

What type of anti-war movement? Pacifist or anti-imperialist?

The need for a working class anti-war movement to stop imperialist war drives is more urgent than ever. However working class independent action is not the goal of the coalitions coming together under the guidance of UNAC, the International Action Center, Veterans for Peace and others in the Spring campaign against the Trump escalations. “Peoples’ Fronts” such as these have never once defended the working masses, but have delivered them to tyrants bound hand and foot. “Peoples’ Front” diehards make a habit of corraling liberal pacifists who wish to oppose imperialist outrages, putting them up to de facto support of tin pot “nationalists.” And in this case, they take no notice of the coordination between superpowers against the social revolution, but see only the conflict within the Putin/Trump “bromance,” taking the allegedly “anti-imperialist”, i.e. Russian side and supporting the “legitimacy” of Assad. Passing this project off as an anti-war movement is to defraud the working class.

How can you have an anti-war movement that supports the dictator’s side in his war against the Syrian revolution? How do U.Sec./Solidarity, the Morenoists of the LIT and the Lambertists support this? By denying the agency of revolution when the masses attempt to take power from crony capitalist regimes enforcing neoliberal austerity in the semi-colonies. Are they abandoning the Syrian comrades of their own currents?

How can you claim to support self-determination when you give back-handed support to Assad in his war against the people of Syria? Whose self-determination do you support if you oppose Kurdish self-determination in action?

Don’t let anyone tell you these folks are

anti-imperialist just because they want to bring the troops home. Anti-imperialists don’t support bourgeois regimes and certainly not ones that historically carry water for imperialism like Assad with his black sites for the Bush/CIA wars, and anti-imperialists do not invest credibility in elections in bourgeois regimes that are one party states that poll only in areas under their own control. Anti-imperialists do not try to pass off a Pinochet-equivalent as an Allende!

Anti-imperialists don’t invest any credibility in bourgeois elections, never mind shill for a dictatorship and pretending it is popularly elected based on the votes cast only in areas it controls.

Anti-imperialists don’t justify a regime making war on its own masses.

Anti-imperialists don’t support the use of poison gases against popular uprisings, the destruction of neighborhoods by barrel bombs, the targeting of hospitals by bunker busters or ethnic cleansing by agreements between dictatorships and foreign powers.

Anti-imperialists do not bury the political differences.

Some UNAC leaders like Joe Lombardo and Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action used to know that it was not correct to chant “Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh...” or to associate Ho with all possible victorious outcomes of the Vietnamese Revolution. They knew it was not correct to support the VCP leadership and that such a critique did not prevent anti-imperialists from opposing the war drive of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon.

UNAC adherents continue to peddle Seymour Hersh reporting as an unimpeachable source for their claim that

all gas attacks are the work of “so-called rebels.” But Hersh’s credibility self-destructed on the Democracy Now telecast of April 25, 2016 and he has not been a guest on that program since.

Let’s for a moment step back from the blinders....

UNAC takes the word of Assad, Putin, Nasrallah and Khamenei against revolutionaries and even slanders the civil defense “White Helmets” rescue forces as “Al Qaeda” and “terrorists.” It does not occur to UNAC that the result of the U.S. invasion of IRAQ has been a righteous Sunni uprising against the prospect of elimination by ethnic cleansing.

In fact, to support UNAC is to support the projects of Assad and allied leaderships in the progress of suppression of dissent and making a proxy war with the U.S./E.U. bloc. **Real** anti-imperialism requires demanding the withdrawal of ALL foreign troops, advisors and mercenaries and their logistics and technical supporters of their military efforts. **Real** anti-imperialists are not indifferent to the drive to make Syria a colony of Iran and a host for Russian bases on the Mediterranean. **Real** anti-imperialists do not ignore the salivating of european imperialists and even the Brazilian Temer regime at the chance to profit from Syria’s misery with “reconstruction” project profits. **Real** anti-imperialists know you cannot credibly support the right of entry to the U.S. for refugees from the war in Syria and at the same time support Assad, who has made the most refugees in the 21st century.

The Syrian revolution is not being slaughtered by Assad alone. Hersh gives credit and rightly so to Russian

forces that stepped in and reinvigorated the forces serving the regime. Militants who call for self-determination on the one hand and support the interventions of Putin's imperialist kleptocracy on the other will never find a mass base among the international working class. They may find a mass base among those who never want to see working class independence and a working class anti-imperialist anti-war movement. That is why despite moving away from the single demand method of NPAC/SMC the ex-SWPer are now embracing what they used to deride as "laundry lists" of demands for their coalitions.

By putting quotation marks around the word rebel (in the [UNAC statement of April, 2017](#)), those who can read between the lines understand that UNAC is stating that the Syrian war is not a legitimate rebellion, that the uprising is not a revolution and

not a class war against the oppressive and brutal dictator Assad. Indeed, we heard coalition sponsor Rick Sterling tout the legitimacy of Assad's election to a room full of Peace and Freedom Party "socialists" who supposedly put no faith in the capitalist electoral system.

Leading UNAC members pretend they can recreate the mass pacifist anti-war movement of the 1960s without introducing any program for socialist revolution. They will tell you they WOULD support a socialist revolution in Syria, IF THERE WAS ONE. But you won't find any evidence that this is their view in print or in any of their resolutions. Don't expect them to tell you that peace requires the victory of the working masses over their exploiters, foreign and domestic. Instead they peddle the fraud of a unipolar world where the U.S. government (no mention of Capital or its

class!) is the leader of the one pack of bad actors on the world scene.

Conspicuously missing in their demands is **OPEN BORDERS TO SYRIAN REFUGEES!** This demand frightens them because when the Syrian refugees show up you get their oral history, a history which many in this movement insist are CIA fictions. But the voices of the masses of refugees are too numerous. The facts of the neighborhood by neighborhood self-organization, the social organization of the Local Coordinating Committees as the basis for the sustained participation of the masses in the uprising is coming to light as refugees are interviewed. Read Wendy Pearlman's [We Crossed A Bridge And It Trembled](#) and [Burning Country](#) by Leila Al-Shami and Robin Yassad-Kassab and judge for yourself.

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DEFEAT ALL IMPERIALIST FORCES IN THE REGION!

U.S./NATO OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA!

RUSSIAN IMPERIALISTS, IRANIAN "MILITIAS" AND MERCENARIES GO HOME!

DON'T DEFEND ASSAD, DEFEAT YOUR OPPRESSORS AT HOME!

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FOR A 'LET'S GO HOME!' MOVEMENT AMONG U.S., NATO,

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VICTORY TO THE SYRIAN REVOLUTION!

FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION TO SMASH ASSAD!

FOR A SOCIALIST FEDERATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA!

The following is reprinted from our leaflet of 10/09/2016.

Syrian Fact Sheet

1) U.S. sheds crocodile tears over Aleppo while their own coalition is waging attacks on people across the region; the tears are for the deal they had with Russia. The U.S. never had a problem with Assad while they were employing his torture chambers against captured Afghans and Iraqis during the Iraq war or while he kept Palestine in check. Indeed the U.S. refusal to arm the opposition with heavy artillery, anti-tank, anti-aircraft MANPADS and SAMS has long indicated the two-faced non-commitment to any revolutionary upsurge of the masses for democracy. The U.S. has always been hedging its bets in search of the new pawn or in deference to Assad. The Obama "red line" declaration after Assad's Sarin gas attack on Ghouta proved this. That pro-Assad figures in the west have had so much fun disputing the truth of the attack is due to the Obama administration's refusal to energize their press control, exactly for doublethink reasons when they found no support in Congress for enforcing any red line.

2) The Arab national revolution emerged again in 2011 with the democratic and economic demands of the masses across the Middle East and North Africa. The people's demands could not be met under regimes that sustained imperialist control and perpetual semi-colonial subjugation. Thus the masses came in collision with imperialism. Both the dominant western imperialism and the emergent Russia/China bloc contesting for geopolitical advantage and control of semi-colonial resources and markets.

3) The counterrevolution emerged from multiple quarters against the

masses in the region from Egypt to Libya to Syria. The majority of local counterrevolutionary forces are proxies for imperialists, East or West. Thus we see Hezbollah backing Assad, while additional counterrevolutionaries are the proxies for regional players and are external expressions of intra-royalty factions in Saudi-Arabia and/or counters to Iranian intervention, and a virtual invasion by Iran with Russian technical and logistical support. To survive the masses have had to find arms where they can. This disturbs sectarians who equate the stencils on the arms crates with imperialist control over the end users. Some of these sectarians say there is no Syrian working class.

4) The bourgeois army officers and Syrian capitalist renegades around the FSA/SNC who abandoned Assad and ran off to Geneva to make alliance with imperialism claim leadership of the opposition and make alliance with western imperialism in the hope of gaining control in a post Assad regime subordinate to the U.S./EU and free from the Russian bloc. They do not speak for the revolution, nor for the Local Coordinating Committees (LCC).

5) Russia is *not* anti-imperialist; Russia is looking at Syria as a fertile territory for investment of its surplus capital.

6) The bombing of civilian populations by Assad and Russia with no real opposition from the west is aimed not at ISIS or Al Qaeda but at the civilians who are organizing their own self-defense, including their own self administration.

7) The Local Coordinating Committees (LCC) established across Syria are the form that self-organization takes, they are the natural organs of self-defense and survival created by a civilian population under siege. Inside the LCC's both the democratic

aspirations of the masses and the need for civil administration and defense from the neo-liberal barrel bombs of Assad unite a civilian opposition against all anti-democratic forces. Thus they are an embryo of workers councils for self-administration of the society by the working population and the lower middle class and dispossessed farmers driven to the cities by climate change.

8) U.S., Russia and China suffer over-production of Capital and are desperate to find places to put it to use where they can assume profit in actual investment and not speculation. Syria has the misfortune of geographic location to be right where profitable pipelines can be built. For Russia, Syria is a host that offers naval and airbases on the Mediterranean, a geopolitical objective of the first order as a counter to the U.S. bases that ring this body from Morocco to Turkey. This is also a proxy war over the allegiance of important business partners for both imperialist blocs, namely the business of Turkey and Iran. For Turkish and Iranian business, the Russian bloc, just like the U.S. bloc would sacrifice the national liberation of the Kurdish people just as readily as sending their bombers or facilitating invasions of Syria.

9) But make no mistake, none of these profit-making objectives can be achieved by either bloc so long as the revolution is contesting political power with the regime; both Russia and the U.S. endeavor to crush the Revolution; Russia seeks to obliterate it and fortify the personal regime of Bashar Assad; the U.S. seeks to combine elimination of the revolutionaries with co-optation of forces it can make amenable to the survival of an Assad regime minus Assad.

10) The revolution increasingly comes to understand that national liberation from the combination of the

Assad dictatorship and the invaders allied to Assad requires breaking with imperialism completely. This places socialism on the order of the day as the only way out and that the national democratic revolution has no hope of realization in a bourgeois parliament but must be carried through to victory by the armed masses and their own workers-democratic organizations. Stalinophiles count as nothing the proliferation of hundreds of Local Coordinating Committees or their five years of experience administering and exercising growing powers in areas liberated from Assad.

11) Defense of Rojava against ISIS was at first heroic and led by the Kurdish YPG (People's Protection Units) with armed women's detachments taking the fight against brutal counterrevolutionary theocracy. But as has happened numerous times in the post-WWII era, Kurdish national liberation has collapsed into an unholy alliance with U.S. imperialism. That this time, the betrayal was managed by the Maoist PKK (Kurdish Workers Party), the same group that lately abandoned the armed struggle within Turkey, shows how the stagist theory of Stalinism, in practice, abandons the masses when a revolutionary victory is within their reach. The U.S. forced the YPG to abandon the fight against Assad, just as it co-opted FSA forces on the southern front

12) Co-opted forces allied to one or the other bloc can only deliver a carved up Syria corresponding to contemporary spheres of economic interests. Assad howls that this is what Washington wants, but has nothing to say about the forced redistribution of populations-- actual ethnic cleansing -- that is the object of the Russian air campaign against Aleppo and the invasion by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps.

13) Since the end of WWII the semi-

colonial states have been driven by the need of their peoples to liberate their economies from the parasitism of imperialism. The Russia/China bloc is not leading an anti-imperialist bloc that can win national independence for semi colonies from imperialism. Russia and China are not leading an anti-imperialist united front *a la* the World Social Forum's dream of a "21st century Socialism," rather they are trying to wrest countries from U.S./EU imperialist control across the global south and claim the semi-colonial prizes for their own profit. Did their BRICS bank bail out their preferred popular front in Brazil and head off the U.S.-inspired impeachment? No!

14) Imperialist imposed and UN sanctioned No Fly Zones (NFZs) presented as humanitarian efforts to stop indiscriminate bombings of civilian populations cannot to be trusted by the workers revolution. They are used to further imperialist control of the semi-colonies and will not protect the masses engaged in revolutionary violence against the fascist state or imperialism. Therefore the revolutionary workers movement does not call for or support NFZ's. While taking tactical advantage of conditions of war imposed by the various forces is the responsibility of the revolution, in the imperialist countries we oppose our military imposing NFZ's and call upon workers to *hot cargo* armaments and direct them via international workers brigades to the front lines of the fight against Assad and his allies.

15) In circumstances where the United Nations cannot prevent Assad from substituting soap powder and liquid for food aid, as we have heard firsthand from refugees, the call for "independent" nations to maintain air patrols from zero to 55,000 feet is as technically far-fetched as it is

politically ludicrous. The two imperialist blocs with these capabilities are the perpetrators of the very bombing the E.U. parliamentarians and Clinton Democrats would have you believe they want to stop, even as they say the no-fly zone would not apply to the bombing of ISIS, the very excuse the air forces of both blocs use for bombing civilians now.

16) We denounce the slanders against the White Helmets by writers with access to the U.S. left press. We protest the phony 'even-handedness' of pacifist organizations that have been hijacked by Assad's Stalinist and neo-Stalinist bedfellows. They cynically accepted Assad-organized "fact-finding" junkets and are now retailing their "reports" for the credulous in the U.S.A. **Don't buy it!**

17) Today internationalist workers must defend the Syrian Revolution as it is the front line in the struggle of the international proletariat and oppressed masses against the designs of imperialism, the system that each of the two blocs employs in a quest for control of all the world's trade and labor. This is what is at stake in besieged Aleppo. **Take the side of the masses against every one of their would-be masters! Victory to the Syrian Revolution!**

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