; the analysis led to the findings and conclusion of the study.

3. ANALYSIS: “THE CAPITALIST LIE” IN *THE EXTREME CENTRE (TEC)*

Tariq Ali (2015) in *The Extreme Centre (TEC)* claims that the contemporary democracies in Europe, America, Canada and Australia are corrupt and “in serious trouble” (2015, p.1) due to their redundancy and “poverty of any real progressive ideas” (p.3) as instead of serving the needs of common people or the proletariat, the parties in power are serving the needs of special interest groups that interfere the political processes through spilling money into the democratic processes for lobbying. The democratic parties in Western Europe, since the collapse of Soviet Union, could not deliver policies that could improve the lives of their people, particularly the proletariat class. “Capitalism, intoxicated by its victory and unchallenged from any quarter, no longer felt the need to protect its left flank by conceding any more reforms. Even a marginal redistribution of wealth to reduce inequalities was off the agenda” (p.2-3). The ruling elites are either members of the capitalist minorities or they are influenced by them through the money they invest in the political processes. Politicians, as a result, evade all such principles of democracy that assure equality of power relations and distribution of

wealth. The distribution of wealth is quite unjust and the people of these countries are getting alienated from the democratic process.

Being a staunch opponent of neoliberal and capitalist economic policies, Ali strongly criticizes the politicians in the United Kingdom for being influenced heavily by the imperial intents of the United States and satirizes the way The Labour Party of Brown and Blair in the UK surrendered "willingly and completely to the needs of a deregulated capitalism and imperial wars" [Ali, (2015. p.3)]. Ali strongly believes that the contemporary politicians of Europe and America "mark a break with virtually every form of traditional politics" all these politicians including "share an authoritarianism that places capital above the needs of citizens and uphold a corporate power rubber-stamped by elected parliaments" (p.3). Intellectuals and activists of the political left see the explosive growth of national and multinational corporations to be structures that lead to wide spread attrition of basic civil and human rights as it deprives societies of equitable or just power-representation in political, economic and socio-cultural spheres. The corporate culture exploits the consumers by manipulating their consent through capitalist lie and by creating false needs to make them buy products that are not really needed. This is also done through the agency of Fetishism. They interfere, both openly and secretly, in the democratic and economic process through legal but very high-priced lobbying in order to influence the politics in their favour. Resources are wasted on expensive advertising campaigns and unnecessary competition.

The English bourgeoisie are concerned more about how to gather more finances for themselves and for the country and care only to formulate policies that favour their own class. They have a submissive media that promotes the Ideology that suits them and has the power to present fake reality to be real in order to generate false-consciousness among the proletariat: "They are immured in exclusive bunkers accessible only to bankers and businessmen, servile media folk, their own advisers and sycophants of various types. They live in a half-real, half-fake world of money, statistics, and focus groups. Their contact with real people, outside election periods, is minimal. Their public face is largely mediated via the mendacious propaganda of the TV networks" [Ali (2015, p.4)]. While celebrating the elitist hegemony, "they refuse to

step down and talk to the people whose worlds they have destroyed” (p.4).

The ruling elite in the United Kingdom tends to be anti-social and anti-democratic by not allowing serious criticism from the opposition forces, “In power they tend towards paranoia, treating any serious criticism as disloyalty, and grow increasingly dependent on spin doctors who themselves behave and are treated like celebrities”. The political opposition does not perform its oppositional functions well since it also forms part of the extreme centre and has interests in the policies made in favour of capitalism and the corporate culture, when “political differences are minimal, power becomes an end in itself and a means to acquiring money and well-paid consultancies after leaving office. Today, the symbiosis between power and money has almost everywhere reached unbelievable extremes” (p.4). The bourgeoisie tend to exhibit more interest in making money for themselves than allowing the proletarians to improve their social and economic conditions. Big institutions like National Health Service (NHS) that symbolise social welfare are destroyed through regulations like Health and Social Care Act. The services available to the classes other than the bourgeoisie are reduced day by day generating a “climate of discontent with the NHS, forcing the middle classes to go private and pay either out of their pocket or with their health insurance” in order to encourage them to forego whatever is left in the institution (p.57).

Ali’s (2015) criticism of the British politicians is analogous to the elite or the bourgeois class in the Orthodox Marxist theory which postulates that the removal of the capitalist bourgeoisie is an essential requirement for the proletariat revolution. Ali uses the term “Extreme Centre” for this dominating and exploitative class in the Britain and the America, “cowed and docile politicians who work the system and reproduce themselves are what I label the ‘extreme centre’ of mainstream politics in Europe and North America” (p.4). He warns the extreme centre to mend its ways. The extreme centre was quite moderate before “the warmongering Green leaders entered the government coalition to promote wars abroad and neoliberalism at home” (p.8). Ali has a genuinely Marxist view of the society and politics in the United Kingdom where the “US-styled politics” (p.7) and a hegemonic,

exploitative bourgeoisie is keeping the proletariat deprived, using the ideological state apparatuses of media and education and making them believe that their interests are the interests of all. The class of contemporary politicians in the United Kingdom, believes Tariq Ali, has a "dystonic vision of capitalist supremacy espoused by Washington, implying the deployment of military force abroad and the redistribution of income away from the poorest to the most prosperous layers in society" (p.6) They are a "class of nouveau entrepreneurs" who have hardly any concern for the "safety regulations or trade-union rights for their employees" (p.7). Ali posits that "The contradiction between the dense concentration of capital and the needs of a majority of the population is becoming explosive" and "it requires mass mobilizations, popular assemblies, to create new movements and parties" (p.15). These propositions have obvious connotations that refer to Ali's desire for a Marxist revival in form of a "huge revolt from below" (p.99) that requires mobilization of the proletariat to replace the bourgeoisie in order to take the means of production in their own hands in order to ensure a more just distribution of wealth or in the long run head towards a socialist society.

Ali, propounding a socialist stance, criticizes the steps taken by ruling bourgeoisie in the United Kingdom against social welfare where capitalism and neo-liberal economy has given rise to consumerism which has "conquered all" by manipulating human needs [Ali (2015, p.173)]. Having knowledge of the stern control of the petty bourgeoisie over the means and modes of production, he is disappointed that Working-class Toryism has vanished rapidly under Thatcher which paved the way for her dismantling of the 1945 reforms under the motto "Each for oneself". He rightly denounces the way Thatcher government promoted individualism and consumerism and privatized public housing and institutionalized "household debt via easy mortgages and borrowing facilities designed to aid the new consumerism" (Ali, 2015, p.5). Later, the extreme centre representatives Blair and Brown encouraged anti-social, neoliberal policies and "crippled" the National Health Service (NHS), once "the most socialized health care systems" in Europe, by taking it to privatization with the help of 2013 Health Act; the institute is now "reduced to a logo" (pp.55-60).

3.1. Capitalism, Militarism, and Neo-Imperialism

In the wake of North America's direct or indirect influence over the socio-political scenarios in the European countries and including the United Kingdom, Ali (2015) sketches a neo-imperialist picture of the region, particularly the Eastern Europe, where the neoliberal, capitalistic values imported from the North America are installed by the bourgeoisie. There has been an "increasing Americanization of European politics offering a Tweedledee or Tweedledum choice – with a decline of the popular voice" (p.3). Americanization of European politics and culture is a clear sign of a neo-colonial or neo-imperial domination of the North American empire on the United Kingdom and other European nations.

The proletariat suffer in the region because "most of the eastern European states are run by corrupt politicians, with capitalism the privileged reserve of criminal gangs of one sort or another" [Ali (2015, p.9)]. Ali warns the elitist rulers of the world by asserting that if the capitalist economic crises are not overcome, smaller nations like Scotland, Kurdistan, and Catalonia will take advantage and will look for stronger bids for freedom. Apart from this, many Socialist, anti-capitalist, and Left-wing movements having Marxist-Leninist or Maoist elements including Syriza (in Greece) and Podemos (in Spain) will get stronger, as they are already "looking closely at the Bolivarian republics of South America" to challenge and "defeat the extreme centre" (pp.9-15) represented by the petty bourgeoisie who allow "bankers, crooks" and "cheats" to exploit the economy and create "anarchy of credit creation" to "privilege the wealthy" (p.92). Prevalence of these political and economic conditions is making hope for social reform, to ease out the pain of the proletarian subjects, bleak and implausible. The United Kingdom cannot be separated from the neo-imperial hegemonic intents of the United States since its political elite is strongly bound and submissive to the imperial desire of the US bourgeoisie. The "special relationship" that exists between the US and the UK is termed as "dog-like coital lock" (p.124) that has its own pains and pleasures but being a lock it cannot be broken; the UK, instead, forms part of the imperial discourse of the global empire and likes to be part of its violent imperial adventures in the foreign lands.

Tariq Ali (2015) considers suppression of the movement of independence in Scotland and the negative outcome of the independence Referendum to be a result of “a campaign of fear accompanied by ideological tricks and knavery” of the hegemonic ruling elite of the United Kingdom. He traces the roots of pro-independence movement in Scotland in the anti-social, pro-capitalist policies of the ruling elites such as “Thatcher’s dismantling of the welfare state and Blair-Brown’s embrace of the same process” (7 pp.1-2). Ali’s analysis of the Scottish inclusion in the United Kingdom in 1707 is essentially postcolonial as he believes that Scotland was “tricked into the Union” (p.72) which was essentially a “compact between the English bourgeoisie and a weak and desperate Scottish elite, one of whose rewards was entry into English markets and later access to its colonies in North America and Asia” though the proletariats of the land gained little. Ali has reproduced the *People’s Vow* written by the Scottish writer Alan Bissett in *The Extreme Centre* (2015) while suggesting that a *People’s Vow* should be written and implemented for England as well. The *People’s Vow* appears to be a Marxist manifesto of change in its outlook and spirit:

We won’t let the poor suffer any longer for errors made by bankers and politicians. Our movement will endorse higher wages and deeper investment over greed and the backslapping bonus culture Together with trade unions, community groups, charities and academic experts, we will prepare a people’s budget to save Scottish public service. We won’t let anyone sell our natural resources to the highest bidder.... Scotland’s people will have the power to own and control their resources We won’t allow equality to become a buzzword We won’t let NATO use Scotland as dumping ground for nuclear weapons. If politicians fail to act in 2015, we will launch an intensive campaign of civil disobedience against Trident to highlight the deep inequalities between public opinion and Westminster. Nor will we tolerate laws that put our vital

public services in peril to global corporations [Ali (2015, pp.85-6)].

Inclusion of this document in the book is significant considering Tariq Ali's leftist and socialist background and his appreciation for socialist revolutions in the South America. The document clearly presents an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, resolve of the Scottish intelligentsia that wants to get rid of a system where politicians are backed and influenced by bankers and corporations, where the English bourgeoisie is in control of the resources of the Scottish people, equality is only a buzzword and imperial forces like NATO are using the Scottish land to meet their hegemonic needs. It also warns the extreme centre comprising a neoliberal, capitalist, Americanized elite to be ready for civil disobedience in case the public opinion is not heard soon. There are clear signs of a desire for revolution led by the proletarians against the bourgeoisie that should lead to a new form of government that would base its policies on the principles of social welfare and communal and gender equality. The document does not indicate a desire for a proletarian dictatorship, yet it has the germs for a system somewhat resembling Socialism.

The imperial, capitalist alliance of European Union (EU) is denoted by Ali (2015) as "Euroland in Trouble" which is in a mess and the stars on its flag "are beginning to fade" (pp.88-108). Ali suggests that the neo-imperial agenda imposed by the United States is one of the reasons behind the decline of the European Union as the dream of Jacques Delors, the Frenchman, to create a social Europe "foundered on the born-again fanaticism of the Washington Consensus: neoliberal capitalism was the only way forward". Thus, the process of progress and development is hampered in the European countries due to emerging and seamless acceptance of the neo-imperial agenda based on the rule: "privatization at home, wars and occupations abroad" (p.91) sanctioned by the petty bourgeoisie of the extreme centre who are essentially "intoxicated by the triumphs of capitalism" (p.93). Europe in general and East European states in particular have become "vassal states" and are acting like "most loyal and compliant" subjects of the imperial United States (p.91). Ali images the EU as an imperialist, non-democratic,

hegemonic, dictatorial body "the mothership of the extreme centre" (p.104) which is governed by "set of unelected bureaucrats, working for banks, the IMF, the ECB, etc." who dictate policies to the elected governments of the EU, having the neo-imperialist North America at their back.

The masses and the proletariats living in the EU are either less aware of the situation or under influence of an interpellative Capitalist Lie propagated by petty bourgeoisie or "merchants of the status quo" (Ali, 2015, p.108) heading the EU who make them believe that "only European Union is able to guarantee the social rights of all European citizens and to eradicate poverty. Only Europe can solve the problems of globalization, climate change and social injustice" (p.105). These shameless capitalist lies, Ali believes, are destined to wither away as many anti-EU parties have emerged out of "pervasive loss of trust in the elites".

Tariq Ali's (2015) evaluation of the EU and NATO is a discourse that can essentially be called Postcolonial and Marxist in nature. He discusses the history, function, and role of NATO with reference to Europe, the United States and the remaining world. The discussion starts with the description of what was discussed during the emergency conclave or held on 5 September 2014 in Wales to discuss how to deal with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). While discussing the matter, a significant question was raised regarding hegemony, Eurocentric and neo-imperial nature of the organization: "Should NATO prepare a rapid deployment force enabling it to send in a few thousand soldiers, commandos, backed by air power, wherever it was necessary to defend Western interests and the Global Empire? Or should it scale down its operations and accept that its interventions in Afghanistan and elsewhere had been a failure" (p.109). The question contains strong connotative meaning that NATO is a self-righteous hegemon, responsible to safeguard the Western interests together with the interests of the US Global Empire against the others or the rest of the world. There is a clear indication that NATO's "imperial impulse" to "exploit" and "civilize" its "Others" is alive and functional and even after the demise of the colonial era and failure in Afghanistan and Iraq they are ready to embark upon a new "civilizing mission" [Ashcroft (2004, 20)].

NATO was initially formulated to avoid or defend any Soviet aggression but it never fought a war during the Cold War years. It was used mainly for military propaganda and to establish a hegemonic control over its allies, rather than punishing its enemies that did not really exist. Ali (2015) sees the inclusion of the Eastern European states in NATO as neo-imperialist expansion of the US after the Soviet collapse since these states became US satellites. He criticizes NATO's role at the time of the Bosnian War when Serbs brutally massacred the Bosnians as NATO's bombing started "when the worst of the slaughter had already been perpetrated in Bosnia" and the whole campaign was a nothing but a "dismal failure" (p.115) as the "Yugoslav army emerged from Kosovo virtually unscathed" (pp.116-7). NATO's second military adventure was its operation in Afghanistan which was "another spectacular failure" (Ali, 2015, p.118) and "an unmitigated disaster" (p.119) as the situation in Afghanistan became worse after withdrawal of NATO forces.

NATO's six month's bombing mission in Libya was not much different. It destroyed Gaddafi government and the infrastructure and installed a comprador, puppet government there to establish neo-imperial control of the region, but the media was frequented by the news "about chaos in Libya from jihadi groups controlling the airports, to the NATO appointed prime minister being removed". Ali (2015) sarcastically questions "what more striking image of 'democracy' than a NATO-created parliament floating on the Mediterranean, waiting for a country to rule?" These brutal hegemonic adventures led to wreckage of a self-made enemy killed thousands and rendered millions homeless. The decision to deploy military to fight ISIS will bring only this much change that "the same people who were sent undercover to fight in Libya will now go openly, wherever needed" (p.119). The entire purpose of NATO's creation and existence is neo-imperialist in nature though at times the physical presence of its forces in foreign lands makes it look like a traditional imperial power.

Being handmaid of the US, NATO destroys countries, mostly in the Muslim world, and helps the empire replace regimes in these countries based on lies and false accusations like presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in Iraq; these lies interpellate the masses at home and abroad in favour of the imperial military action. Ali believes

that the decline of the global empire seems improbable in the near future and those who think that its economic problems or the setbacks in South America will lead to a decline soon have little more than wishful thinking. All empires in the history of mankind had their decline but in "false optimism of the US's imminent decline" the oppositional political forces should not "abandon effective opposition" against the "grand hegemon" [Ali (2015, p.125)]. The domestic financial and economic problems in the US make it even more violent abroad. The enemies like the Taliban, Gaddafi, Saddam and the Jihadists of the ISIS are presented as savage and horrendous enemies of the world through a strong media used as Ideological State Apparatus. The global media networks controlled and sponsored by the empire are made to propagate that any force that challenges the neoliberal, neo-imperial or capitalist agenda of the empire are "the enemies of the people who should be imprisoned, tortured or exterminated at will" (p.126). The Eurocentric view is promulgated through media networks out rightly rejecting any view point that challenges the imperial or neo-colonial discourse.

There is no serious threat to the imperial hegemony of the US. Even the threats imposed by China or Russia through the disputes in Ukraine and South China Sea do not offer any serious challenge to the empire that can develop into a political or military confrontation in the near future: "The global empire is the continued maintenance of US hegemony in a world where new forces are not rising up against it, but are certainly challenging it. Russia has defied it in the Ukraine; China is opposed to many US policies in the Pacific. Since NATO acts solely as the European arm of the global empire, other arms are being created in various shapes and forms in the Pacific Zone." [Ali (2015, p.121)].

3.2. Ideology, ISAs and Interpellation

Tariq Ali (2015) resists the Ideology propagated by the British politicians in power and critiques how they have maintained their hegemonic control over the interpellated subjects through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), particularly the ISA of media. He considers "New Labour" to be Blair's "most significance ideological success" (p.6). The neoliberal and capitalist Ideology was though a "hallucinatory

euphoria” yet it was “aided and abetted by a sycophantic news establishment, helped to cement the new consensus” (p.7). Ali calls it a grave “ideological assault”, “ugly”, “brutal”, and “hegemonic” (p.7, pp.61-68), which can be translated as ‘domination by consent’, in Gramsci’s words. The hegemonic politicians perpetuated their ideological assault by first controlling the BBC. To perpetuate their Ideology and to make full use of Ideological State Apparatus of media, they removed all those people in the BBC who resisted their ugly, brutal Ideology.

Ali comes up with an example of the hegemonic overpowering of the government on the media and using it as an Ideological State Apparatus by quoting a 1983 live conversation between a Bristol housewife Diana Gould and Margaret Thatcher that put an end to live TV phone-ins involving the prime minister. The conversation took place in the background of the Falklands crisis when an Argentinian battleship was destroyed by the British Navy while it was actually sailing away from the Falklands. Thatcher did not like to be questioned on that issue and disliked the overall coverage of the issue considering it “too left-wing”. As a result, BBC was transformed into “the top heavy managerial monster” (p.65). Later, BBC started suffering from an “atmosphere of fear and self-censorship” where “creativity had been suffocated” and “yes-men” were promoted. Ali suggests that the British media cannot come out of the influence and interference of the extreme centre “unless there is an uprising by licence-fee payers” (Ali, 2015, p.67-8) or “a huge revolt from below” (p.99). In Marxist terms Ali appears to be hopeful about an uprising or at least a partial revolution by the proletariats and sees solution of many problems related to the middle and lower classes in active opposition of capitalism and imperialism.

The strong impact of the imperial and neo-imperial Ideology has been influencing the subjectivities of the masses of the world, including the citizens of the Western countries, through the neo-imperial Ideology and interpellation. Being subject to the new world order the masses in the West either “became passive spectators or active supporters of the new world order, busy reinventing themselves and rewriting their personal histories, caricaturing the radical upheavals of the past in which some had been enthusiastic participants” [Ali (2015, p.128)]. They have

been subject to commodification and objectifications installed by the capitalist and neoliberal strategies including “explosion of consumerism and celebrity-worship, profit and pornography” (p.128). The interpellated subjects of the western proletarians are made to believe that the US ideological and military domination would harbingers a golden age. The illusion of progress, prosperity and freedom is marred by the outcomes of the imperial wars and capitalist greed. The cost of the so-called “‘war on terror’ has been much higher than the price of the Vietnam War while the petty bourgeoisie ruling the nations bound with the imperial designs are plundering their resources through corruption. To justify its existence, the empire keeps on making or defining its new enemies. The current new enemies “are either former Islamist allies or new economic partners/rivals who refuse to surrender their sovereignty altogether” (p.129). Despite its apparent greed, military brutality and capitalist lies, the chances of defeat coming from outer forces like a rising China, Putin’s Russia or rise of political Islam, seem bleak. Ali asserts that the power houses of the US can only be defeated from internal political forces. The neo-imperial Ideology has interpellated the subjectivities of its proletariats so much that those who oppose the foreign imperial adventures in the US and Europe are considered either “bad patriots” or “a little more than back-stabbing traitors” (pp.141-2). The moderate Islamist forces of the Arab East are playing the role of the comprador class of petty bourgeoisie that has no will to carry out struggle for cultural or economic autonomy by opposing the neo-imperial policies of subduing and plundering the world in the guise of its civilizing impulse.

3.3. Alternatives: The Forces of Subversion and Dissent

Tariq Ali (2015), after criticizing the capitalist, neo-imperial, democratic values prevalent in the West, considers Socialist, Marxist Ideology, adapted by the Bolivarian leadership in South America, to be the alternative of the exploitative capitalist-democratic system: “the Bolivarian experience, though it is far from perfect, offer a much better model for Europe and other parts of the world than neoliberalism” (p.178). He argues that the masses are ruled and exploited by a few elitists who control the wealth and other power centres including the military organizations. The Bolivarian Revolution was a political process

in Venezuela led by the revolutionary iconic leader Hugo Chavez, the founder of Fifth Republic Movement and head of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. The uprising was motivated and named after Simon Bolivar, a revolutionary leader who came to prominence during the 19th century Spanish American wars for independence and under his revolutionary leadership many vital parts of the northern South America got independence from Spanish colonial rule. Chavez's claim to popularity was due to his efforts to establish popular democracy or Bolivarianism that will put an end to corruption and encourage economic independence ensuring equal distribution of wealth. Chavez utilized military for public service including anti-poverty activities, education, distribution of food in slum areas, and mass vaccination instead of using it as a repressive tool. He also introduced government funded health care systems and sporting facilities for the marginalized people in Venezuela. Chavez also planned and implemented to some extent Mission Habitat which provided housing facility with complete social services including healthcare and education. These revolutionary steps taken by Chavez have every reason for Tariq Ali to get inspired and propose a system in Europe and elsewhere in the world that may ensure basic necessities of life to the proletarian masses.

Ali (2015) venerates the Cuban revolution and the Marxist ideal of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (p.175) which can be achieved through a revaluation or upheaval and the consequent anti-capitalist structural reforms. Ali has a firm belief that the capitalist, imperialist system is doomed, though the state machineries are willing to do whatever it takes to save the system. Ali does not see a proletarian dictatorship, as conceived by Carl Marx, after over through of the bourgeoisie; instead, he advocates a revived and overhauled democratic system that is not run by a selfish gang of elites, established as a result of proletarian "movements from below" [Ali (2015, p.175)]. While reminiscing the Russian Revolution of 1917, Ali argues that conditions in Europe are different from that of Tsarist Russia. He finds Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the struggle of Hugo Chavez of Venezuela inspiring though these movements together with the anti-capitalist Bolivarian struggle in South America were suppressed time and again by the imperialist US and EU and their "media barons of South

America” (p.177). The process that empowered Bolivarian leadership in South America cannot be replicated easily in Europe due to deindustrialization and decline of the old working class. European trade unions and working classes have been demoralized due to privatization and other neoliberal policies. The movements like Radical Independence Campaign in Scotland, Syriza and Podemos, however, are beacon of hope inspirational guide for the European proletariats. Ali while quoting Lenin’s 1913 statement emphasises that oppression alone cannot encourage revolution, both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie should find it uncomfortable to rule or to be ruled in the old way. He believes that radical democracy is not the only solution, it is important to make alliances both on the proletariat and bourgeoisie levels in order to bring about change that will ensure heavy regulation of capital and state ownership of utility services.

CONCLUSION

Tariq Ali’s non-fiction *The Extreme Centre* (2015) is a critique of democratic capitalism and neo-liberalism in most first world countries and the capitalist lies spoken consistently by the ruling elites to ensure the masses that the economic, financial, and social policies they implement are in favour of both the capitalist elite and the masses. Ali’s censure of the neo-colonial EU and NATO is essentially Postcolonial and Marxist in nature. The US-Europe alliance of NATO acts as a self-righteous hegemon, responsible to safeguard the Western interests together with the interests of the US Global Empire against its others; i.e., the rest of the world. NATO’s imperial impulse is more concerned with improving its image as an essential force in order to interpellate the global masses into accepting a world view of their choice and to do so there is no better way than presenting and stereotyping the ISIS enemies. This process of othering is essential for the existence of the Self in the colonial discourse, the Empire as the Imperial Self cannot achieve value unless it has its Other, the enemy that is to become focus of power [Ashcroft (2004, p.156)]. By invoking the fear of threat of the enemy, NATO in fact desired to bring in significant policy changes with an aim to further negotiate its neo-colonial position. Through the spread of neo-imperial hegemonic Ideology and interpellation, western neo-imperial

powers have strongly influenced the subjectivities of the masses around the world in general and in the West in particular. The interpellated subjectivities of the western proletarians are made to believe that the US ideological and military domination would harbingers a golden age. The illusion of progress, prosperity and freedom is marred by the outcomes of the imperial wars and capitalist greed. Ali, after censuring the neo-imperialist demeanour of the West, considers Marxist-Socialist Ideology, like the one taken up by the Bolivarian leadership in South America, to be the most suitable alternative of the exploitative capitalist-democratic system. However, he rightly concludes that a positive revolutionary change would not be caused due to the oppression of the neo-imperial forces. Both the proletarian and bourgeoisie classes must find it uncomfortable to exist in the prevailing system to an extent that they find themselves compelled to initiate dissent from within the bounds of the empire itself.

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