

# TEMPEST

## What does internationalism mean today?

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by **David Camfield**

*In this contribution to Tempest's 2025 education series, which has been lightly revised for length and clarity, **David Camfield** discusses working-class internationalism as an alternative to both nationalism and the kind of anti-imperialism that politically supports oppressive regimes in conflict with Western imperialism.*

*While supporting struggles for national self-determination, working-class internationalism insists that working people, wherever they are in the world, have common interests, and that our loyalties should be to the working class everywhere, not to any nation.*

*Tempest will continue to publish talks from this year's education series, including primers on Marxism, **socialism from below** (<https://tempestmag.org/2025/12/socialism-from-below-3/>), Anti-racism and abolition, internationalism and anti-campism, the **rank and file strategy**, (<https://tempestmag.org/2025/12/socialism-from-below-and-the-rank-and-file-strategy/>) organizing, feminism and LGBTQ liberation, and others. These talks are intended to serve as an introduction to Tempest's **core political agreements** (<https://tempestmag.org/about/our-politics/>).*

think the starting point for thinking about internationalism is to think about nationalism. Today we live in a world where nationalism is everywhere. We all grow up inside nationalism one way or another. Of course, that's going to look very different in the [U.S. or Canada](https://newpol.org/issue_post/are-you-a-settler/) ([https://newpol.org/issue\\_post/are-you-a-settler/](https://newpol.org/issue_post/are-you-a-settler/)) than in [Palestine](https://tempestmag.org/2024/01/what-would-it-take-to-win-in-palestine/) (<https://tempestmag.org/2024/01/what-would-it-take-to-win-in-palestine/>), [Iran](https://newbloommag.net/2026/01/19/campists-iran-reactions/) (<https://newbloommag.net/2026/01/19/campists-iran-reactions/>) or [Venezuela](https://tempestmag.org/2026/01/the-end-of-pretenses/) (<https://tempestmag.org/2026/01/the-end-of-pretenses/>).

But most of us learn to see the world in nationalist terms as we grow up, and the whole idea that underpins nationalism is that nationalism is all about, to use an academic phrase, an [imagined community](https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/4011-imagined-communities-an-introduction?srltid=AfmBOoqhfidMATroeuEUa_0A_m-5KSMTqLthNrFAzkGJsD8O6cSRg7QG) ([https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/4011-imagined-communities-an-introduction?srltid=AfmBOoqhfidMATroeuEUa\\_0A\\_m-5KSMTqLthNrFAzkGJsD8O6cSRg7QG](https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/4011-imagined-communities-an-introduction?srltid=AfmBOoqhfidMATroeuEUa_0A_m-5KSMTqLthNrFAzkGJsD8O6cSRg7QG)). The idea is that we are all members of the same nation, no matter if you're Jeff Bezos or someone working in an Amazon warehouse.

There is supposedly something that unites all members of the national community, regardless of what the real differences in their lives are, whether they're differences of wealth, power, or anything else. And so we often assume nations are just the way things are.

But this is actually not the case. It hasn't always been that people have lived in nations and thought of themselves as members of nations. Nations are not ancient or natural ways of humans organizing themselves. So it's important to pause to think about how nations and nationalism came to be.

When people tell stories about nations that make it seem like a particular nation has always existed or has existed since antiquity, that's a modern story that's being told, and that's a kind of retrospective projection—projecting back into the past something that wasn't really there. If you actually look into human history, you find that nationalism is a modern phenomenon.

Nationalism was originally the ideology of rulers who were building new states in the modern era and coming into conflict with their imperial opponents. Think about the formation of the United States out of the southern colonies of British North America, and later the Canadian state out of British North America's northern colonies (the term "the Canadian state" makes the point that it's a multinational state made up of Canada—the dominant nation—, Quebec, and Indigenous nations).

There were also people who were becoming the rulers of new states who were in conflict with pre-capitalist ruling classes— for example, in the French Revolution that created the modern French state or the creation of states like Italy and Germany out of what had previously been many smaller jurisdictions. The ideology that there was a community that bound together everyone, rich and poor, in these nations was a new thing. As the Italian politician Massimo d'Azeglio famously put it in the 1860s, "We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians."

People were speaking different languages, and there wasn't a single national culture. And so the people ruling these new states had to actually create, from the top down, this new way of organizing society. They did this to try to unify the population under their rule, to secure their rule over the direct producers—the workers and peasants who actually produced the wealth of society. They were also often doing this in the midst of conflict with other forces, other states.

So, again, nationalism has not always been there. These states were created before nations were created. It's not that there was an ancient nation that then created a state.

Another way that nationalism came to be so important was as a way of mobilizing a unity of people across social classes against imperial or colonial domination, usually under the leadership of the middle class or sometimes actually capitalists. We can think of Ireland, for example, which was Britain's first colony, or India fighting for its national liberation from British colonial rule, or Mexico's and Cuba's

struggles against U.S. domination. These are all examples where you had modern nationalisms that arose as part of these struggles against imperial or colonial domination. In these examples, nationalism was what was used in order to unite forces against colonial domination. It was a part of the struggle for independence and national self-determination.

But whether you have nationalism coming out of experiences like the United States or the Canadian state or France or Italy on the one hand, or whether on the other hand it arose as part of national liberation struggles, it served the leaders of these nationalist movements, who were either ruling classes already or groups that were trying to become new ruling classes. They needed to devise a unifying ideology. They had to have common symbols that people would identify with— flags, rituals, a common language, and so on—that would replace older, smaller-scale identities and cultures that people had connected with or understood the world through. This was a process of inventing traditions in which these nationalist leaders had to construct these ways of unifying people who had very different interests as all members of this new national unity. If you look into the history of the nations, you can see how this was done.

Because nations haven't existed for all time, all nationalisms have something in common, and there's always the question of who is going to be included or excluded from the nation. Who's going to get to count as a member of the nation, and on what terms are people going to be members of the nation? Are women going to be full members of the nation or not? Patriarchal domination put its stamp on many nationalisms, and women then had to fight for inclusion or equality within these nationalisms and nations. Are queer people counted as members of the nation? Are speakers of a language that's not the dominant national language members of the nation? In white-majority or white-dominated nations, are non-white people members of the nation at all, are they second-class members of the nation, or are they equal members of the nation? There are fights about all these things, about who counts, who's included, who's excluded. That's true of all nationalisms, whether they're nationalisms of a powerful imperialist state or nationalisms of an oppressed nation.

This takes us to another really important point, which is that although all nationalisms have something in common – they're all imagined communities that unite people across lines of oppression and across class lines – they're not the same politically. There's a really important difference we have to recognize: the difference between the nationalism of nations that are dominant in the imperialist world order we live in and the nationalism of oppressed nations. The nationalism of the United States, of course, is a prime example of the nationalism of an oppressor. Canadian nationalism is also the nationalism of an imperialist power. On the other hand, there's the nationalism of Mexico, which is oppressed by U.S. and Canadian imperialism. Within the United States and the Canadian state, there are the nationalisms of Indigenous nations, which are oppressed by settler colonialism. In the U.S. there's also the distinct phenomenon of Black nationalism. Within the Canadian state, there's also Quebec nationalism, which is the nationalism of a nation that's still politically subordinated within the Canadian state but oppresses Indigenous peoples within the borders of Quebec. These are all politically different from U.S. nationalism and Canadian nationalism.

Nationalisms of the oppressor, like U.S. and Canadian nationalism, are 100% reactionary. There is absolutely nothing good about the nationalism of an oppressor nation. But it's a little bit different when it comes to the nationalism of the oppressed because these nationalisms can be progressive to a limited extent, to the extent that they express struggles against oppression.

That said, the nationalism of the oppressed is still nationalism, so it has the problem of bonding people together across class lines. Working-class people and ruling-class people are all supposed to be members of the same national community – the exploited and their exploiters!. But the nationalisms of the oppressed, because of the way that they're related to struggles against oppression, are often the way that people are going to express their opposition and wage their fights. Even if these nationalisms of the oppressed have their problems, it would be a terrible mistake for socialists to dismiss them.

For example, consider Mexican nationalism. It was a way for the capitalist class and state authorities to bind together the population into the project of building the modern Mexican nation-state. This was done at the expense of workers, campesinos, and Indigenous peoples. At the same time, these very people have expressed their opposition to U.S. domination of Mexico in nationalist terms. But the Mexican ruling class has also used nationalism to try to prevent workers and the oppressed from organizing independently and fighting for change.

Nationalisms are all nationalisms, but not all nationalisms are the same. We have to be able to politically distinguish between nationalisms of the oppressor and nationalisms of the oppressed. As supporters of socialism from below, we should never be nationalists, even when we're in solidarity with people who are fighting against oppression in nationalist ways.

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This brings us to working-class internationalism. This is the alternative to nationalism. The key idea of working-class internationalism is that working-class people, wherever they are in the world, have common interests, and that our loyalties should be to our class everywhere, not to any nation. Old slogans, which go back to the 1800s, like “workers of the world unite,” come out of this tradition.

In countries like the U.S. and the Canadian state in the early twentieth century, when people who were not citizens were talked about as aliens, there were slogans like, “No alien but the capitalist,” which is part of this tradition of international solidarity.

Working-class internationalism is completely compatible with support for national liberation movements against imperialism. But there’s always been a debate about this too. For example, Rosa Luxemburg had a different take on this than Lenin did. This has always been a politically debated issue among supporters of socialism from below. But it’s certainly possible, I think, to be a consistent supporter of both working-class internationalism and also of national liberation struggles against imperialism and settler colonialism.

Working-class internationalism was born in the 1800s. In the second half of the 1800s, you had the first international working-class organization, the International Working Men’s Association (IWMA), which Karl Marx was part of. But there are a lot of other examples. Famously, in Britain, textile workers in places like Lancashire and Yorkshire, who themselves were suffering a great deal during the U.S. Civil War when the Union navy was blocking Confederate exports of cotton to Britain, exhibited strong support for the struggle against slavery. They did so even when it meant being thrown into unemployment. This is part of the long and proud history of working-class internationalism that we need to know, celebrate, and explain to people. Unfortunately, this tradition is not well known today.

Later in the 1800s, there was the so-called Second International, the Socialist International, which was set up by people who considered themselves to be supporters of the ideas of Marx and Engels.

World War I was a tremendously important turning point as an appalling war between imperialist powers about how they would divide up the world. Most leaders of parties affiliated to the Second International capitulated to nationalism and supported their respective states in the war. Socialists who opposed that war and then went on to support the Russian Revolution of 1917 were supporters of a renewed working-class internationalism. Most believed that it was necessary to

have socialist revolutions that would be carried out by workers' councils, which would create a much more democratic way of working class people running societies than any parliament. They united in what was called the Communist International (Comintern), often called the Third International, an organization of revolutionary socialist parties committed to working-class internationalism.

What came later, in the late 1920s through the 1940s was what some people call the “midnight of the century,” to use a phrase of Victor Serge, with both fascism and Stalinism acting as tremendously powerful counter-revolutionary forces. These forces dealt terrible blows to working-class internationalism.

But they didn't manage to kill it, fortunately. In the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, working-class internationalism has continued in various forms. You can go back to the 1970s and 1980s, when people in advanced capitalist countries supported the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In the Canadian state in the 1980s there were workers who engaged in hot cargo actions—they wouldn't handle goods coming from South Africa. In 1986, this took the form of a week of action where telephone workers wouldn't deal with calls coming from South Africa. Mail processing workers wouldn't sort the mail from South Africa. In Ireland, a small group of grocery workers went on strike for three years, between 1984 and 1987, because of their refusal to handle South African goods.

In the twenty-first century, we saw May Day 2008. On that day on the west coast of the U.S., the International Longshore and Warehouse Workers Union (ILWU) struck against the occupation of and war in Iraq that the U.S. was carrying out. And throughout the late twentieth century into the twenty-first century, there've been all sorts of significant cross-border solidarity initiatives between workers in the U.S. and workers in Mexico, supporting independent Mexican unions and other organizations of people in struggle in Mexico.

There haven't been nearly enough of these moments, of course, but they're there and we need to know that history and try to promote such efforts today. Even if working-class internationalism is no longer as strong as it was when it emerged in the middle of the 1800s, it has never died. This is a tradition we're a part of. We need to know it, celebrate it, and extend it.

But from the late nineteenth century on, nationalism gained ground inside the workers' movement, challenging working-class internationalism. After all, nationalism is part of the dominant ideology of most capitalist societies. People are taught nationalism at home, at school, in their churches and other religious institutions, and so on. The ruling ideas of every age are the ideas of the ruling class. Nationalism is the most important form that this takes in the world. So of course working-class people are going to be affected by that.

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*The struggle for self-emancipation doesn't have borders.*

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But there's also another aspect of the problem, and that is reformist politics. Most of the time, working-class people who want to change society for the better are going to think about doing so in terms of reforms within the existing social order, rather than replacing capitalism with a new kind of society. If your understanding of the kind of change that needs to be made is limited to social reforms within the confines of the framework of capitalism, which will be carried out by existing state institutions, you're going to see the world through the eyes of the existing state. And you're likely going to accept the framework of the existing state and the nationalism that goes along with that. Supporters of working-class reformist politics may have a different idea of what the nation should stand for than their employers do, but they're still going to be seeing the world in nationalist terms.

Of course, we have to make an important distinction between different kinds of reformism. Not all reformism is the same. Most working-class people who want change for the better look to reformism to enact that change. Their reformism is pragmatic. It arises because people don't believe that a revolutionary transformation of society is possible. This is different from the commitment to reformist politics that comes from the leaders of reformist political parties, the leaders of official unions, and the like. They're committed to reformism not in a conditional or pragmatic way. For them, reformism is a coherent ideological commitment fully consistent with their interests as a distinct social layer because the explosion of a social revolution would endanger the organizations and institutions they run. They're going to be committed to nationalism because they're deeply committed to reformism.

World War I, as I mentioned earlier, was a really important turning point because it was the point at which workers' movements that on paper were committed to international solidarity and opposed to war saw, in most cases, the leaders of their unions and political parties actually support their own national rulers in the inter-imperialist slaughter that happened between 1914 and 1918. When the commitment to internationalism was put to the test, in most cases it was found wanting when it came to the important political parties and unions of the working class.

Another historical development that we need to understand around all of this is how Stalinism was a very negative influence on working class internationalism. Socialists and other radicals all around the world rallied to defend the Russian Revolution of 1917 against counter-revolution. A bunch of countries, including the U.S., were sending military forces to overthrow the new revolutionary government that had been created by the working-class revolution. A way for people to express international working-class solidarity was to oppose military intervention against the Russian Revolution.

But problems arose whenever supporters of the Russian Revolution in other parts of the world were uncritical in their support of the Bolsheviks who had led that revolution. This became a really significant problem from about 1923, when the politics of the ruling layer that had consolidated itself in the USSR really became counter-revolutionary. Those rulers adopted the slogan of “socialism in one country,” which cloaked the reality that their project had become economic development in Russia, which could only be carried out by exploiting workers and peasants.

Instead of hanging on in isolated Russia in the hope that revolution elsewhere would come to the rescue of the Russian Revolution, the new rulers in the USSR subordinated world revolution to their project of national economic development. By the end of the 1920s, these leaders had consolidated as a new ruling class. They ensured that Comintern parties around the world were subordinate to them, both in terms of supporting the domestic policies of the new ruling class in the USSR and also its international policies.

What did this mean? Consider Spain in the 1930s: There was a fascist military coup in 1936, and the working class and peasants rose up against it. What then happened was a civil war between fascist and anti-fascist forces and at the same time a social revolution within the non-fascist territories of Spain. That revolution was ultimately suppressed by the leadership of the anti-fascist side, with the Spanish Communist Party and the rulers of the USSR playing an important counter-revolutionary role. At the very same time, the Comintern was calling on people around the world to support the struggle against fascism in Spain.

In the same vein, after the victory of fascism in Germany in 1933 the rulers of the USSR became very concerned to try to build an alliance with governments in Britain, France, and other countries against Nazi Germany. So they told Communist Parties in European colonies that it was more important for them to support this foreign policy alliance effort than it was to fight against colonialism. In other words, the rulers of the USSR directed them to subordinate the struggle against imperialism to the USSR’s foreign policy objectives.

This became even clearer in 1939, when the USSR signed a treaty with Nazi Germany. The alliance between these two countries was an extraordinarily disorienting political experience for many, many people on the left who'd looked to the USSR as an anti-fascist force. This was followed by the invasion of Poland. Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939, and the USSR invaded from the other direction. They carved up Poland between them. The USSR then also militarily expanded into the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, conquering them.

Communists around the world were told that they had to support these acts of aggression in the name of international working-class solidarity. Stalinism was actually gutting the meaning of international working-class solidarity.

After World War II, there was the Cold War—the face-off between the USSR and the United States and its allies. This was an inter-imperialist conflict. There were also a number of national liberation struggles that were happening around the world at this time. The message that the rulers of the USSR sent this time, a message which became very influential as a way of thinking about politics, was that the world was divided between what they called an anti-imperialist camp, which they led, and an imperialist camp. That became how left forces that supported the USSR saw the world. Most of the rest of the left lined up with the US and other Western states in the name of “democracy” against “totalitarianism.”

Here we see the development of two different ways of seeing the world as fundamentally divided between good states and bad states. Even though these were very different political visions whose supporters clashed with each other, they had this two-camp view in common. Both visions replaced thinking politically about the interests of the international working class (including national liberation) with thinking about the interests of a group of states – which meant the interests of ruling classes.

The ideology of the new ruling class in the USSR, Marxism–Leninism (which had nothing to do with the ideas of Marx or Lenin), changed the meaning of internationalism for many people on the left around the world. Instead of consistent international working–class solidarity and anti–imperialism, “internationalism” came to mean being aligned with some states against Western imperialism. Later, in the late twentieth century, when the USSR collapsed and when China opened up to the world market and adopted a kind of market Stalinism, there was tremendous disorientation among people on the left who’d accepted that “internationalism.”

Where does this leave us today? The United States doesn’t have the power that it once had in the world. It is, of course, a very powerful state, but it is also in decline. We also see the rise of China relative to the U.S. and to other imperialist powers. Russia has emerged as a regional imperialist power as well. And all around the world, we see the rise of hard right and far right nationalists of one kind or another.

So, whether it’s in the U.S., Europe, India, the Philippines, wherever it is, these kinds of right–wing nationalist forces are growing. And then on the U.S. left, we have, on the one hand, people who end up saying that if only the U.S. had a different government than the Trump administration it could go back to being a force for good in the world, promoting “democracy” against “authoritarianism.” It’s a way of saying that although there may be criticisms to make of the U.S., the left should see the U.S. as a force for good or potential force for good. We can hear this from Bernie Sanders, for example. Nationalism is also common on the Canadian left.

There’s an old term dating back to the early twentieth century for this kind of politics: social patriotism. It’s putting a left gloss on U.S. or Canadian nationalism. In this kind of thinking, there’s a way of seeing the world that divides it into so–called democratic countries, which are supported against the undemocratic ones like Russia and China. This is a way that the left ends up tailing behind Western imperialism.

On the other side of the coin is a kind of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” politics. Here the idea is that people on the left should politically support governments in conflict with the U.S., such as the former Assad regime in Syria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Chinese ruling class, or even Putin’s Russia, treating them as supposedly anti-imperialist forces. This kind of politics flows from an understandable hatred of the U.S.—a disdain or revulsion people feel for what the U.S. does in the world. But being anti-U.S. is not the same as being anti-imperialist. Such “enemy of my enemy is my friend” politics ends up seeing the world in U.S.-centric terms. Whether people are for or against the U.S. becomes the way that you assess them politically, rather than actually thinking about the global capitalist world we live in and where particular forces fit in that.

What’s the alternative to these terribly flawed kinds of politics? We need to renew internationalist anti-imperialism, which means thinking globally about how there’s a class antagonism, everywhere in the world, between exploiters and exploited. Socialists should be on the side of the exploited everywhere, in every country. At the same time, the world is organized in an imperialist hierarchy. It has the U.S. at the top, but there are other imperialist powers too, including the Canadian state. We should be opposed not just to U.S. imperialism but to all forms of imperialist power and subordination.

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International anti-imperialism is about being guided by the principle of consistent internationalist working-class solidarity and consistent anti-imperialism.

So internationalist anti-imperialism inside the U.S. starts with unflinching opposition to U.S. nationalism. It means being opposed to the tariffs the U.S. state may want to impose. We've seen this become even more of an issue under Trump. Unfortunately, the United Auto Workers' leadership supported Trump's auto sector tariffs. This is a strategy that ends up saying that the jobs of U.S. autoworkers are more important than the jobs of Mexican or Canadian autoworkers. In the Canadian state, internationalist anti-imperialism starts with opposition to Canadian nationalism. Socialists need to argue against workers aligning with their employers and governments in economic and geopolitical competition. What we need is international working-class solidarity, not competition.

The interests of workers in the U.S. are not advanced when workers align with their employers or with the U.S. state. Instead, U.S. workers need to forge bonds of solidarity with workers in other countries. That's an example of how to concretely apply internationalist working-class politics. The same is true in the Canadian state.

Additionally, we need to be opposed to U.S. and Canadian support for Israeli settler-colonialism – and to Israeli settler colonialism itself. This means we hold a position of unconditional solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for national liberation. That doesn't mean giving political support to Hamas, Fatah, or any other existing Palestinian political current. Socialists have to make a distinction between being in **[unconditional solidarity with a national liberation struggle](https://tempestmag.org/2022/03/the-abc-of-national-liberation-movements/)** (<https://tempestmag.org/2022/03/the-abc-of-national-liberation-movements/>) and politically supporting specific political forces within any national liberation struggle.

When it comes to U.S. attacks on Iran, we're unconditionally against any imperialist aggression and intervention. But that doesn't mean giving any political support whatsoever to the rulers of Iran, who came to power as a result of their counter-revolutionary suppression of the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

In this situation and others like it, being opposed to any imperialist aggression is elementary. Yet that doesn't mean politically endorsing the government of the Iranian capitalist state or any other state in conflict with the U.S. Instead, in Iran we should support the very courageous embattled forces that are fighting for democracy, independent democratic trade unions, women's rights, the rights of oppressed nations, and so on.

When it comes to U.S.-China rivalry, socialists must refuse to line up with the rulers of the U.S. in their increasingly intense economic and geopolitical competition with the rulers of China. We must oppose all forms of anti-Chinese racism and the demonization of China. But at the same time, we shouldn't in any way support the rulers of China. We have to refuse the idea that China is anything other than a capitalist society. And we want to be in solidarity with people fighting for change from below within China.

Along with this, we should defend the right of Taiwan to self-determination. Taiwan is a potential flashpoint for the U.S.-China rivalry. We need to support the right of the people of Taiwan to determine their own future. That includes opposing both any effort by China's rulers to annex Taiwan and attempts by the U.S. state to subordinate Taiwan to its own interests.

Finally, I'll just mention Ukraine and the Russian invasion. This is a clear example of Russian imperialism. Supporting the right of people of Ukraine to determine their own future without conquest and domination by Russia is important. But at the same time, that doesn't mean in any way politically supporting the Ukrainian government – it's a neoliberal government that's completely aligned with NATO and Western European imperialism.

What's complicated about the war in Ukraine is that it's a war of national self-defense by Ukraine against Russian imperialism that's caught up in the rivalry between Western imperialism and Russian imperialism. So there are two dimensions to the war. This means the character of the war could change. If Western imperialist forces became more directly involved it would then become mainly an inter-imperialist war rather than what it is now, which is mainly a war of self-defence against Russian imperialism. If that were to happen, we'd have to change our stance and favor the victory of neither side. However, at present we should favor a victory for Ukraine, without politically supporting the Ukrainian government.

There are two specific pitfalls we need to avoid with respect to Ukraine. One is seeing the war in Ukraine as only or mainly a conflict between Western imperialism and Russia. That's geopolitical reductionism. It negates Ukraine's self-defence against Russian aggression. Another mistake, which we see some leftists in Europe making, sadly, is opposing Western imperialism, Chinese and Russian imperialism but treating Russian imperialism as worse than other imperialisms. So some leftists are supporting European governments spending more money on military expenditures, and some of them justify it in the name of anti-fascism. They say that Western Europe has to build up its military power against the threat of Russian fascism. They're unfortunately being driven by their fear of Russian imperialism into lining up with the imperialism of Western capitalist powers. This is a really unfortunate drift and we need to challenge these comrades about it.

To wrap up, let's remember the core idea of socialism from below: when working-class struggle happens, it has a logic to it, a tendency that if the struggle keeps on growing and advancing, people find themselves in situations in which they have to grapple with organizing in new democratic ways in order to take the struggle forward.

This might happen within the context of a strike: You have a situation where you have a strike happening on a large scale, and then you have the question of how are we going to make sure that food delivery still happens? And how are we going to still keep public utilities going and so on. When we realize that we can't rely on the official leaders of the movement, people may begin to organize new democratic forms, organize themselves to do what these forces can't or won't do.

We saw this in Sudan, as people were building a democratic mass struggle against the military regime. New democratic forms have the potential to spread and to become more advanced, and then they actually pose a challenge to the ruling class. You can have a situation in which on-the-ground struggle grows into these new democratic structures created by people through their own activity. We can call this dual power: a new form of power, which could become the way that people rule and organize societies themselves, pitted against the existing power of the capitalist state and employers.

This isn't something which is imported into the struggle by socialists. This is something that comes out of the experience of class struggle. It reaches new heights, poses these new problems, and people come up with new solutions to those problems, new ways of organizing. And that's the seed of a new society. It has the potential to grow and develop into the basis of ways in which people take control of society into their own hands and begin a transition to a totally different kind of society. This is the idea at the core of socialism from below.

This is what the process of the working class emancipating itself looks like. And it's from that perspective that we come at the question of internationalism. International solidarity and consistent anti-imperialism are necessary parts of the struggle for workers' self-emancipation.

That struggle for self-emancipation doesn't have borders. We live in a capitalist world that has never been so interconnected as it is now. The fate of people in one part of the world system is bound up with the fate of people in other parts of that system. By supporting internationalism from below, or working-class internationalism and consistent anti-imperialism, we're recognizing that reality.

We're trying to rise to the challenge of living in this world that we find ourselves in. But we don't have a dream of a different society that comes out of nowhere. Our gamble is that these struggles from below for people to free themselves have this potential within them to create the basis of a new society.

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