THE WORLD’S RICHEST MEN

Behind every great fortune is a crime.
Honoré de Balzac, French novelist (1799-1850)

WORLD’S TOP BILLIONAIRES
RANKED BY ASSETS IN US$ BILLIONS

Carlos Slim Helu
Mexico
telecom

Bill Gates
USA
software

Warren Buffett
USA
investments

Bernard Arnault
France
luxury goods

Larry Ellison
USA
software

WHERE WAS THE MONEY MADE?
SECTORS THAT THE TOP 100 BILLIONAIRES’ WEALTH CAME FROM

WHERE DO THE MOST INCOME?
1990 to 2007

TOP 1% SHARE 2012

CASE STUDY OF CARLOS SLIM
The world’s richest man, who doubled his assets between 2008 and 2010, is a classic example of a tiny global elite, who have used monopolies, government corruption, and the support of the World Bank and IMF, to privatise public resources and extract vast wealth from ordinary people, often in the global South.

In 1990, Carlos Slim bought the newly privatised national telephone company, Telmex, in a sweetheart deal – with his friend then President Carlos Salinas – that included a prior promise on consumers, a monopoly of telecommunications for several years, and a $22 million loan from the World Bank. The deal made telephone services in Mexico some of the cheapest in the world, and paved the way for Slim to take over other monopolies.

In 2006, it was estimated that Mexicans contributed $150 per capita or $67 million total to Slim every day. His significant investments in oil and gas, mining and infrastructure companies pollute the Mexican environment through the emission of greenhouse gases, the displacement of local populations and the destruction of the country’s biodiversity.

Slim protects his wealth by fighting off anti-monopoly suits with legal action, making donations to all major Mexican political parties, through friendships with politicians including current Mexican President Felipe Calderon and former President Bill Clinton, and more recently via his philanthropic involvement in the health and environmental sectors to “whitecoat” and “green-wash” the poor social and environmental track record of many of his companies.

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