



National liberation

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Since 1989, more and more oppressed nations, racial and ethnic groups and indigenous peoples, have demanded freedom from oppression and domination. The compulsory unions of peoples such as the former USSR or Indonesia have either broken up or are beginning to do so. Compulsion or national oppression of any kind stands in the way of international solidarity.

The working class, youth and popular masses of the oppressor nations must fight in solidarity with the oppressed. They must oppose all violations of national rights: for the right to learn and use ones own language, equal rights in education and at work, equal rights of citizenship. They must fight for the right to self-determination of all peoples ? including their right to form separate states if they so wish.

At the same time, since small states are even more at the mercy of the megacorporations, the imperialists and their allies, we need to fight for regional and continental federations of states under the rule of the working class and poor peasants. National unity and independence were no mere political ideals for the bourgeoisie. They had a practical economic purpose: the creation of a unified national market, protected against foreign competition, within which domestic capital could expand. This expansion worked so well for the initial capitalist states that capital flooded out into the non-capitalist world subordinating it to the old centres of capital.

In the first period of imperialism, this meant the division of the world amongst colonial powers. After the Second World War, when the ?American century? began in earnest, the colonial empires fell apart to be replaced by formally independent states. But, despite this, the former colonies are, in reality, no nearer to economic independence than they were at the dawn of the imperialist epoch. They remain oppressed nations.

The chains of economic dependence are forged from capitalist social relations and can only be smashed by the expropriation of capitalism itself. For this reason, only the working class has the interest and ability to fully abolish the national oppression of the semi-colonies ? which starts with the removal of imperialist forces. We must fight for the expulsion of all of NATO, US and UN-sponsored armed forces, installations and advisers and the abolition of the standing armed forces trained by and loyal to imperialism and their replacement by an armed workers? and poor peasants? militia.

The arbitrary borders carved out by imperialism in its division and re-division of the world in the 1880s, 1919 and, (hand in hand with Stalinism) in 1945, divided many nationalities and peoples, creating national minorities within the colonial and semi-colonial states

Far from solving the many national problems caused by imperialism?s division of the world, the inability of the semi-colonial bourgeoisie to unify or economically develop the nation results in the deepening of regional economic differences, the re-emergence of old national antagonisms and the creation of new ones.

Wherever a movement against this national oppression develops, the proletariat must support this people?s right to self-determination up to and including the creation of a separate, independent state. Once such a demand is embraced by the mass of workers and peasants, expressed for example in referenda or by mass armed struggle and civil war, revolutionaries must take a leading part in such a struggle. Their goal is for the working class to take power ? the strategy of permanent revolution.

The proletariat is an international class ? a class with no fatherland. Our general programme is not for the creation of ever more nation states or the breaking up of large ?multi-national? states into their national constituent parts. Secession is not the only means of liberating such countries from imperialism or national oppression. A combined struggle of the workers of the oppressor nation with the oppressed can lead to a voluntary union or federation.

While the working class must champion the legitimate national rights of oppressed peoples, it should fight nationalist ideologies, even those of the oppressed nations, which foment divisions and poison international solidarity.

Against the imperialists? policy of controlling weak and unstable nation states by dividing them against each other (Balkanisation), we call for voluntary federations of socialist states as a step towards a world socialist federation.

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