

THE INTERNATIONALISM OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY



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Both history and theory have demonstrated conclusively that it is impossible to overcome inequality, injustice, and class-based oppression under the yoke of imperialism. Imperialism is inseparable from capitalism and it is a permanent feature of its reproduction. Capitalism cannot survive without imperialism because it is a system that requires constant and ongoing expansion, it must break every border and surpass every threshold because, without increasing profit, it begins to decompose. Capitalism is also a system that cannot withstand development and growth on an equitable basis. Its highly competitive nature, which is constituent to its existence, demands that one group of capitalists dominate others so that it can create the conditions to continue growing. By design, the capitalist system will never allow for equal development to exist across the globe, for its existence to be perpetuated it must thwart the development of most of the world so that the strong can extract from the weak what they require to remain strong. Despite the elaborate narratives emanating from imperialist heads of State, and their armies of ideologues, economists, diplomats, and journalists it is utterly false that capitalism can produce equality

and support the joint development of nations across the world. It is not true that with the application of the right economic policies we can all rise above poverty, marginalization, violence, and the countless ills that an underdeveloped economy results in, under capitalism. On the contrary, capitalism requires imperialism to reproduce underdevelopment.

Given this undeniable reality, no struggle to overcome the many injustices that arise from capitalist exploitation can be strategically complete if it does not articulate an anti-imperialist platform. Every project aimed at overcoming economic dependency, addressing underdevelopment, or redistributing resources to fulfill social needs will eventually need to contend with imperialism as an obstacle. We have countless

historical examples of this fact. From military interventions to economic sabotage, the imperialism will not allow any country around the world to pursue a path that will grant them the sovereignty to develop and overcome a subordinate place in the global economy. Sanctions, debt, military invasion, and unbalanced trade agreements are all mobilized to secure the dominant place of the capitalist class in the imperial nations. Imperial powers rule both by coercion and

consent, mobilizing one strategy or another based on what is most advantageous and what is possible to achieve their aims. When building consent with the elites of the countries of the periphery is possible, the imperialist countries will pursue this route, thus making our national bourgeoisie allies and second-class beneficiaries of imperial rule. When co-opting the national bourgeoisie is not possible, the approach changes and nothing is off the table, from economic sabotage to outright military invasion.

"the capitalist system will never allow for equal development to exist across the globe"

Imperialism is not a nameless and faceless force operating without strategy or plan. Instead, it is a coordinated strategy developed by the bourgeoisie of imperialist countries and in our time, by the ruling class of the United States. For decades, the U.S. bourgeoisie has sought to establish dominance over the global capitalist system in order to create the conditions that will most profit and benefit the interests of its ruling class. Faced with the waning power of British imperialism, the United States seized the opportunity afforded by World War II to exert growing influence over the future of capitalism around the world. To this end, the United States has drafted doctrines, constructed ideological justifications, built military bases, created international institutions and sabotaged the

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development of others, bombed and invaded countries, provoked conflict, and aggressively exported the culture and ideals of capitalism. Almost 100 years into the unfolding of US imperialist hegemony the outcome is an environmentally devastated planet, where more research and investment is directed towards producing weapons than towards solving basic problems like hunger, illness, and illiteracy that more than a third of the planet

contend with. This is no accident and gradual and progressive reforms will not revert this reality.

Every day millions of people across the world participate in some form of action to try to address the various crises that capitalism creates. Whether it is a mass protest or a small mobilization to municipal government, a meeting on a university campus or under the shade of a tree in a plantation, an organizing drive in the poorest of slums, or a union election in an industrial plant – people across the world are struggling against capitalism every day. These struggles are the backbone of any strategy to transform our

reality and they must expand in size, becoming mass movements against capitalism. This necessary expansion will only be achieved by increasing the unity of those that are already in struggle, and for this broad unity across diverse sectors of the global working class, an anti-imperialist platform is the key. This is because to build a mass movement against capitalism it is necessary to develop the confidence and hope of the people in the possibility of transformation, to convince the masses that their reality can be transformed. To strengthen the sense of possibility and purpose of struggles, the global unity of all those engaged in confronting capitalism is a fundamental necessity, and the point of unity of all these struggles is precisely the common enemy of imperialism. The peasant farmers marching in India need to know of the political prisoners on hunger strike in Palestine who must know that workers are striking in South Korea, who must be aware of the mass general strikes of women in Argentina. They must know that regardless of the conditions and demands of their struggle, they are engaged in the same historic mission to transform reality and that their common enemy is the forces of imperialism that work every day to perpetrate the very system they are struggling to overthrow. Any strategy that assumes that it is possible to first address capitalism at home, to later engage in anti-imperialism globally is doomed to be defeated, for no national struggle today can advance without some measure of global unity.

The International Peoples Assembly was founded with the mission of building a global mass movement against imperialism and capitalism, forging the unity of the working class along an agenda



from the river to the sea! by Ghalmi othmane made for IPA art call in solidarity with Palestinian struggle.

of transformation. This global movement seeks to incorporate the various organizations and political instruments in every country in the world that are struggling to overcome capitalism. The strategy of the IPA consists in clearly identifying the actors of imperialism and drawing attention to their actions. We aim to build unity around a platform that is broad enough to encompass the diversity of the peoples of the world and their path to emancipation, while still maintaining strategic clarity and the capacity for coordinated action.

The IPA does not have the objective of building an organization, or a durable instrument that can guide struggle. Instead, our orientation is to be a constantly evolving process that advances an agenda of global unity against imperialism. As such, we understand that we are a continuation of historic efforts to unite the working class and build strength based on a common platform.



Haití resiste! by Valentina Aguirre made for IPA art call in solidarity with Haiti.

We have learned from the First International founded in 1846, that ideological clarity regarding the nature of the change we seek to accomplish is fundamental to be effective. It is not enough to be critical of capitalism and pursue diffuse efforts of contestation with a range of different strategic objectives. Instead, capitalism and its very nature must be understood for to dismantle a machine we must hold no illusions about its inner workings. The bourgeoisie's physiognomy and strategy must be unveiled and our horizon must include the overthrow of the class-based exploitation that sustains it.

From the Second and Third Internationals (1889 and 1919 respectively) we understand the centrality of the confrontation with imperialist forces, if any revolutionary path is to be pursued.

Many actions and instruments are necessary to build a global movement against imperialism. The diversity of actions and instruments must preserve a measure of unity while not only respecting but encouraging class struggle to develop based on the specific characteristics and features of every local reality. Unity is not a function of uniformity but rather a historic feat built upon diversity, autonomy, and mutual commitment to emancipation.

From the socialist revolutions in Russia (1917), China (1949), Vietnam (1955), Cuba (1953), Nicaragua (1979), and Venezuela (1999) we have drawn an unforgettable lesson – US imperialism will not stand by and allow the people to progress towards socialism in peace. The United States has invested every means and method at its disposal to interrupt and overthrow revolutionary struggles that challenge capitalism. This is an inescapable fact that if ignored, can only doom the revolutionary efforts of any country to defeat. US imperialism will not coexist peacefully with any project that aims to overcome class-based rule.

The many struggles for national liberation in Egypt, Iran, Guatemala, Ghana, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Congo, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Algeria, India, and countless others, remind us of the urgency and continued relevance of the struggle for sovereignty. The only way to build socialism is to assert the broad and popular participation of the people in the construction of their national projects. Every post-capitalist project will have to contend with its own reality, its social composition, and its various strengths and weaknesses, answering the questions posed by its own history. Upholding the right to sovereignty and denouncing the logic of colonial and imperialist tutelage is a principle that unites our anti-imperialist agenda. This history and the experience of the



non-aligned movement have pointed to the need for regional and international processes that build the confidence of the people in their struggle for self-determination. A global platform against imperialism must respect the various paths and challenges that any political project faces to overcome a history of foreign rule and capitalist exploitation. Our role is not to judge the correctness of the political action of a project but to stand with the popular forces and defend their right to sovereignty.

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In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, movements against capitalism were dealt a severe blow, as capitalist ideologues and imperialist apologists announced the terminal death of communism and socialism. During a period of seemingly uncontested US hegemony, we witnessed the naked self-interest of the US ruling class provoke wars and military conflict in at least five countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine). The death and displacement of these military conflicts must be added to the death and displacement that the aggressive application of neoliberal policies across the world has caused. Despite ample evidence pointing to the threat that US imperialism poses to humanity, this has been a period where anti-imperialism has regressed to the background. Ideological divergences and a crisis of confidence amongst the Left have resulted in dispersion and disunity that favors imperialist aggression. Uncontested ideologically, unchallenged militarily, and unequaled economically, US imperialism has marched forward during this period.

Despite the defeat this constituted for the historic movement to overcome capitalism, struggles continued and revolutionary projects persisted. In this context, the stubbornness of the Cuban revolution has been a shining beacon of enduring hope for the possibility of socialism. *The Cuban revolution has taught us in this period that the battle of ideas is an inescapable task and that solidarity is a non-negotiable element of struggle.* The

revolutionary march of the Venezuelan people has also taught us in this period that regional integration is crucial for defying imperialist aggression and intervention.

This legacy of struggle, defiance, and revolution has left us with no formulas, no recipes, and no manuals for treading the path forward toward socialism. What it has left us with is a series of principles that have guided the construction of the International People's Assembly, which we outline here.

UNITY AMIDST DIVERSITY.

Homogeneity is not a prerequisite for unity. Real unity implies embracing, encouraging, and accommodating the diverse histories and realities of life on the planet. Broad platforms must be created that contemplate the many forms of exploitation and oppression upon which capitalism relies. Our political platform is an expression of the values and struggles that we believe underlie the path toward socialism. As conditions evolve and change this platform must undergo a similar evolution and transformation. Our fronts of struggle are subject to constant evaluation and are permanently adapting to where class struggle is opening doors and building barricades. The basis of our unity is not derived from organizational models or instruments and is both strong and flexible enough to embrace and tolerate disagreement. We unite based on a commitment to advance forward together knowing that absolute agreement is not possible but also that a lack of shared vision is insufficient to build power. We attempt to strike this balance by advancing together on that which we have agreement and pursuing continued dialogue on that which we diverge.



MASS MOBILIZATION IS THE MEANS TO TRANSFORMATION.

The masses are the main characters of struggle and as such, their action and participation is central to any confrontation with imperialism. Declarations and the stated solidarity of leaders are important expressions that contribute to clarifying the position

" Through solidarity work, we express in action our principles and values."

of our organizations. Still, they are not enough to build a mass movement against imperialism. The IPA believes in the possibility and necessity of global days of coordinated action against our common enemies. With the creativity, political culture, and local character that each reality contemplates, we must still strive to engage the masses in anti-imperialist actions that allow them to see the connection they bear with people across the world. Internationalism is not the task of the international relations department of our organizations, it is the principle and mission of

all peoples in struggle and everyone must be given the task and opportunity to be an internationalist.

SOLIDARITY IS IMPERATIVE.

Our key objectives of forging unity, building the confidence of the working class in struggle, and developing political strength towards effecting change – are only possible through permanent solidarity actions. Through solidarity work, we express in action our principles and values. Solidarity actions build the internationalist consciousness of our organization's base while also teaching us all valuable lessons about our common political challenges. Our commitment to internationalism is measured by our ability to prioritize solidarity work amid all the many demands and challenges that our organizations must confront. Solidarity actions pursued by the IPA include:

- Giving visibility to struggles happening across the world in our social media, educational spaces, our organization's communications tools, and in regular reports on the international conjuncture
- Joining actions, be they mobilizations, signature drives, or social media campaigns to express our solidarity with a cause
- Organizing other organizations and political figures in our network to support causes that require our solidarity
- Producing art, culture, and educational content that expands our knowledge of the struggles that require our solidarity
- Organizing fact-finding missions, communications brigades, and solidarity trips to locations that require our urgent support
- Carrying out drives for material or financial support for people in need of our solidarity
- Establishing permanent brigades and or exchanges that advance the goals of a struggle and help an organization develop capacity in a given area. We do this by assigning our cadre to contribute to the goals and projects of another organization

THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez in the context of the threat of war against Iraq and then during the war itself, denounced the irrationality and hypocrisy of US aggressions around the world. Their actions were brave and in sharp contrast with the silence and complacency that dominated the mainstream media and the forums where power convenes and discusses the fate of the world. Speaking out against the logic and values of the decaying capitalist system is an act of resistance that we cannot abandon at any time.



End the US Blockade of Cuba! By Kimberly Barzola, made for #LetCubaLive art call.

Still, it is insufficient to merely denounce, we must also propose and project an alternative to the system that we criticize. To lay out the possibility of change we must first unveil the actions, motivations, and values of capitalism, exposing its fundamentally unjust nature. Combating the ideas of force requires permanent work. To engage in the battle of ideas we require technical skills, instruments, training, study, research, creativity, and most importantly ideologically grounded cadre to carry out this task. The IPA sees the battle of ideas as one of the most important parts of its mission. In every space, at every moment, and through all the means at our disposal we seek to call out imperialist actions and declare a position with the people and their right to sovereignty and prosperity. By supporting the communications efforts inside organizations and creating opportunities for exchange on political education, we develop the capacity to present our ideas to the people and defend them, dispelling the narratives and false reasoning of imperialism while critiquing the values of capitalism.

BUILDING POWER MEANS TAKING ON TASKS

Meeting and exchanging points of analysis or sharing updates on the conditions and realities of class struggle in our countries is a means of building unity but should not be the ultimate end of our work. Advancing together requires that each organization that integrates this process take on tasks as outlined by the projects and campaigns that we agree to work on together. Assigning cadre and resources to the organization of a meeting, or conference or developing the communications strategy of a campaign are all tasks of the organizations that compose the International Peoples's Assembly. The leadership that is assigned to participate in the spaces where decisions are made regarding our joint projects must take the responsibility of bringing to their organization a summary of the plans that have been made and a proposal of the responsibilities that the organization can assume to advance that plan. We must overcome bad habits of participating in meetings without committing to taking on tasks and not giving continuity to agreements after the meeting. Being engaged in deciding on the direction of the IPA requires a commitment to then taking on tasks collectively to the best of our ability.

MARCHING FORWARD TOWARD A SOCIALIST UTOPIA

Although we have come together as an anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonial network of organizations, our objective is not to be an instrument of critique. Our horizon is socialism and we see the task of building this alternative future as an exercise in great daring, creativity, and hope for the future. We don't ascribe to the idea that there is one path towards socialism or that any project possesses all the solutions to the challenge of building a post-capitalist society. The path towards socialism is a permanently evolving process that zig-zags forward through struggle. Socialism grows in adult literacy classrooms in Zambia, in indigenous communities that defend streams and rivers in Honduras, in worker cooperatives in India, and popular assemblies in Venezuela. The many peoples, projects, and spaces that organize, build and struggle collectively may have different methods and processes, but what they have in common is that they are motivated by the vision of a socialist utopia, a conviction that a better world is possible, urgent and ours to build.

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HOW TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY

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 International Peoples' Assembly

Join one of our solidarity campaigns

Visit our website www.ipa-aip.org, and find materials and information that you can use to talk to your organization about our solidarity campaigns and join in our calls to action

Sign up for our monthly newsletter: IPA, In Movement

Write to info@ipa-aip.org to sign up for the newsletter

Contact one of our Regional Secretariats or our International Secretariat

Email us at info@ipa-aip.org and send us any information about your organization, so we can learn about your work and your projects and find ways to collaborate and work together.





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