

ANTI IMPERIALISM IN THE METROPOLE



“How then can the US society come to terms with its past? How can it acknowledge responsibility? The late Native historian Jack Forbes always stressed that while living persons are not responsible for what their ancestors did, they are responsible for the society they live in, which is a product of that past. Assuming this responsibility provides a means of survival and liberation. Everyone and everything in the world is affected, for the most part negatively, by US dominance and intervention, often violently through direct military means or through proxies.”

- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe the responsibility socialists, communists, and revolutionaries in the metropole have towards the struggle against imperialism.

We cannot describe what anti-imperialism in the metropole looks like without describing the following questions: what is socialism? what is a revolutionary? what is anti-imperialism? what is the metropole?

The return of socialist politics in the imperial center requires us to address many new questions. The end of the Cold War was complemented by the rise of finance and monopoly capitalism, neoliberalism. The end of the red scare and the beginning of the war against terror.

Colonialism and its successors imperialism and neocolonialism is led by the IMF, the World Bank, the US imperialist machine, their invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the constant threat of invasion and war against Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela.

The following people live under a violent, fascist regime permitted by the peoples of the occupied "Americas": The internal colonies of indigenous nations, the internal colonies of the African diaspora. The colonized peoples of the world who have fled US imperialism and its exports of economic, military, and political violence in the Global South. We see further examples when we examine other metropole nations (the African and Asian diaspora in Britain, indigenous islanders in the Pacific Ocean, indigenous peoples in Australia, the African diaspora in France, the Asian diaspora in Germany, etc.).

There is no class struggle in the metropole that does not advance the liberation of oppressed peoples

I. What is socialism

Socialism is the transition form of society between capitalism and communism. If we are to have a stateless, classless society, a society where human beings have the right to life, to live, with dignity, it will first be established by us taking the bourgeois state from the class that controls it. When we have taken the state from the capitalists, the reactionaries, the fascists, bourgeois ideology does not disappear. Those who controlled us have not magically disappeared.

It will then be necessary to engage in the struggle to bring about communism. The revolution has not truly begun until proletarians have seized power. How can we destroy the systems that oppress us if we cannot exercise control over them? How can we revolt against bourgeois culture? How can we revolt against the exploitation of our labor and the social constructs to oppress us if we do not have power? How can we revolt against fascism and the ideologies of European supremacy, of gender, sexuality, racism, ableism? In essence, how can we wage a social and cultural revolution, if the people do not have power? We cannot throw off the shackles of colonialism without socialism, and we cannot have socialism and liberation without removing the shackles of colonialism.

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e. exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the transition from capitalism to communism.

– V.I. Lenin,
State and Revolution

II. What is a revolutionary?

The path to socialism is a path of revolution. The oppressor class will never willingly cede the power it lords over us, and the past century has demonstrated they will utilize guns, bullets, economic violence, food shortages, propaganda and the full power of the state to ensure all those who stand in their path are crushed. There is a reason white Europeans and the colonized peoples willing to aid the colonial project do not support the liberation movements of oppressed nations. Liberation means two things: land, and culture. The European and their descendants maintain a monopoly on both and deny oppressed peoples their right to either. They fear the colonized person with their own nations, with their own guns, with their own history and creativity. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the apartheid states of the settler colonial project.

To be a revolutionary is to foment and build for revolution. The violent overthrow of the oppressor class. This necessitates the liberation of all nations. Indigenous nations in the Americas, the African people in the diaspora, the elimination of the U.S. imperialist armed forces which restrict liberation movements in the Global South. Freedom for all nations to exercise self-determination of their peoples collectively.

This project cannot be achieved by struggling for reforms. Though the struggle for reforms may raise consciousness and confidence, it is by itself no means for building towards revolution. If there is not dedicated and principled building towards revolution, then reforms are only so useful as they relate to the construction of concessions the capitalist class may utilize to pacify the agitation and militancy of oppressed nations and exploited workers. To conquer military, social, and political power, our work must endeavor to achieve these conquests in practice.

The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air. Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie. In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat. (...) The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; (...) The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution.

— Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels,
The Communist Manifesto

III. What is imperialism

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

- V.I. Lenin,
Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism

Imperialism is that stage of capitalism where the control of land, culture, and power has been established via colonialism, and then transitioned to a control via finance, politics, resource, and the implicit threat of violence.

The colonial relationship involved the colonizer directly overseeing the territory they exercised control over. Colonial military forces, colonial guns, colonial administrators, and a direct economic relationship that was explicitly to serve the colonizing state, also known as the metropole.

The imperial relationship is one of maintaining power over the appointment and execution of loan policies through the International Monetary Fund, such as structural conditionalities forcing nations in the Global South to cede economic policy decisions to a cabal of Western bankers. It is also a process in which the former colonizer nations discreetly fund reactionary military forces in the Global South. Teaching Latin American reactionary dictators how to torture their own people, funding

the Contras in Nicaragua, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, sponsoring regime change in every country where the spectre of socialism raised its head in the 20th century. When all else fails, directly invading Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Afghanistan, Iraq.

...Western European capitalist countries, the US, and Japan established political, economic, military and cultural hegemony over other parts of the world which were initially at a lower level and therefore could not resist domination. Imperialism was in effect the extended capitalist system, which for many years embraces the whole world--one part being the exploiters and the other the exploited, one part being dominated and the other acting as overlords, one part making policy and the other being dependent.

- Walter Rodney,
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

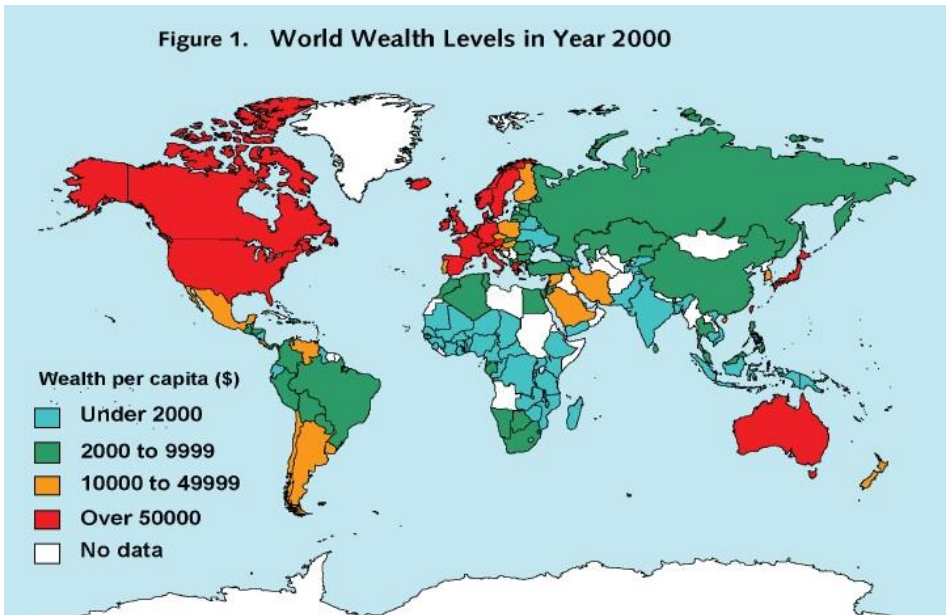
IV. What is the metropole?

The metropole is the imperial center. The colonial mother country.

The parent state or mother city of a colony; a mother country
- Oxford English Dictionary

A largely erroneous view is that the development of these underdeveloped countries must and will be generated or stimulated by diffusing capital, institutions, values, etc., to them from the international and national capitalist metropolises.

- A.G. Frank,
Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution



The modern character of imperialism is driven by resources and finance capital flowing to fill the coffers of industrialists, investment bankers, war profiteers, and the reactionary politicians in the metropole. To describe imperialism we must also describe the geographic socio-political context of the world. Not only that wealth flows to the Global North (the metropole), but that this relationship is purposefully exploitative. Europe and the United States have overseen a process by which the metropole is fed and maintained in its wealth from the resources and labor of the Global South. The development of a labor aristocracy, of a first world proletariat that need not revolt to survive (outside of their internal colonies) is the material relationship between the metropole and the periphery.

Africa is a paradox which illustrates and highlights neo-colonialism. Her earth is rich, yet the products that come from above and below the soil continue to enrich, not Africans predominantly, but groups and individuals who operate to Africa's impoverishment.

- Kwame Nkrumah,
Neo-Colonialism: the Last State of Imperialism

Today White workers in Europe and the United States are pacified by a vicious cycle of cheap commodities. The national liberation movements of the Global South stood and stand opposed to this vulgar form of neocolonialism. It is the manganese stolen from Azania (South Africa for the settlers) and Gabon that feeds the batteries in cell phones and electronics. It is the neocolonial labor and industrial production in South East Asia that produces these electronics, overseen by the puppets of empire. And it is in the first world where these profits and commodities reach their destination, satiating the first world masses.

In the beginning, certainly some of the great labor-movement leaders struggled against the industrial lords' absolute control of the economy, but the fight of white workers in the West has been essentially only for money. Those few who had visions of extending the fight, of demanding workers' control of production, never succeeded in transmitting their entire vision to the rank and file. The labor movement found itself asking the industrial lords not to give up their control, but merely to pass out a few more of the fruits of this control. Thus did the United States anticipate the prophecy of Marx, and avoided the inevitable class struggle within the country by expanding into the Third World and exploiting the resources and slave labor of people of color. Britain and France did the same thing. United States capitalists never cut down on their domestic profits to share with the workers-- instead, they expanded internationally, and threw the crumbs from their profits to the American class, who lapped them up. The American working class enjoys the fruits of the labors of the Third World workers. The proletariat has become the Third World, and the bourgeoisie is white Western society.

- Kwame Ture,

From Black Power to Pan- Africanism

Those in the Global North, the First World, the imperialist center, cannot address the contradictions inherent in our struggles without addressing where they are. The fight for liberation is not limited geographically. Its existence is material upon the relationships of the metropole, of Europe and its settler-colonial state the US, in exploitation to the Global South, the Third World.

V. Down with social imperialism!

What is social imperialism?

Social imperialism blunts our revolutionary edge. It is a shield that dispels the efforts made in the Global North. We expend our energy, our anger, our love, and our revolutionary spirit by avoiding fighting the enemy effectively and succinctly.

Social imperialism is a valve. It is a valve that releases the necessary crumbs to calm the revolutionary energy that builds up among the people. When cities and communities in the First World explode in revolutionary anger (i.e. Ferguson, Baltimore, Oakland, Gilets Noirs, Tottenham), social imperialism dissipates this energy into social-democratic electoral politics, wastes energy and lives stemming the anger with the insufficient energy channeled through the non-profit industrial complex. Many a potential revolutionary has failed to commit to the project of communism by accepting the comfort of union and/or non-profit work. Careers that allow them to retain a revolutionary aesthetic while engaging in maintaining the imperialist project.

Anything that would blunt the revolution is in fact its enemy. That is why we must always stand firmly opposed to social imperialism. The reformists who refuse to engage with revolutionary practice are no more allies than the imperialists they prop up.

We did not ask you white men to come here. The Great Spirit gave us this country as a home. You had yours. We did not interfere with you. We do not want your civilization!
- Crazy Horse

Should we argue and fight for a politics built upon the genocidal settler-colonial state? Our examples should be the centuries of anti-colonial movements and fighters who refused to accept a nation built upon colonialism, slavery, and genocide. There can be no form of socialism where a majority European population still owns the land, makes the decisions, and does not recognize and accept indigenous nations right to exist, to land, and to culture. Any attempt at socialism without decolonization is social imperialism with a European face. It is not socialism, but the most vulgar and oppressive appropriation of all liberation movements.

..In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation. If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well known words: "The last shall be first and the first last.

"Decolonization is the putting into practice of this sentence. That is why, if we try to describe it, all decolonization is successful..

- Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth

Our examples should be revolutions and revolutionaries, not social imperialists. Was FDR's New Deal of social security and medicare worth nuclear bombs, segregation, and Japanese Internment? Was the British Labour Party's National Health System and welfare state worth creating the State of Israel and the colonization of the Palestinian peoples? Was it worth the installation of a brutal monarchy in Iran? Was it worth the welfare reforms of the French Socialist Party and Vincent Auriol to begin the brutal repression of national liberation and decolonizing movements in Vietnam, Tunisia, and Morocco?

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it—relationships between individuals, new names for sports clubs, the human admixture at cocktail parties, in the police, on the directing boards of national or private banks—decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men by another "species" of men. Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution.

- Frantz Fanon,
Wretched of the Earth

DOWN WITH SOCIAL IMPERIALISM!

VI. A call for anti-imperialist action

It is not a matter of wishing success upon the victim of aggression, but of sharing his fate; one must accompany him to his death or to victory.

- Che Guevara,
On Guerrilla Warfare

It is insufficient for revolutionaries in the metropole to benefit from the language and aesthetic of anti-imperialism without expending any effort or practice dedicated to anti-imperialist action. To recreate the colonial perspective, to pat the internal and external colonized peoples of the metropole on the head in sympathy, while refusing to fight alongside colonized peoples in the effort for liberation, is another passive form of support for the continued violence upon colonized peoples.

Protest is when I say I don't like this. Resistance is when I put an end to what I don't like. Protest is when I say I refuse to go along with this anymore. Resistance is when I make sure everybody else stops going along too.

- Ulrike Meinhof

We must educate ourselves on the histories of indigenous and colonized peoples

Sabotage the U.S. army

Disrupt the military-industrial complex

Take and occupy land from settlers

Expel settlers

Fight alongside Indigenous soldiers

Build the Colonized People's Army

Take social, political, and military power from the settlers and the bourgeoisie

Build socialism

We are not going to use this platform to rail against imperialism. An African saying very common in our country says: "When your house is burning, it's no use beating the tom-toms." ... this means that we are not going to eliminate imperialism by shouting insults against it. For us, the best or worst shout against imperialism, whatever its form, is to take up arms and fight. This is what we are doing, and this is what we will go on doing until all foreign domination of our African homelands has been totally eliminated.

- Amilcar Cabral
The Weapon of Theory

ANTI-IMPERIALIST ACTION NOW!