

## China Plunders Congo, Exploits Miners - “Anti-imperialists” Approve

By Charles Andrews

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Late in January Sinohydro Corp and China Railway Group Limited re-negotiated their plunder of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). They hold 68% of Sicomines, a joint copper and cobalt mining venture with a local corporation. The two Chinese corporations will pay a pitiful [royalty](#) of 1.2% on gross sales.

The Chinese firms also pledged to invest \$7 billion in infrastructure in the Congo during the life of the agreement. However, in the previous contract they had agreed to put in \$3 billion but actually invested only \$822 million.

Congo is the world’s biggest producer of cobalt and third-largest copper producer. Chinese companies dominate its mining sector.

The Chinese state owns Sinohydro, the globally dominant builder of hydropower dams. The state originally owned China Railway Group Limited outright, then [spun off](#) the equity in shares traded on the Shanghai and Hong Kong stock exchanges. The state retains majority control, while [Lehman](#) Brothers, Allianz Global Investors, and ICBC Credit Suisse among others hold millions of shares, too. It is no problem; both the government of the PRC and Western finance capitalists are interested in profits.

Those profits come from the sweat, long hours, and dangers endured by workers. In the Congo, the mining corporations contract with logistics agents who in turn subcontract truckers to carry the ore to a seaport. If a trucker loses a cargo, it is out of his pocket. The truckers [went on strike](#) last year, demanding a risk allowance because of frequent robberies. Did the Chinese companies make a separate, more equitable agreement with truckers? Of course not. Western and Chinese corporations looked the other way while the contracting agents fought the strike.

For the people of the Congo there is no real difference between Chinese and Western exploiters. They are all in league with state bosses, they plunder the

mineral wealth of the country, they make and break promises about infrastructure and industrial development, and they care not a whit for the workers.

### **“Anti-Imperialist” Publicists Make Excuses for PRC Imperialism**

In a discussion posted on Youtube, Joti Brar, a leader of the World “Anti-Imperialist” Platform, excused the actions of PRC state monopoly capitalists in the Congo.

First, Brar tried to narrow the issue to private firms. “If Chinese companies are operating [in other countries] and they’re not run by the Chinese state...” Sorry, but they are. (All quotes are at around 1 hour 54 minutes into the [session](#).) Brar goes on, “The conditions for how they operate there will be the conditions of the country. ... China is not in charge of the conditions.”

Is this how communists think: let’s garner surplus value wherever we can, regardless of the workers’ misery? Brar says, “In countries in Africa ... the struggle of the workers is mostly against comprador governments, or capitalist governments, that allow particularly bad conditions to carry on. ... It’s not China that’s enforcing that. China says, ‘We don’t interfere in how you run your country.’” With a straight face Brar offers, “It’s not China’s responsibility to fix that.” Tell that to the truckers who move the ore to seaport.

This is not hands-off commodity trade. Chinese state capital in the Congo exploits workers just like Western corporate capital. Yet Brar has the nerve to declare, “It’s in the responsibility of the workers in those countries to fix that [the bad conditions].” Ms. Brar, when the day arrives that the workers *do* fix things, will Chinese capital want compensation for expropriated mines?

The apologetics of Joti Brar, the World “Anti-Imperialist” Platform, and similar publicists for Chinese imperialism are not only a moral outrage. Their stand against imperialism is only against *U.S.* imperialism – and *drains all revolutionary force* out of what remains. With rosy lies about the People’s Republic of China, they push aside the work of advocating, explaining, and organizing for socialist revolution in their own country. For credibility they talk a veneer of socialism; they join social democrats on particular injustices and

reforms; but their main activity is to peddle illusions about China, including its [perversions](#) of Marxism-Leninism.

Western publicists for China praise the carnage that globalization dealt the working class of their own country. One such person [claimed](#), while parroting the PRC slogan of “win-win cooperation,” that “trade with China boosted the annual purchasing power for US households.” The company moved your job to China for lower wages, but you can buy a cheap kitchen faucet at Walmart.

Does effective anti-imperialism in Western countries require socialist revolution? Not necessary; just support an up-and-coming imperial power as it moves to displace established, decaying U.S. imperialism. The apologists take pride in such opportunism, which is often rewarded with a junket, a small grant, or an academic appointment from the “Communist” Party of China, or the government of Russia, or both.

Charles Andrews is the author of [The Hollow Colossus](#).