

# Nationalism is a deadly poison for the class struggle

(Part 3)



## Internationalist Voice

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## **What is a Marxist definition of imperialism during the decadent period of capitalism?**

If imperialism is not a manifestation of a major economic, military and repressive power such as the US, then what is the Marxist definition of imperialism? The fact is that such a definition is based on an understanding of world capitalism's development into decadence. Imperialism became a way of life in the capitalist system during its decadent period. Imperialism is not a specific policy carried out by any particular state. It can only exist on an international scale:

“The expansionist imperialism of capitalism, the expression of its highest stage of development and its last phase of existence, produces the [following] economic tendencies: it transforms the entire world into the capitalist mode of production; all outmoded, pre-capitalist forms of production and society are swept away; it converts all the world's riches and means of production into capital, the working masses of all zones into wage slaves.”[1]

The following short paragraph contains the core of the Marxist view of imperialism.

”Imperialism is not the creation of any one or of any group of states. It is the product of a particular stage of ripeness in the world development of capital, an innately international condition, an indivisible whole, that is recognisable only in all its relations, **and from which no nation can hold aloof at will.**” [2]

"The workers of all countries have a common mortal enemy: imperialism - the most characteristic manifestation of capitalism's political world domination and it appears in its final stage." [3]

During the rise of capitalism, imperialism was defined as the search for new colonies in the case, for example, of Britain, France and Spain. All the time, they were engaged in war with over because of the distribution of colonies. But, as we have seen before, imperialism can only be understood by world capitalism and world market developments. Imperialism in the decadence of capitalism is about the redistribution of the world market. It does not matter if it involves great imperialists such as the USA or small imperialists such as Iran, all states in the decadence of capitalism are imperialist.

“Imperialism is no longer defined by the search for new colonies without a permanent military rivalry between the capitalist states. This rivalry is now about dominating the world market, which can no longer expand, but only be redistributed by conquests and wars. All parts of the bourgeoisie, from the US to a small gangster like Saddam Hussein, are as imperialist and ferocious as before.

The fact that Iraq has devoured Kuwait, as well as Vietnam's defeat of Cambodia or the annexation of the Indian-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir, shows that not a single state can

evade imperialism today. Faced with an oversaturated world market, while being weary of their bankrupt economies, and though still heavily armed, these so-called oppressed nations can survive by taking over smaller countries. And so it goes all the way down to the bandit gangs on the streets of Beirut and Monrovia.” [4]

### **National liberation wars are pawns in imperialist conflict**

The slaughter that has taken place during “national liberation wars” are nothing more than a struggle between imperialists. If war is not the direct consequence of powerful states, they are the expressions of local imperialist contradictions. Often, bourgeois political organizations, on the left of capital, seek to justify nationalist hysteria, albeit in a “Marxist” disguise. The examples of Iran, Iraq and Turkey demonstrate this phenomenon clearly. Abdullah Mohtadi, a Kurd nationalist, was the first secretary general of the Communist Party of Iran (Komala) and Abdullah Öcalan (“Apo”) called his nationalist party the Labour Party, while referring to himself as a “Marxist”. Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (the current President of Iraq), has also called himself “Marxist” and even been invited to the Congress of Komala. In the 1952 edition of *Internationalisme*, entitled “The Evolution of Capitalism and the New Perspective” (No. 45), it states that:

”The truth is that the colonies have ceased to represent an extra - capitalist market for the metropolises; they have become new capitalist countries. They have thus lost their character as outlets, which makes the old imperialisms less resistant to the demands of the colonial bourgeoisie. To which it must be added that these imperialisms’ own problems have favoured – in the course of two world wars – the economic expansion of the colonies. Constant capital destroyed itself in Europe, while the productive capacity of the colonies or semi-colonies grew, leading to an explosion of indigenous nationalism (South Africa, Argentina, India, etc). It is noteworthy that these new capitalist countries, right from their creation as independent nations, pass to the stage of state capitalism, showing the same aspects of an economy geared to war as has been discerned elsewhere.

The theory of Lenin and Trotsky has fallen apart. The colonies have integrated themselves into the capitalist world, and have even propped it up. There is no longer a ‘weakest link’: the domination of capital is, equally distributed throughout the surface of the planet.”

”Today in a situation where even the oldest and most powerful countries are incapable of developing, the juridical constitution of new countries does not lead to any real progress. In a world divided up by the imperialist blocs every ‘national liberation’ struggle, far from representing something progressive, can only be a moment in the continuous conflict between rival imperialist blocs in which the workers and peasants, whether voluntarily or forcibly enlisted, only participate as cannon fodder.

Such struggles in no way ‘weaken imperialism’ because they do not challenge it at its roots: in the capitalist relations of production. If they weaken one imperialist bloc it is only to strengthen another; and the new nations set up in such conflicts must themselves become imperialist,

because in the epoch of decadence no country, whether large or small, can avoid engaging in imperialist policies.” [5]

### **Class against class instead of "nation against nation"**

"In almost every 'oppressed minority' is still a small 'oppression minority' reached to its high 'self-determination', Germans and Slovaks in the Czech territories, Ruthenia and Lithuania in Poland, and so on." [6]

In fact, apart from class oppression experienced some ethnic groups more repression in comparison with other people. Bourgeoisie tries to exploit this and use the smaller ethnic group as cannon fodder in their rivalries and adventure. Native workers against "immigrant" workers, Black against white, Asians to Europeans, Spaniards against the Americans and so on. Nevertheless, no matter what color our skin is or what language we speak, we have a common characteristic that we belong to the working class, and nation is foreign to us. Therefore, we are raising our voice and say, class against class. In short, nationalism is a deadly poison for the class struggle.

The independence struggle of working class (class war or class struggle) in the international scale (from Africa to Europe, from Asia to the Americas) is the only alternative.

"For the first time the polestar of strict scientific teachings lit the way for the proletariat and for its emancipation. Instead of sects, schools, utopias, and isolated experiments in various countries, there arose a uniform, international theoretical basis which bound countries together like the strands of a rope. Marxist knowledge gave the working class of the entire world a compass by which it can make sense of the welter of daily events and by which it can always plot the right course to take to the fixed and final goal." [7]

Just as the bourgeoisie is a class in international scale, the working class is also an international class. Therefore, the international of workers is formed to lead the struggle of working class on an international scale. After the Second International treason, Rosa Luxemburg pointed out the importance of the creation of a new international in order to lead the struggle of working class in all countries.

"After the treason of the leading states' socialist parties leadership that committed against the goals and interests of the working class, and after the retreat they had carried from the international proletariat policies to the bourgeois imperialism, it is of utmost importance to socialism to form a new workers' International, whose task will be to lead and coordinate the revolutionary battle actions against imperialism in all countries." [8]

Our ultimate goal is a society without classes. In a classless society where man's exploitation of man is abolished, there will not be some kind of oppression of the smaller ethnic groups, but each people group's free development is prerequisite for all people's free development.

**“In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”[9]**

## **Long live the class struggle!**

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### **Notes:**

[1] The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 8, Rosa Luxemburg

[2] The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 7, Rosa Luxemburg

[3] Guidelines for the tasks of the international social democracy, Rosa Luxemburg

[4] IR No 41 -1991

[5] Platform of the ICC, point 10

[6] The National Question, Rosa Luxemburg

[7] The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 1, Rosa Luxemburg

[8] Guidelines for the tasks of the international social democracy, Rosa Luxemburg, point 12

[9] Manifesto of the Communist Party, Chapter 2