

Nationalism

**Is a Deadly Poison for
the Class Struggle**



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**Communist Revolution or the
Destruction of Humanity!**

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Introduction

Since nationalism is nothing to do with class struggle, the question is, what is nationalism and what does this question mean in various eras of capitalism, the period of capitalist development, as well as during the period of capitalist decay? What impact does nationalism have on class struggle? Furthermore, what is the Marxist definition of state, nation and imperialism? What kinds of approaches and beliefs did Marxists such as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg have? What was the position of the communist left on this issue? When will man's oppression of human beings cease? In this booklet, we will try to formulate some answers to all these questions by examining the evolutionary process of capitalism. Therefore, we will try to refer to past experiences as much as possible by effectively applying real Marxist beliefs.

The national issue during the rise of capitalism

In the development process of capitalism, the creation of new nations was a progressive step in the development of productive forces. This meant that new nations were able to develop within a social framework, i.e., a world market. Therefore, they often lent communists and proletarian internationalists their support in national liberation movements. Indeed, this cooperation during the rise of capitalism is used today by leftists as an argument for their support of national liberation movements in the present historical epoch. In the meantime, the bourgeoisie remained a progressive and revolutionary class that struggled to unchain itself from feudalism. The bourgeois

revolution against the feudal system was portrayed in a national form. Lenin describes this situation as follows:

“A precise formulation of this question, which no Marxist can avoid, would at once destroy nine-tenths of Rosa Luxemburg’s arguments. This is not the first time that national movements have arisen in Russia, nor are they peculiar to that country alone. Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of **national states**, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied.”¹

¹ The Right of Nations to Self-Determination - Chapter 1, Lenin

Yet, Marx already revealed the fraudulent nature of “national war” in 1871 when he wrote to the International Council on the occasion of the Paris Commune cases:

“The fact that the two armies from the largest military showdown in modern times, after the war, can be united to crush the proletariat is a thing of immense importance. But it does not as Bismarck imagines to work for the new form of society that has been made impossible for all time; on the contrary, it shows how the old bourgeois society is heading towards its total decomposition. **The National War symbolized the first form of heroism as the old type of society was powerful, and now this war has proven to be a pure giddiness.** The sole purpose was to divert attention away from class struggle and as soon as class struggle developed into civil war was any deceptive scenes aside. Class domination could no longer hide in the nationalist disguise: the national governments have come together to fight against the proletariat.”

The full support for the self-determination of nations or conditional aid

Marx, Engels and other communists did not support every national movement during the rise of capitalism, but only those movements that were progressive. On 21 July, 1870, Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel made the following historical declaration before the Reichstag:

“The present war is a dynastic war in the interest of the Bonaparte dynasty as the war of 1866 was conducted in the interest of the Hollenzollern dynasty.

We cannot vote for the funds which are demanded from the Reichstag to conduct this war because this would be, in effect, a vote of confidence in the Prussian government. And we know that the Prussian government by its action in 1866 prepared this war. At the same time, we cannot vote against the budget, lest this be construed to mean that we support the conscienceless and criminal policies of Bonaparte.”²

What was the Second International’s position on this issue at its congress in London in 1896? Before finding out, we need to note that even the Second International lacked clarity on this issue. The following explains the Second International’s decision in this regard:

“This Congress declares that it stands for the full right of all nations to self-determination and expresses its sympathy for the workers of ever country now suffering under the yoke of military, national or other absolutism. This Congress calls upon the workers of all these countries to join the ranks of the class-conscious [Klassenbewusste -those who understand their class interests] workers of the whole world in order jointly to

² The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 2, Rosa Luxemburg

fight for the defeat of international capitalism and for the achievement of the aims of international Social-Democracy.”³

“Workers of the world, unite!” instead of “Proletarians in developed countries, unite!” or “Classes in non-developed countries, unite!”

When Marx and Engels were tasked with write *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848, capitalism was only developed in a few countries, mainly England. One could say that today’s capitalism in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, etc. is more developed than was the case in England in the late 1840s. Yet, there was no call in *The Communist Manifesto* calling for proletarians in developed countries and the classes in non-developed countries to unite! Instead, Marx and Engels, writing from a historical perspective, wrote: “Proletarians of all countries unite!”

When the whole capitalist system became decadent

”Side by side with England, one nation after another stepped into the world market, capitalism developed automatically, and with gigantic strides, into world economy.”⁴

Luxemburg described the global historical process of capitalist development as a single and unitary process. She did not divide the

³ The Right of Nations to Self-Determination - Chapter 2, Lenin

⁴ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 3, Rosa Luxemburg

world into different historical parts, namely, senile capitalism and youthful and dynamic capitalism. Capitalism is a unified system that has periods of evolution and decadence, as the International Communist Current explains:

“But as capitalist social relations became generalized throughout the original enclaves of capitalism the ‘push’ of capitalist production towards the rest of the world accelerated. Instead of competition between individual capitals for markets within the national framework, the emphasis was now on competition between national capitals for the remaining non-capitalist areas of the globe. This was the essence of imperialism, which is simply the expression of ‘normal’ capitalist competition on an ‘international’ scale, backed up of course by the armed state power which is the distinguishing characteristic of competition at this level.

As long as this imperialist development was restricted to a few advanced capitals expanding towards a still considerable non-capitalist sector of the world, competition remained relatively peaceful, except from the point of view of the pre-capitalist peoples who were being plundered wholesale by imperialist cartels (i.e. China and Africa). But as soon as imperialism integrated the whole world into capitalist relations, as soon as the world market became completely divided up, then global capitalist competition could only assume a violent and openly aggressive character from which no nation, advanced or backward, could ‘hold aloof’, since every nation

had been irresistibly drawn into the rat-race of competition over a saturated world market.”⁵ [5]

The nature of the First World War

The First World War marked a historic turning point in the history of capitalism. In other words, it emphasized capitalism in the transition from a period of evolution to a period of decadence. The First World War was the result of decadent capitalism throughout the world. The war altered the conditions of the working-class struggle but did not change the fundamental laws of capitalist society, namely, the struggle between capital and work. As Lenin said, our epoch is the epoch of proletarian revolution. Luxemburg described the process leading up to the First World War very well:

“The events that bore the present war did not begin in July 1914 but reach back for decades. Thread by thread they have been woven together on the loom of an inexorable natural development until the firm net of imperialist world politics has encircled five continents. It is a huge historical complex of events, whose roots reach deep down into the Plutonic deeps of economic creation, whose outermost branches spread out and point away into a dimly dawning new world, events before whose all-embracing immensity, the conception of guilt and retribution, of defence and offence, sink into pale nothingness.”⁶

⁵ Nation or Class? - Chapter 3, ICC

⁶ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 7, Rosa Luxemburg

The First World War was a consequence of **the entire capitalist system throughout the world** becoming decadent, with trades unions, parliaments, national movements and so on, **on a global level**, joining the bourgeoisie. This means that no further reform was possible during capitalism's decadence in the world. Luxemburg skilfully explained the historic consequences of this situation:

“To the leading elements in the labour movement, the vote in favour of the war credits by the Reichstag group was a cue for the immediate settlement of all labour controversies. Nay more, they announced this to the manufacturers as a patriotic duty incurred by labour when it agreed to observe a civil peace. These same labour leaders undertook to supply city labour to farmers in order to assure a prompt harvest. The leaders of the social democratic women's movement united with capitalist women for “national service” and placed the most important elements that remained after the mobilisation at the disposal of national Samaritan work. Socialist women worked in soup kitchens and on advisory commissions instead of carrying on agitation work for the party.

Under the anti-socialist laws the party had utilised parliamentary elections to spread its agitation and to keep a firm hold upon the population in spite of the state of siege that had been declared against the party and the persecution of the socialist press. In this crisis the social democratic movement has voluntarily relinquished all propaganda and education in the interest of the proletarian class struggle, during Reichstag and Landtag elections. Parliamentary elections have everywhere been reduced to the simple bourgeois formula; the catching of

votes for the candidates of the party on the basis of an amicable and peaceful settlement with its capitalist opponents.”⁷

The national question within decadent capitalism

The discussion on the national question has been very hard to resolve over the last 100 years. What is a communist perspective on the national question within decadent capitalism? Let us see what Kautsky has to say to us on this question before he became a **renegade**. In the pamphlet entitled *Patriotism and Social Democracy* from 1907, Kautsky wrote the following:

“Meanwhile, it is becoming more and more unlikely that the proletarian and bourgeois patriotism again will join together to protect their own people freedom As long as the situation as is, no longer, in any country envisage the possibility of a national defence war, where the bourgeois patriotism can be reconciled with the proletariat.”

In fact, during the decadence of capitalism cannot be any national defence war. Rosa Luxemburg was one of the first Marxists who analysed this in her various works. When Kautsky became renegade and joined to the bourgeoisie, Rosa Luxemburg together with Lenin had a big responsibility to defend Marxism against revisionism. Rosa Luxemburg’s portrayal of this issue is very clear:

“The national phrase, to be sure, has been preserved, but its real content, its function, has been perverted into its very opposite.

⁷ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 6, Rosa Luxemburg

Today the nation is but a cloak that covers imperialistic desires, a battle cry for imperialistic rivalries, the last ideological measure with which the masses can be persuaded to play the role of cannon fodder in imperialistic wars.”⁸

The Italian Fraction of the Communist Left explains very clearly, in its magazine *Bilan* (No. 14), nation and state, and their role in the decadence of capitalism after the degeneration of the Third International. This explanation is very similar to Luxemburg’s depiction:

“The nation is no ‘one domain’ of the ‘who was born there’, but belongs to the capitalists as the nation state by organizing the exploitation of workers and defending their interests against the competing states. The capitalist state and nation are two inseparable concepts. A nation without a state is as impossible as a state without a nation. Truth is that the latter is a social tool that is necessary to mobilize all classes of society for the bourgeoisie in their struggle for world supremacy. As an expression of the ruling class interests of the nation may have no basis other than to carry out repression, in another word, a State.”

More than 50 years later, one of *Bilan*’s successor describes “national liberation wars” as pawns in imperialist conflicts with ‘socialist’ aggression. The International Communist Current writes:

⁸ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 7, Rosa Luxemburg

“The phrase ‘national liberation wars’ is included in the fight to the death between large and small imperialist powers to gain control over world markets. The slogan ‘support the struggling people’ is in fact a defence of an imperialist power against another with the help of nationalist or ‘socialist’ phrases.”

Lenin and the national question

Workers have no homeland, while national pride is totally alien to the working class. But, first, we should reproduce some quotes from Lenin:

“Is a sense of national pride alien to us, Great-Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not! We love our language and our country, and we are doing our very utmost to raise her toiling masses (i.e., nine-tenths of her population) to the level of a democratic and socialist consciousness. To us it is most painful to see and feel the outrages, the oppression and the humiliation our fair country suffers at the hands of the tsar’s butchers, the nobles and the capitalists. We take pride in the resistance to these outrages put up from our midst, from the Great Russians; in that midst having produced Radishchev the Decembrists and the revolutionary commoners of the seventies; in the Great-Russian working class having created, in 1905, a mighty revolutionary party of the masses; and in the Great-Russian peasantry having begun to turn towards democracy and set about overthrowing the clergy and the landed proprietors.... We are full of a sense of national pride,

and for that very reason we **particularly** hate **our** slavish past...”⁹

And Lenin continues:

“And, full of a sense of national pride, we Great-Russian workers want, come what may, a free and independent, a democratic, republican and proud Great Russia, one that will base its relations with its neighbours on the human principle of equality, and not on the feudalist principle of privilege, which is so degrading to a great nation. Just because we want that, we say: it is impossible, in the twentieth century and in Europe (even in the far east of Europe), to “defend the fatherland” otherwise than by using every revolutionary means to combat the monarchy, the landowners and the capitalists of one’s own fatherland, i.e., the worst enemies of our country. We say that the Great Russians cannot “defend the fatherland” otherwise than by desiring the defeat of tsarism in any war, this as the lesser evil to nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Great Russia.”¹⁰

As we saw previously, the Second International lacked clarity about the parliamentary and national question. Lenin inherited his vagueness about the national question from the Second International. He tried to adapt it to fit with Marxism. Contrary to today’s leftists, who support “national liberation” throughout the world, Lenin tried to solve the problem based on historical conditions. He claimed that, in developed capitalist countries, national liberation was meaningless,

⁹ On the National Pride of the Great Russians, Lenin

¹⁰ As above

while arguing that the situation in backward countries, such as Russia, which experienced progressive capitalist development, was different. Therefore, he wrote:

“First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw **all** classes of the population into politics through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie - a period that may be called the eve of capitalism’s downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the

antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the forefront.”¹¹

The same assessment of the differences between developed and non-developed countries evolved out of Lenin’s discussion with Luxemburg.

”In this respect Rosa Luxemburg has lost sight of the most important thing—the difference between countries, where bourgeois-democratic reforms have long been completed, and those where they have not.”¹²

Despite the lack of clarity that Lenin had on this matter, he rejected the national movements in developed countries such as Poland and focused on class solidarity and class struggles. As such, he discussed Polish social democracy and Polish workers as follows:

”The Polish Social-Democrats were therefore quite right in attacking the extreme nationalism of the Polish petty bourgeoisie and pointing out that the national question was of secondary importance to Polish workers, in creating for the first time a purely proletarian party in Poland and proclaiming the extremely important principle that the Polish and the Russian workers must maintain the closest alliance in their class struggle.”¹³

¹¹ The Right of Nations to Self-Determination - Chapter 2, Lenin

¹² The Right of Nations to Self-Determination - Chapter 2, Lenin

¹³ The Right of Nations to Self-Determination - Chapter 7, Lenin

We must point out that Lenin's ultimate goal was a class goal or, better still, his only goal was a class goal contrary to that of today's leftists; nor did he believe that any nation was entitled to privilege.

"In Russia, the creation of an independent national state remains, for the time being, the privilege of the Great-Russian nation alone. We, the Great-Russian proletarians, who defend no privileges whatever, do not defend this privilege either. We are fighting on the ground of a definite state; we unite the workers of all nations living in this state; we cannot vouch for any particular path of national development, for we are marching to our class goal along **all** possible paths."¹⁴

Luxemburg and the national question

Luxemburg was one of the leaders on the left wing of the Second International and clearer than Lenin about the national question. She stressed that it is only through socialism that self-determination can be realized. Her lessons about the decadence of capitalism, nationalism, imperialism and so on are still an inspiration source for revolutionaries. For her, national war during the decadence of capitalism was no longer possible. She believed that referring to national interests only misleads the masses and lures them into serving their mortal enemy, imperialism.

"International socialism recognizes the right of free independent nations, with equal rights. But socialism alone can

¹⁴ The Right of Nations to Self-Determination - Chapter 4, Lenin

create such nations; can bring self-determination of their peoples. This slogan of socialism is like all its others, not an apology for existing conditions, but a guidepost, a spur for the revolutionary, regenerative, active policy of the proletariat. So long as capitalist states exist, Le., so long as imperialistic world policies determine and regulate the inner and the outer life of a nation, there can be no “national self-determination” either in war or in peace.

In the present imperialistic milieu there can be no wars of national self-defence. Every socialist policy that depends upon this determining historic milieu, that is willing to fix its policies in the world whirlpool from the point of view of a single nation, is built upon a foundation of sand.”¹⁵ [15]

The core of Luxemburg’s lessons on the national question is the following:

“No one oppressed nation can obtain freedom and independence by the states that was provided by imperialist or as a result of the war. The small nations whose ruling classes are in cahoots with their reigns colleagues in the power group is merely chess pieces in major powers' imperialist game and like the proletariat abused of the war as a tool for them, therefore, after the war, abandonment and extradited to capitalist interests.”¹⁶

¹⁵ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 7, Rosa Luxemburg

¹⁶ Theses on the Tasks of International Social-Democracy, Luxembourg

In fact, during the decadence of capitalism, an organization cannot be a revolutionary one unless its programs are internationally oriented.

“The labor movement of today, [because of] its more arduous daily economic struggle, bases its mass organization on cooperation [with worker movements] in all capitalist countries.”¹⁷

Luxemburg and the united German Republic question

Rosa Luxemburg was unclear when she pitted herself against the imperialist war, as identified by Marx and Engels’ national programme from 1848, under the slogan of a united German Republic. This platform was articulated by the avant-gardists of the proletariat during the growth of capitalism and adapted to reflect this period. Therefore, Lenin criticized from a Marxist perspective the lack of clarity in Luxemburg’s approach to this question. Luxemburg wrote:

”In Germany the determination of the people found concrete expression in the demands formulated by the German revolutionary democrats of 1848; the first fighters of the German proletariat, Marx, Engels, Lassalle, Bebel and Liebknecht, proclaimed and fought for a **united German Republic**.”¹⁸

¹⁷ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 8, Rosa Luxemburg

¹⁸ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 7, Rosa Luxemburg

Is imperialism a major (economic and military) oppressive power?

The left of capital defines imperialism as the manifestation of a major economic, military and repressive power such as the US, Japan and the UK. The consequence of this definition is to mobilize the working class behind the weakness of imperialism.

“But while the leftists condemn the imperialism in countries like USA, UK and France, they usually also argue that Iraq or other ‘small’ countries are not imperialist. For them, only great powers are imperialist and by challenging of the United States by Saddam Hussein, he is fighting "objectively" against imperialism and therefore would be worthy to support by workers and "socialists". In this way using both the right and left of capital their definition of imperialism to mobilize workers behind one or the other side of the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

Against this assert the revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg said during the First World War against all hypocrites and charlatans who claimed that only one side was imperialistic but not the other.”¹⁹

A free state and nation cannot exist in the decadent period of capitalism. It must integrate itself into the capitalist mode of production and participation in world markets. This means that the new states arising from national movements will themselves become imperialists, regardless of their size or economic power.

¹⁹ IR No 41 -1991

An illustrative example is the Worker-communist Party of Iran, which supports or requires the creation of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. If this becomes a reality, then “Kurdistan” will become an imperialist state. Moreover, it will be a weak imperialist state. This means that the Worker-communist Party of Iran supports a future “Kurdish” imperialism against “Arab” (Iraqi) imperialism. The consequence will be that the Worker-communist Party of Iran will try to end or distract attention from the class struggle in the region. This allegation is “**blasphemous**” in the leftist milieu. Like *The Satanic Verses*, this party must be condemned.

“If a national bourgeoisie escaped the tentacles of one bloc, it immediately fell into the maws of another.

To give a few examples:

- In the Middle East the Zionists fight the British-backed Arab armies with Russian and Czech arms, but Stalin’s plans to draw Israel into Russia’s sphere of influence fail, and Israel is integrated into the US orbit. Since then, Palestinian resistance to Zionism, having previously relied on British and German imperialism, is forced into the hands of imperialist powers hostile to the US or to Israel: Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and China;
- In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh helps the French and British defeat the Japanese; then under the aegis of Russia and China he defeats the French, and inflicts wounding blows on the Americans;

- In Cuba, Castro withdraws from the US orbit to fall unambiguously into the hands of Russian imperialism.”²⁰

“Just like the military regimes of that time, they were forced to put down the workers’ resistance to austerity. They were and remained self-imperialists, and then they were forced to make their way in the world market. Imperialism is not a matter of ‘great’ against ‘small’, but it is capitalism as a mode of global production where everyone is strong or weak capital in international competition. Therefore, production may not ‘be disturbed’ by the workers’ struggle.”²¹

Are all states (regardless of their size, wealth, power etc.) imperialist?

In the decadent period of capitalism, **all** states regardless of their size, wealth and power were imperialist. The fact is that capital cannot be accumulated in **complete isolation** and no state can avoid this. They had to integrate themselves into the global market. *Nation or Class* describes this as follows:

“In addition to acting as agents of the big imperialisms by accepting their aid, advice, and arms, local bourgeois factions themselves become imperialist pure and simple as soon as they grab control of the state. Because no nation can accumulate in absolute autarky they have no choice but to begin to expand at the expense of other nations even more backward, and thus

²⁰ Nation or Class? - Chapter 1, ICC

²¹ IR No 41

engage in policies of annexation, unequal exchange, etc. **In the epoch of capitalist decadence, every nation state is an imperialist power.**”²²

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.”²³

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

²² IR No 41

²³ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 8, Rosa Luxemburg

“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.**”²⁴

“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.”²⁵

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

²⁴ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 7, Rosa Luxemburg

²⁵ Theses on the Tasks of International Social-Democracy, Rosa Luxemburg

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."²⁶

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

²⁶ IR No 41 - 1991

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.”²⁷

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.”²⁸ [28]

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,

²⁷ Platform of the ICC, point 10

²⁸ The National Question, Rosa Luxemburg

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.”²⁹

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

²⁹ The Junius Pamphlet - Chapter 1, Rosa Luxemburg

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.”³⁰

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.”³¹

Long live the class struggle!

M. Jahangiry
December 2010

³⁰ Guidelines for the tasks of the international social democracy, Rosa Luxembourg, point 12

³¹ Manifesto of the Communist Party, Chapter 2

Basic Positions:

- The First World War was an indication that the capitalism had been a decadent social system. It also proved that there were only two alternatives to this system: communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.
- In our epoch, the working class is the only revolutionary class. Furthermore, only this social class can deliver the communist revolution and end the barbarity of capitalism.
- Once capitalism entered its decadent period, unions all over the world were transformed into organs of the capital system. In turn, the main tasks of unions were to control the working class and mislead them about its class struggle.
- In the epoch of decadent capitalism, participating in the parliamentary circus and elections only strengthens the illusion of democracy. Capitalist democracy and capitalist dictatorship are two sides of the same coin, namely, the barbarity of capitalism.
- All national movements are counterrevolutionary, against the working class and the class struggle. Wars of national liberation are pawns in imperialist conflict.
- The reason for the failure of the October Revolution was the failure of the revolutionary wave, particularly the failure of the German Revolution, which resulted in the isolation of October Revolution and afterwards its degeneration.

- All left parties are reactionary: Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyists and official anarchists etc. represent the political apparatus of capital.
- The regimes that arose in the USSR, Eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc., while being called “socialist” or “communist”, only offered a particularly brutal and barbaric form of capitalism: state capitalism.
- The revolutionary organization constitutes the avant-garde of the proletariat and is an active factor in the development and generalization of class consciousness. Revolutionary organizations may only take the form of revolutionary minorities, whose task neither is to organize the working class nor take power in its stead, without being a **political leadership**, or a political compass, where revolutionary organizations’ political clarity and influence on the working classes are **the fundamental elements for the implementation of a communist revolution**.

Political belongings:

The current status, positions, views and activities of the proletarian political tendencies are the product of past experiences of the working class and the effectiveness of the lessons that political organizations of the working class have learned during the history of the proletariat. Therefore, Internationalist Voice can trace its own roots and origins back to the Communist League, the First International, the left wing of both the Second International and the Third International, and the fractions that defended proletarian and communist positions against the degenerating Third International, which was represented by Dutch-German fractions, and **particularly Italian Fraction of the Communist Left** and the defence of Communist Left traditions.