

Pakistan, Afghanistan: Anti imperialism, theirs and ours

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Anti-imperialism represents liberation. One cannot be a liberator and an oppressor at the same time.

First things first. Anti-imperialism stands for national liberation, women's emancipation, democratisation, political and economic empowerment, respect for the religious minorities, and self-determination for oppressed nationalities. Anti-imperialism is freedom, for all oppressed, from all oppression.

But such is the ideological bankruptcy and confusion among sections of right, left and centre that many cannot tell blind anti-Americanism apart from true anti-imperialism.

While there are certain left theoreticians who coin sophisticated theories to mould Taliban violence into anti-imperialism, there are liberal supporters of the Empire [ridiculed by Media Mujahideen as Liberal Fascists] mocking the left for siding with the Taliban mere because the left has opposed the US occupation of Afghanistan, destruction of Iraq and US sanctions on Iran. Lets sort out anti-imperialism, theirs and ours.

1. Socialism is a scientific utopia. It wants to build a future world free of exploitation and oppression. Fundamentalism is dystopian. It is, by definition, a return to an imagined past.
2. Socialists oppose imperialism in view of historical experiences and a scientific analysis of the contemporary world. We argue that the present world system is constituted by imperialism and colonialism. For socialists, imperialism is an economic, political, cultural, communication, and military power concentrated in the hands of a handful of Western countries. The USA lords over this camp. A country in the 'Third World' or periphery cannot develop and achieve true liberation unless it breaks out of imperialist chain. It requires a mass political struggle to overthrow the imperialist yoke. For the beards, the USA is the Big Satan leading the infidel West. They don't want to overthrow imperialism. They want revival of a 'golden past' when Muslims were 'imperialists'. Thus, they want to unseat Uncle Sam and occupy his place. They don't want a political struggle. They want Jihad to reach their goal.
3. Thus while socialists oppose imperialism for political reason, they also see struggle against imperialism as a global fight linked to the overthrow of capitalism. Imperialism is after all the latest stage of capitalism. You cannot have imperialism without capitalism. In this struggle against capitalism and imperialism, the socialist slogan is: Workers of the world unite! For Pakistani socialists, workers of the West are not *wajib ul qatal* [liable to death in line with Sharia] infidels. They are our comrades. For Taliban, capitalism and feudalism is the natural system of organizing the world. For them, socialism is unIslamic. They are in fact a product of Jihad against 'Soviet communism'.
4. Socialists stand for global peace. Taliban personify global Jihad.

5. Socialists stand for class war instead of wars between countries. For us permanent revolution is a permanent struggle against global imperialist and capitalist order for a permanent peace. Taliban consider class war an illegitimate struggle that divides Muslims. They believe in and have been trying to provoke a violent 'clash of civilisations'.

6. Socialists have been consistently opposing imperialism since the day Pakistan's first prime minister accepted invitation to Washington and turned down Moscow's invite. Anti-imperialism is a commitment of the left consistently upheld. The Taliban were accepting US dollars when they were ruling Kabul and MMA was silently accepting American money when in power in the NWFP. Taliban's anti-imperialism is a hypocrisy through and through.

7. Socialists stand for religious tolerance. We staunchly and proudly stand with Shias, Hazaras, Ahmediya, Hindus, Christians and Agnostics. Taliban are killing all of them. For Taliban, Ahmedis are Western/Jewish instruments, Shias are infidel Iranian influence, Hindus are Indian agents, Agnostics are communists.

8. Socialists are anti-imperialist, not anti-American or anti-West. We preach and struggle for the humanist, universalist values of Enlightenment. For us, Enlightenment is the aim of anti-imperialist struggle. For Taliban, Enlightenment is a Western construct. Hence, they resist it.

9. Socialists want to build Pakistan and Afghanistan into a paradise. Talibanist 'anti-imperialism' has turned Pakistan and Afghanistan into hell in their pursuit of paradise.

Conclusion:

Anti-imperialism represents liberation. One cannot be a liberator and an oppressor at the same time. The anti-imperialism that upholds Mullah Omar as its poster boy does not solve this contradiction.

Taliban's 'anti-imperialism' currently on display in Pakistan and Afghanistan is symbol rather than substance, signifying a new phase in the relations between two estranged lovers, fundamentalism and imperialism.

And what does this quasi 'anti-imperialist' crop have on offer: bomb blasts, beheadings, Swat video, destruction of schools, ban on polio vaccination, public execution of television sets, bonfire of music videos, 35000 dead Pakistanis...

True, they carry out occasional suicide missions targeting NATO troops. These acts of 'anti-imperialism' might cause a temporary headache for the residents of White House and Empire's satraps in London, Paris and Berlin. But this headache is nothing compared to the frustration of the basileus in Washington caused by Bhutto's nationalization, NSF/DSF hold over campuses, Mirza Ibrahim's sway over trade union movement, Faiz' poetry, Iqbal Ahmed's writings, Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din's chain of progressive newspapers let alone a full fledged 'Sour Revolution' carried out by the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

An anti-imperialism that does not threaten to nationalize commanding heights of economy, stand for land distribution or allow the working classes to organise trade unions — such anti-imperialism does not bother Empire. An anti-imperialism based on the repression of women, religious minorities, small nationalities, trade unions, peasant organisations, and political parties actually performs a function imperialism wants: repression of the masses.

No Sir! mindless Taliban violence and their puritan fanaticism couched in anti-Americanism has nothing in common with anti-imperialism socialism stands for.

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P.S.

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