

Anti-Imperialist Politics: Class Formation and Socio-Political Action

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September 11, 2003

Introduction

To understand the nature and dynamics of anti-imperialist politics it is important to answer several key questions. These include:

1. What constitutes an anti-imperialist movement (AIM)? Are anti-globalization, anti-ALCA, anti-Iraq (or anti-war) movements or events anti-imperialist?
2. Under what conditions and geo-political locations do AIMs emerge and expand?
3. Which specific classes initiate and which expand AIM, and which classes, states, and regimes defend imperialism?
4. Under what conditions (political and economic context) do structurally determined (exploited), classes become activated in an anti-imperialist struggles? Do heightened economic crises and the emergence of new organizations and leaders make a difference?
5. Under what conditions do AIM movements emerge in the imperialist countries (US and EU)? What are their potentialities and limitations?
6. What strategies and tactics advance or limit the growth of AIM?

The answers to these and other relevant questions provide a guide to our discussion of the theory and of anti-imperialist politics today.

Anti-Imperialist Movements

Opposition to imperialism takes a great variety of organizational forms and practices. There is no single internationally dominant organization, which is fully opposed to imperialism as a system of power. Rather, what predominates are a variety of single-issue movements opposing imperial policies and institutions. For example, throughout Latin America significant demonstrations,

movements and referendums have opposed the US sponsored Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA in Spanish). For many of the opponents, opposition to ALCA is based on the destructive effects that free trade has on jobs, as well as farmers and peasants. For others, ALCA is seen as a part of a US global strategy to conquer and dominate the economies and politics of Latin America, and the rest of the world. The anti-ALCA movements oppose an important aspect of US imperialism-its attempt to dominate trade and investment throughout the region through its formal control of the legal-political framework governing economic relations.

The anti-globalization movement and the anti- (Iraq, Afghanistan) war campaigning contains both anti-imperialists and “imperial reformers”-groups which generally support US imperial power but oppose the particular way power is exercised, or the specific location in which it manifests itself. Others oppose the behavior of the multi national corporations but not the imperial state and system in which they are embedded. These movements are anti-imperialist to the degree that they mobilize popular forces to oppose an important manifestation of imperial expansion, raise popular consciousness about the motives of the US and EU regimes and open the possibility of deepening and extending resistance to imperialism as a system.

Nevertheless, the potentialities of these single-issue politics are frequently not realized; the struggle over a single issue remains isolated from a general rejection of imperialism, and the victory or defeat of imperial power usually ends the mobilizations. The anti-Vietnam war mobilization which was the biggest and longest standing opposition to an imperialist war, declined when military conscription ended, the Vietnamese won the war and the US withdrew its troops. The after-effects were to limit the use of massive US ground troops for fifteen years, (until the Gulf War) and to increase the recruitment of mercenary armies (Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, etc.), increased reliance on intelligence agencies and special forces to overthrow anti-imperialist regimes (Chile 1973, Argentina 1976, Uruguay 1973, etc.) and small scale forces to invade small countries (Grenada, Panama). In addition, the single-issue anti-imperialist movements did not prevent or even mobilize to end the economic blockade of Cuba,

Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, etc. Finally many of the single-issue anti-imperialists joined the liberal wing of the pro-imperialist Democratic Party in the US, and the reformist pro-NATO parties of Europe-the Socialist Party of France, the Communist Party of Italy etc.

The historical record of single-issue anti-imperialist movements is very ambiguous; in some cases it has medium term residual effects, in others it dissolves into traditional politics and in a few cases it feeds into larger social movements. In the latter case, the anti-colonial struggles in France and Italy fed into the larger anti-systemic movements; Paris 1968, the hot autumn of Italy in 1969.

The key to identifying the dynamics (forward or backward) of single-issue anti-imperialist movements is politics: the ideology, the leaders and the programs around which the movements are organized. Most of the short term impacts are the result of the leaders' ideology of pragmatic lowest denominator politics, focusing exclusively on the most immediate issue (imperial policy), dissociated from imperialism as a system of power, eschewing any political challenge for regime or state power, and accommodating or subordinating the mass movement to opportunist "dissident" politicians from the major imperial parties, who seek to capitalize on the mass protest for electoral purposes.

Single issue anti-imperialist mobilizations, like the anti-globalization, erupt, extend and then become routine and decline, as they fail to connect political instruments to challenge for power, with popular mass struggles. In the case of the anti-globalization struggle, the false premises of the ideologues of the movement, the idea of the multi-national corporations as autonomous powers divorced from the imperial-state, failed to anticipate the imperial wars and colonial occupation. The reorientation of many former anti-globalization activists to the anti-Iraq war movement, led to a massive increase in protests on the single issue of the war followed by a collapse after the US conquered and occupied Iraq. No mass movement has emerged to oppose the US colonial regime or support the Iraqi resistance.

The eruption of single issue mass movements opposed to specific anti-imperialist policies

do not necessarily lead to an advancing, radicalizing and consequential anti-imperialist movement, unless the movement goes beyond single issues and develops a program and leadership capable of linking anti-imperialism to system transformation.

Conditions for the Emergence of AIM

The second key question is: Under what conditions do AIMs emerge and expand?

Almost all the most important and consequential AIM movements have taken place in Latin America, Asia, or Africa. In the present period we can identify several contexts in which significant AIM have emerged.

1. Colonial invasion and occupation: Iraq has seen the regrouping and resistance of mass anti-imperial movements organized against colonial-military rule. The colonial regimes pillage the economy, they appoint colonial rulers, destroy the infrastructure, kill civilians, and torture suspects. The everyday humiliations of millions provoke hostility, rejection and resistance. The same is true in Afghanistan, where armed resistance to the US-EU occupation force and their puppet (Karzai) regime.
2. Military Intervention: Long term US military involvement as advisors, arms supplier, and financial backers of the Columbian oligarchy has provoked a large scale, long term anti-imperialist guerrilla and civilian opposition. The most recent phase of imperial military intervention (Plan Columbia) has polarized the country, impoverished the urban workers, and heightened the killing of peasants, human rights activists, journalists and trade unionists. The direct involvement of US mercenary sub-contractors in combat and coca eradication has further contributed to the growth of anti-imperialist politics in the rural areas.
3. Privatization and Declining Living Standards: Most of the privatized banks, telecommunications, public utilities (light and power), mineral and petrol enterprises have ended up in the hands of US and EU MNC. The result has been massive firings, higher prices, reduction in regions served and large scale transfer of resources overseas, legally and

illegally. The very process of privatization was not transparent, as bribes and pay offs led to buyouts at below market value. This has led to massive protests against the particular foreign enterprise, against state policies and against the negative consequences. Massive anti-privatization protests have taken place in Peru (state owned electrical companies), Bolivia (water), Ecuador (petroleum and electricity) and many other countries. In Argentina a mass popular uprising took place (December 20/21, 2001) after foreign owned banks transferred depositors savings abroad. The multitude of anti-privatization activity has focused on the IFI sponsorship of privatization and the US and EU backing of the IFI.

4. Unequal Trade and Investment: The US and EU subsidize their agricultural products to the tune of over fifty billion dollars in direct payouts, and several billion more in a state funded irrigation systems, export subsidies, technical assistance, electrical and power rates, marketing promotion, infrastructures, networks and "tied aid". In addition both the US and EU impose tariff barriers, quotas, non-traditional trade barriers, on agricultural and manufacture exports from the Third World. In contrast the US and EU imperial states demand the lowering and elimination of tariffs and subsidies in the Third World. As a result, the Third World loses an estimated two hundred billion in trade income a year, more than double all the loans, investment, grants and transfers from the imperialist regimes. The US proposes, through ALCA (the Latin American Area of Free Trade), to consolidate and deepen its unequal trade relation with Latin America by establishing a legal and political framework under an ALCA commission, which it will control, thus converting Latin America into a colonial mercantile zone.

Throughout Latin American millions have protested against the signing of the ALCA agreement.

In Brazil in an informal referendum, ninety-five percent of the voters rejected ALCA-a total of eleven million voters. The key to the advance of ALCA is found in the vassal regimes which rule in Latin America-particularly in Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia, Peru and

elsewhere.

The defeat of Washington's re-colonization effort passes through the overthrow or ousting of the vassal regimes, which are actively collaborating with the US. The major social forces opposing re-colonization are the peasant, and small farmers who cannot compete with the subsidized US agricultural products which sell at lower prices due to imperial state export subsidies. In Bolivia, peasants turn to an alternative crop, coca, since they cannot compete with US subsidized agricultural imports. In Mexico, Bolivia, Columbia, and Peru rural movements defend the right to produce alternative crops and oppose ALCA. In Brazil the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) is the leading force opposing ALCA.

In so far as ALCA, in substance and symbol, embodies the US imperial conquest and colonization of Latin America, the anti-ALCA movements represent a key element in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The transition from free trade to colonial mercantilist imperialism has heightened conditions for the emergence and expansion of anti-imperialist movements (AIM). Equally significant ALCA has broadened the scope of opposition to US and EU domination. During the first phase of neo-liberalism, opposition to imperialism was based on a specific policy-privatization-and focused on particular industrial sectors affected (or even particular firms). The protests were directed at specific grievances, loss of employment, lowering of salaries, increases in prices, etc. These particular struggles persist-notably the Ecuadorian petroleum workers against the privatization and denationalization of the oil industry, the light and power workers in Mexico, etc. However, increasingly these particular struggles are explicitly linked to opposition to ALCA and the US imperial conquest.

Anti-Imperialist Movements: Historical Perspective

The current AIM is the most recent of a series of struggles that go back to the original conquest of the Third World. Nevertheless the goals, social classes, and programs of the AIM are

vastly differed from what they were in earlier times.

We can distinguish several types and sub-types of historic and contemporary AIM.

1. Traditional AIM

The earliest movements against imperial-colonial conquest frequently resisted genocide,

extermination, enslavement, displacement, and serfdom. The goals of at least some of their leaders were to restore the pre-colonial systems of hierarchical rule by local emperors, councils or communities. The rebellions, defeats, re-enslavement, and dispersion of the colonized peoples created two parallel economies: the dominant colonial economy and the subsistence communities of anti-colonial peoples in remote regions of the conquered countries.

2. Modern AIM

Modern AIM can be divided and subdivided into those which struggled for political

independence from overt colonial rule (Latin America in the nineteenth and early twentieth century) and Asia/African (in the middle twentieth century) and those which struggled for political and economic independence through national and socialist revolutionary struggles in the mid twentieth century (China, Cuba, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, etc). These anti-imperialist revolutions in turn laid the basis for new confrontation between nationalist-capitalist and socialist-populist movements. The modern AIM succeeded in establishing a “hybrid” economies and regimes, mixed state, private and collective property forms, and popular hierarchical regimes. These “hybrid regimes and economies” serves as the terrain for new confrontations with imperialism. The new nationalist and communist elites, divorced from mass socio-economic realities, and subject to imperial influence or intervention, evolved over the decades into a new class or were overthrown and replaced by imperial vassal regimes, particularly during the last decades of the twentieth century. Nationalist regimes in Africa and Asia were overthrown and replaced by tribal warlords, colonial vassals and clerical reactionaries-all initially linked to the US

and/or the EU. The conversion of collectivist regimes to pro capitalist/pro-imperialist regime in the ex-USSR, Eastern Europe, and Southern Asia was based on both external and internal social forces. In Eastern Europe, US financial and ideological support of nationalist politicians, intellectual elites and trade unions bosses, facilitated the shift of their regions from Russian satellite to US vassal states-extending the US empire from the Baltic to the Balkans. Military intervention and support for surrogate paramilitary forces extended the US Empire from the Balkans to the Middle East. In the twenty first century the US expanded to the Middle East and Southern Asia through war in Afghanistan and Iraq. The ideology of imperial conquest varied from the traditional colonial “humanitarian” to the “liberation” rhetoric in Iraq, and to the modern anti-terrorist subterfuge in Afghanistan.

By the end of the twentieth century there already emerged three variants of anti-imperialism:

- a.) Rightwing anti-imperialism, articulated by US client dissidents in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Caucasus as an instrument to shift allegiances from Soviet domination to the US Empire.
- b.) Clerical anti-imperialism, based on religious (Muslim) opposition to US military aggression, political conquest, cultural influence, economic depredations and racial hostility, oriented toward “restoring” traditional clerical views and in some cases combining it with modern nationalist values.
- c.) Modern anti-imperialism, opposing imperial wars and conquests, the MNC, the WTO, ALCA, supporting the liberation struggles in the Third World. The profound class and political differences in anti-imperialist or nationalist movements-between pro-US empire movements, clerical-nationalist and modern liberation movements-has important theoretical and practical consequences. The US war against Yugoslavia based on an alliance with Muslim terrorists in Bosnia and Kosova (ELK), the clerical-rightists in Afghanistan and the attempt to

establish a clerical (Shia) colonial junta in Iraq indicates the way in which imperialism articulates with reactionary rightists against secular regimes. US support for and influence over the dissident elites in Eastern Europe and their conversion into US vassals demonstrates the capacity of the empire to co-opt anti-influential ideology and its propagators in order to secure military bases and political vassal states. The selective use and disuse of Muslims, secular intellectuals, and ethnic extremists is a central part of US imperial strategy to weaken anti-imperialist regimes and divide imperialist opponents. This is particularly effective in the case of critics in the AIM who lack a class perspective on the nature of imperialism, the multiple forms it takes and the flexible allowances it adopts: supporting Muslims against leftists in one moment, attacking Muslim nationalists in favor of secular or Muslim vassals in another moment. The current wave of AIM contains both secular and clerical forces, socialists and nationalists, progressives and restorationists.

Anti-Imperialism in the US:

Anti-imperialist movements have been weakest in the United States. With the exception of the height of the US invasion of Indo-China between 1966-1972, there have been few sustained anti-imperialist mass activities. Nevertheless, US public opinion and electoral protests directed against particular US imperial incursions have not been infrequent. Essentially, we can identify several periods of US public opposition to aspects of imperial policy.

1.) 1945-1947 US public opposition and overseas troop demonstrations forced post-World War Two imperial planners to significantly reduce US troop deployments in the occupied countries and to limit US intervention against the Chinese, Indo-Chinese, and Yugoslav Socialist revolutions.

2.) 1951-1953 US public opposition to the Korean War led to the defeat of the pro-war Democratic Presidential candidate and pressured Eisenhower to negotiate an armistice which denied Washington military victory.

3) 1966-1972 US public opposition (mass demonstrations, and acute socio-political polarization) and large scale discontent within the military in Vietnam undermined the political and military bases of imperial power and contributed to the defeat of the US military.

Subsequently there was sustained public protest over the US intervention in Central America, the US support for the apartheid South African regime and more recently to the US invasion of Iraq. These protests had a very limited effect, in influencing US policy. Equally serious, the US intervention in Angola, Central and South America during the decade between 1973-1983, in support of mercenary and/or military coups, elicited little public response except from small activist groups. The “anti-globalization” demonstration of 50,000 in Seattle in 1999 was a singular event-with little effective follow-up, except for the flare up of anti-war demonstrations in January-February 2003.

What accounts for the rare but successful mobilizations of anti-imperialist protests in the US? In both Korea and Vietnam, US military forces were defeated or were unable to win and suffered heavy casualties (several hundreds of thousands dead or wounded) over a prolonged period of time (three to ten years) at the hands of the national liberation forces. The imperial defeats and casualties brought the war back into the communities, neighborhoods, workplaces, families, and social organizations of the US. Secondly the earlier wars were fought with conscript armies, which included or threatened to include the sons of the middle and upper middle classes in combat situations, thus affecting an important electoral constituency. The threat of conscription into a military already suffering heavy casualties in a prolonged war motivated many draft-age men and their parents to actively oppose the war. Thirdly, prolonged and costly imperial wars, while stimulating the economy, led to a loss of shares in the world markets and strengthened US imperial rivals, while limiting Washington’s ability to intervene and control other regions of the world. Sectors of the ruling and political classes began to put the strategic interests of the empire ahead of prosecuting a hopelessly stalemated war, leading to inter-elite divisions over how best to build a world empire.

The combined factors of sustained popular resistance, US military casualties, fear of conscription and inter-elite divisions, led to organized mass movements and sustained opposition. Nevertheless, even in the large-scale protests against the US invasion of Indo-China, the great majority did not oppose the US imperial system but particular aspects of it, like the war in Indo-China, conscription, and US military casualties. The ending of the war, the success of the movement was relative; it led to a temporary reduction of military spending (1974-1978), and a resistance to new massive commitments of ground troops in overt interventions. Subsequently, during the 1970's to 1990's, when the US switched to covert CIA-led interventions (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay), and used mercenary armies in Angola, Mozambique and Central America (Nicaraguan Contras), there was little protest. There was no significant opposition to the US invasions of the tiny, weak countries of Grenada and Panama in the 1980's that led to very few casualties among US enlisted soldiers.

Subsequently, the US invasions and occupations of regions like Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, both being largely aerial wars with ground support from Muslim fundamentalist warlords and terrorists, elicited significant public support in the US. The US invasion and conquest of Iraq confirms this analysis. The successful invasion and conquest was largely a result of massive military force and bombing, an aerial war accompanied by the covert surrender of Iraqi military commanders, which led to a rapid and successful military conquest with a minimum of US casualties. However, the occupation and subsequent colonial rule has led to large-scale popular opposition in Iraq and sustained urban guerilla warfare, leading to dozens of US casualties each week (over four thousand injuries and over one hundred fifty deaths) in the first six months (May-October 2003). As the Iraqi guerrilla resistance and popular opposition grows and US casualties mount, US opinion begins to shift from outright support for imperial wars, to growing opposition with 49% opposed to Bush by the end of August. This coincided with calls for congressional hearings and electoral campaign criticism of the war.

Equally significant the US invasion in Iraq is the first imperialist war that has not been

combined with socio-economic gains for the mass of wage and salaried classes. The empire expands, the oil companies and corporate profits pump to double digits, as unemployment increases and reductions in health and educational benefits increasingly erode living standards for the mass of the labor force. Despite the extremities of imperialist aggression and the severity of the attacks on living standards, there has been little “movement” against imperialism from the working and salaried classes. In official and semi-official opposition circles, opposition is aimed at the “misleading propaganda” (the lies of the state) not the substantive issue of the imperial wars. The progressive dissidents criticize the particular policies leading to war not the structures of power that generate the policies; they criticize the Bush regime not the imperial state. What “solidarity” exists is directed toward the US soldiers (“bring our boys home”) not to the anti-colonial peoples’ resistance to an occupation army.

The historic record tells us that it will take extreme conditions to move significant forces in the US to oppose imperial aggression, such as a major economic crisis, significant loss of lives, or prolonged wars of attrition. We must look elsewhere (outside of the US) to locate the dynamics of anti-imperialist movements, precisely in those regions and among those classes who have suffered the full impact of imperialist conquest.

Impact of Imperialism on the Class Structure

The new class based AIM emerges from the vast transformation brought about by the penetration and takeover of Third World economies, particularly in Latin America. Imperialism, particularly its economic policies and successes in taking over strategic financial, commercial, mining, and petroleum sectors has had a major effect on the quantitative and qualitative nature of all social classes in Latin America. In addition, economic policies imposed by the self-styled “international” financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank) have also been instrumental in transforming the class structure. Equally important, the selective enforcement of “free trade” policies has been a crucial factor in restructuring the urban and rural

class structure. All the changes brought about by imperialist classes and institutions have been instrumental in shaping the nature of the emerging anti-imperialist movements. In the countryside imperialist policies and class had had several key effects.

- 1) Undermining small and medium farm producers through the “free market” policies that allow the massive influx of subsidized US farm exports.
- 2) Concentrated ownership and displacement of subsistence and landless peasants via loans and assistance to agro-export firms (both Latin American and US) who specialize in production of export products, such as soybeans, coffee, and orange juice.
- 3) Increased polarization in the countryside by ending constraints on foreign ownership, and ending communal titles to land, encouraging internal stratification.
- 4) Lowering prices paid to local producers, increasing the cost of credit (mostly by denying formal credit and forcing small producers to borrow at exorbitant interest rates in the informal lending market).

The net result is to increase the number of landless rural producers, bankrupt family farmers and force rural migrants to the periphery of regional urban centers. Imperial induced mass impoverishment, land concentration and peasant displacement has been a key factor igniting rural social movements that have been at the forefront of struggles against ALCA, the IFI, and neo-liberalism. Equally important imperial policies have adversely affected countries with high concentrations of Indian and black peasants and farm workers, via mechanization and job elimination, the takeover of pasture land or the use of illicit and legal coercive mechanism to seize land with proven mineral reserves. IFI funding of infrastructure almost exclusively links large agro-exporters to markets, ignoring the needs of rural communities. Probably most important for small producers in Bolivia, Peru, and Columbia imperial designed chemical “eradication” programs have destroyed the livelihood of millions of households without

providing any viable alternative crop to coca production. The result has been the organization and mobilization of mass social movements of peasants in support of their land, homesteads, and communities, and a sharp increase of anti-imperialist consciousness.

In the cities, imperialist promoted privatizations of firms and budget cuts to pay foreign creditors has had a severe impact on employees and wageworkers. Millions of public sector employees, particularly in social services and public administration, have lost their jobs and job security and most have suffered income declines of up to forty percent over the past decade. The new owners have fired industrial workers as they consolidate enterprise operations or pillage newly acquired public resources. The end result has been the “proletarianization” of public sector workers as a result of low income, job insecurity and diminished status. The result has been a major increase in public sector organized protest directed against imperialist promoted “structural adjustment” programs-and beyond to the intellectual authors in the IFI. Imperial policies and institutions have undermined these two pillars of “political stability” for imperial hegemony, small rural property owners and middle-income professionals in the public sector. The urban unemployed and displaced rural producers have been concentrated into the so-called “informal sector” and in the poorly paid, highly exploited and tightly controlled “maquiladoras” (assembly plants). Increasingly organized as unemployed workers movements, barrio-based self-employed street vendors or organized in distinct markets, the leadership and activists in Bolivia, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela and in some of the other countries have been in the forefront opposing imperialist policies of privatization, such as water in Cochabamba, Bolivia and electricity in Arequipa, Peru and the increase in public utility rates charged by recently privatized formerly state owned firms run by foreign monopolies. University, secondary and primary school teachers and students have opposed budget cuts and deteriorating public schools and salary reductions mandated by the IFI to pay foreign debt holders.

Occasional protest have emerged among the tightly controlled “maquiladoras” production workers but the traditional private sector industrial trade unions have demonstrated either a lack

of interest or ability in supporting unionization of imperialist-owned firms. In fact the industrial workers and in particular their trade unions have been the least active and least militant component of the anti-imperialist movements. Many workers fear the loss of employment faced with a mass of unemployed workers. Equally damaging most of the trade union officials have consolidated control and have become closely linked to tripartite pacts with the state and employers, and reject independent class action, let alone active anti-imperialist solidarity. Apart from formal denunciations of ALCA, neo-liberalism and SAP, the industrial unions have been minor actors in the new wave of anti-imperialist struggles in Latin America, far less engaged than the progressive sectors of the Catholic Church. Exceptions exist but they represent a minority in the Brazilian, Uruguayan, Chilean, and Argentine confederations.

Imperialism has restructured the capitalist class; hundreds of thousands of small and medium sized manufacturers have been bankrupted or have switched to commercial activity, as the high cost and meager availability of credit has cut off cash flow, cheap imports have undermined profits and MNC's have squeezed profits from subcontractors. A similar pattern has taken place in the commerce sector; large scale foreign owned department stores and supermarkets have sharply reduced the share of small and medium business people in retail trade and food services. The net result is a substantial increase in low paid, non-unionized service workers employed by giant foreign owned emporiums. Large scale bank takeovers by US and European bankers has led to massive layoffs of bank employees, and the stimulation of a vast increase in speculative capital and the legal and illegal flow of billions of dollars in tax-evaded earnings, illicit gains. Instead of radicalizing the bourgeoisie, imperial policies have created imperial associates, linked to financial and commercial networks, an army of local consultants, publicists, legal and tax advisors and local political promoters who serve as intermediaries in facilitating, lucrative privatizations, state contracts and monopoly market controls. A minority of productive small and medium size capitalists (PYMES) are active in seeking cheaper credit, protection, subsidies and lower public utility rates, but their opposition is tempered by their

support for the anti-labor, anti-social legislation promoted by the IFI and therefore they play a minor role in the new anti-imperialist movements.

Imperialism has also transformed the nature of the state either through military intervention, economic blackmail, coups, and corrupt electoral processes or through mass media manipulation of elections. The state in Latin America, namely the Central Bank, military, police, intelligence services, senior officials in the administration (all the “permanent institutions” of government) are trained, indoctrinated and “networked” by the imperial state, with some notable exceptions. The state buttresses the imperial vassal regimes, which replaced the populist-nationalist regimes of an earlier period. Imperialism has established the parameters of policies of the vassal regimes: imperial subordination in foreign policy, free markets and SAP in economic policy, re-concentration of income upward and outward in social policy, primacy of debt payments to foreign creditors over reactivation of domestic consumption and investment.

This imperial centered accumulation regime requires large scale long term state intervention to reallocate resources to imperial enterprises, regulations which facilitate the free flow of profits and interest payments outward, and large scale intervention in civil society to repress, co-opt or eliminate anti-imperialist leaders and activists, among others as occur in Columbia, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, and in the countryside of Brazil, Paraguay, and Mexico.

Imperialism has moved toward overt political control via ALCA a so-called trade and investment treaty which will convert the vassal states into outright colonies in the new model of a formal empire centered political-economic model.

Class Organization and Anti-Imperialist Policies

On the surface it appears that the anti-imperialist movements include a multitude of classes, identities, strata that extend from the bottom to the near top of the social hierarchy. This impression reflects the views of those active in the US and European "anti-globalization" movements. This imagery is far from the reality in Latin America. Today as in the recent past the

bulk of the anti-imperialist movements are made up of wage workers, unemployed and sub-employed in the cities, students and self-employed and particularly of peasants, Indian subsistence farmers and landless rural workers. There are no undifferentiated "multitudes", rather the participants are organized and/or convoked by class based social organizations whose leaders and organizers have "histories" of involvement in class struggle, class politics either in the workplace or in the neighborhoods.

The contemporary anti-imperialist movements are substantially different from the past in so far as the composition of the movements, the leadership and their political forces have taken on specific characteristics of the present period. First of all is the absence of any "progressive bourgeoisie" either as a hegemonic factor or participant. The bulk of the local bourgeoisie has sub-contacted with imperial firms, converted to marginal associates, been bought out, or has benefited from the regressive labor legislation that lowers labor costs, even as they are adversely affected by the lowering of tariff barriers. In contrast to the past, the centerpiece of the popular base of the AIM has shifted from the industrial trade unions to the peasant and rural movements, as many of the trade unions are involved in collective bargaining agreements with the MNC's and prefer to negotiate contracts rather than raise issues like nationalization. In contrast the peasants' and farmers' livelihoods and households are directly and adversely affected by the large scale entry of subsidized food products, imperialist dictated eradication programs and the expansion of foreign owned agro-export corporations.

Thirdly the current anti-imperialist movements are not influenced by external states like the USSR and China as was the case in the past and thus have greater tactical flexibility and a clearer notion of the internal class dynamics of imperialist exploitation. In the past the anti-imperialist agenda was in part influenced by the priorities of the external "allies", today the anti-imperialist priorities are determined internally and international actions are based on open consultations. Finally the leadership of the AIM today are much more prone to direct action and sustained class struggles linked to anti-imperialism and less to big symbolic demonstrations. The

Social Forums, whether world or regional or national, are meeting places for movements and others to exchange ideas, but they do not provide leadership or programs nor do they provide resources for the on-going daily anti-imperialist struggles within the nation states.

Theoretical Issues

The key to the new AIM is found in their theoretical analysis that locates the central contradiction between classes and not states. The new AIM link class exploitation to imperialist plunder, unlike the past where the conflicts were perceived as conflicts of blocs, such as Socialist versus Capitalist states, or regimes, such as Third World versus First World. The new AIM clearly see that internal class differences and inequalities are linked to, and reinforced by, the coalition of imperial MNC's, and states. Imperial penetration of the nation state particularly the cupola of the state, and regime and financial hierarchies means that imperialist classes and local collaborator classes are the initial point of conflict between capital and labor. In other words, imperialism does not merely influence and control the national economic, cultural and political structures, but it also operates at the macro and micro political and socio-economic levels. The result is that anti-imperialism is expressed at both the national level in the form of major demonstrations in the principle cities but also at the municipal and village level. Moreover the different anti-imperial movements frequently become interconnected and escalate upward from the local to the national but also vice versa.

For example in Bolivia, in the Chapare region and in Cochabamba, two major anti-imperialist struggles took place at the micro city/country level. In the case of Cochabamba, it was over the privatization of water to a foreign company, and in Chapare it was over the US policy of coca eradication. These local struggles were linked to the larger struggles against the imposition of neo-liberal policies which undermined local agricultural and manufacturing employment and public sector financing which in turn led to anti-imperialist movements against ALCA, the IMF and US imperialism.

The key to the new AIM is precisely the direct link between macro-imperialist policies and their sectoral and local class impacts which serves to extend workers and peasant consciousness from the level of simple economic demands to national political struggles. For example the SAP (structural adjustment polices) imposed by Euro-US financial institutions on the Peruvian and Argentine economy lead to massive layoffs and salary reductions of public employees, particularly teachers and health workers. This led to massive public demonstrations for pay raises and attacks against the regime implementing the SAP and the IFI's dictating the policies as well as US imperial policy makers and the bankers benefiting from interest payments secured through state surpluses.

The biggest and most widespread protests against US imperialism are linked to the wide swath of classes affected by the macro-economic policies of US imperialism and the specific classes and public sectors affected by the SAP, the Free Trade doctrines and the blatant imperial decision-makers imposing these policies.

High visibility of imperial policymakers, their clear identity with the imperial state, the direct and sustained negative impact of imperial economic policies provides the mass of exploited classes a very clear target for their opposition and mobilization. It does not take great effort for the popular classes to identify the sources of their adversity when the IMF dictates a SAP which results in lower public funding, loss of public employment and the termination of clinics in the barrios, overcrowded classrooms, teachers strikes and children begging in the street. AIMS are no longer middle class dominated nationalist movements, they are class based because imperialism is embedded in everyday work and household survival.

Anti-Imperialist Movements and Regimes

Contrary to the triumphal rhetoric from the US Great Britain, and Israel following the successful US military invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, anti-imperialist movements are gaining ground in several fronts.

In Afghanistan the anti-colonial movements are regrouping and have launched several successful attacks particularly against the civilian agencies of the colonial occupation. Even more striking, the Iraqi resistance movement has inflicted daily casualties on the Anglo-US occupation forces. The massive civilian protests and the daily hostility of millions of Iraqis are severely eroding morale among ordinary soldiers of the occupation. Israeli efforts, backed by US Zionist in the Pentagon, to spread the Mid-East War to Iran, Syria and Lebanon, and to provoke a renewal of the war against the Palestinians, is heightening anti-imperialist activity and raising consciousness throughout the Middle East. But it is in Latin America where the intersection of US imperial expansion and rising popular discontent with declining living standards is most intense. After four years of negative growth (1999-2002) and high levels of transfers of wealth to the US and Europe, Latin America represents the clearest symbolic and substantive illustration of all the evils of the empire.

In order to analyze the anti-imperialist movements it is important to distinguish between anti-imperialist events and on-going organized struggles and movements. For example, the anti-ACLA referendum in Brazil in July 2002 involved a coalition of movements, progressive church groups and leftist parties. Eleven million people voted in the referendum, making it an important event, highlighting the active opposition to US colonial pretensions. The referendum was an event, the coming together of social forces at a specific movement in time. A similar but more amorphous event was the "World Social Forums" which met, approved resolutions and then disbanded or returned to organize national social forums. In contrast the organizations of the cocaleros in Bolivia are in a continuous struggle against the policies, institutions and agencies of US imperialism deeply implicated in directing the country's agrarian policies and controlling the executive and military branches of government. In discussing anti-imperialism it is important to focus on the sustained movements and not merely a recitation of international events which have received the bulk of the publicity but have had less effect on changing imperial rule than sustained national struggles by on-going movements.

The anti-imperialist movements in Latin America have developed unequally. One can identify three levels: a.) Sustained large scale movements, b.) Movements that are large scale but not sustained over time, c.) Movements that are sporadic and of lesser dimensions. We can also distinguish between movements that are consistently anti-imperialist and those that combine anti-imperialism with conciliation of imperialism.

Sustained, Large Scale Movements

It has been argued by Amartya Sen and others that electoral regimes, what they term "democratic" governments, generate greater equity, development and political stability than dictatorship. This argument is fallacious for several reasons. First, despite having elections, many of the key socio-economic decisions of electoral regimes are made by non-elected foreign and domestic elites, and have resulted in greater inequalities, declining living standards, and negative or regressive growth.

The four countries where the anti-imperialist movements are strongest are all electoral regimes and all are economic vassals of the US, pursuing empire centered policies over the past two decades.

The longest standing electoral regime, Columbia, has been under quasi-martial law over the past half-century and receives the greatest amount of US military aid, advisors and contract foreign mercenary forces in Latin America. Columbia is also the site of the biggest, most combative and sustained anti-imperialist movement in Latin America. It includes two popularly based nation-wide guerrilla armies and significant social movements. In Colombia, the guerrillas are the most important component of the anti-imperialist movement. The Revolutionary Armed forces of Columbia (FARC) number approximately twenty thousand combatants and almost ten thousand active supporters among its urban militias, commandos and rural support units covering over half the municipalities of the country. The National Liberation Army (ELN) has approximately four thousand five hundred combatants and probably another five thousand

civilian sympathizes in the cities and in specific provinces. The regimes military and paramilitary death squads have over the years decimated the legal civilian anti-imperialist movements. Over two hundred fifty trade union leaders were assassinated between 2002 and August of 2003, by far the highest figures in the world.

In contrast to anti-imperialist movements elsewhere, the FARC-ELN are directed to overthrowing the vassal regime and taking state power to end imperialist control over the economy, military and the state. They have a comprehensive multi-sectoral program that include opposition to ALCA but extends to opposition to foreign ownership of natural resources, finances, payment of foreign debt and the US strategic "Plan Columbia".

If socio-economic conditions in Columbia are similar to those in the rest of Latin America, what accounts for the growth of a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement in Columbia and less so in the rest of Latin America? We can hypothesize several factors. The highly repressive Colombian political system physically eliminates political critics of imperialism, such as the Patriotic Union, the electoral movement in the 1980's that suffered five thousand deaths at the hands of the regime and its para-military allies. There is a long tradition of popular armed rural resistance to centralized control by a government with ties to local landlords and narco-traffickers. Finally, the organization of the rural based guerrilla movement and its leadership headed by Manuel Marulanda, who have close ties to the peasantry, with sixty-five percent of the guerrillas fighters coming from the countryside, have retained independence from urban reformists and electoral parties. The long term presence of US counter-insurgency forces and their tactics of mass displacements of peasants, the eradication of lucrative crops of family farmers and the US alliance with the military/paramilitary forces and key landholders has radicalized the countryside. The "over determined" role of the US, in military strategy and intervention for over forty years, the historic traditions of rural insurgency linked to rural leaders and the lack of democratic space have been the key elements fostering the most powerful anti-imperialist movement in Latin America.

The second most important mass anti-imperialist movement is found in Bolivia. Once again, large scale long term US military, political, and financial intervention, US support of military regimes and coups, crop eradication and support of mine closures has produced a deep seated and widespread anti-imperialist consciousness. From the US intervention in the post 1952 nationalist revolution, to the promotion of pro-US military juntas in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's to the US-IMF closure of the tin mines, to the massive and violent coca eradication campaign of the past twenty years, the US policy and entry into Bolivian policies has had a long term, large scale negative impact on urban miners, manufacturing workers (via free trade doctrines) and peasants. The second factor is the long tradition of anti-imperialist revolution and struggle, from the 1952 revolution and formation of worker militias, to the mass based Popular Assembly of 1970-1971, to the history of repeated general strikes, to the present massive road blockages by militant peasant groups, to the popular rural-urban uprising of February 2003 against US-IMF policies, the Bolivian popular movements demonstrate a capacity for sustained struggle.

The third factor is the mass based political and social leadership of the coca farmers and their disciplined and democratic social movements and syndicates. The popular leader, Evo Morales, combines rural-based direct action with urban electoral politics to build a nation-wide, anti-imperialist movement that links local demands to end US directed coca eradication to opposition to ALCA. In Bolivia, the anti-imperialist struggle has popular support based on the links to daily household and work survival.

In Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador there are large-scale anti-imperialist movements which combine a conscious rejection of IMF and empire-centered development policies with mass events protesting foreign debt payments, ALCA, and other manifestations of imperial power. These movements however are not linked to a project for political power and lack a unified political leadership and organization. Nevertheless, they have demonstrated a capacity to oust incumbent regimes (Argentina and Ecuador) and to register mass opposition to ALCA (referendum of eleven million in Brazil in 2002). In the rest of Latin America there is widespread

opposition to ALCA, empire centered "neo-liberal policies", Plan Columbia and more specifically pro-imperialist regime initiatives like the privatization program of Toledo in Peru, which ignited national mass protests.

In addition to the anti-imperialist movements, there are two governments that oppose or are partially independent of imperialism: Cuba and Venezuela. Cuba has been in the frontlines fighting imperialism from Southern Africa to Latin America and beyond. Unlike other leftist and nationalist regimes in the past, such as Allende in Chile (1973), Goulart in Brazil (1964), and several others, Cuba's revolutionary regime has successfully defeated US efforts to overthrow it. Unlike other ex-leftist and ex-nationalist regimes like the Socialists in Chile, the Peronists in Argentina and the Workers Party in Brazil, Castro has refused to retreat to pro-imperialist politics.

What accounts for Cuba's long-term trajectory as an anti-imperialist country in the face of the overthrow or decay of other leftist regimes? Basically there are several factors both internal and external. The Cuban regime is the product of a revolutionary process and leadership that destroyed the old state apparatus and has successfully built a sophisticated homeland security organization to neutralize terrorists and saboteurs. Secondly, Cuba has a large, professional,, highly motivated armed forces closely linked to the mass of people, subordinated to the revolutionary leadership and capable of defending Cuba from a frontal invasion from the US (In simulated 'war games' the Pentagon has estimated US casualties in the tens of thousands from a ground invasion of Cuba). Thirdly, the original Cuban revolutionary leadership has been successful in reproducing a new generation of revolutionary cadres and technicians who assuming the reins of power, defend the original social gains of the revolution. Fourthly, the great majority of Cuban workers and farmers are significantly better off than their counterparts in Latin America and retain social welfare benefits that are not available to the Cuban exiles in the US. Fifthly, the Cuban leadership was successful in securing favorable trade, military and economic agreements with the USSR and China in order to resist US military attacks and the economic embargo.

Subsequently the Cuban leadership was successful in restructuring its economy in the post-Soviet period and developing trade and economic relations with Europe, Asia, and Latin America. More recently it has developed mutually beneficial ties with Venezuela, securing strategic energy sources. Finally, the US policy of unremitting hostility and military threats has undermined any groups in Cuba oriented toward conciliating with imperialism. In other words, anti-imperialism for Cuba is a necessity as well as an ideal.

Venezuela, under President Chavez presents a more ambiguous picture, similar to those of past Latin American nationalists. He pursues an independent foreign policy, opposing imperialist wars like the invasion of Iraq and counter-insurgency programs like Plan Columbia, promoting solidarity and fraternal relations with Cuba, and criticizing of ALCA. In domestic policy however he has followed a neo-liberal policy, privatizing public firms, offering oil concessions to US MNCs, paying the foreign debt and following fairly orthodox monetary and budgetary policies. The key to Venezuela's ambiguous or contradictory policies are found in the process by which Chavez came to power, the class alliances and programs which he envisioned in ruling the country and his liberal view of the political and social structure of the country. Chavez formed alliances with a broad array of social and political forces and his majority included a substantial number of neo-liberal and pro-imperialist groups and personalities, who subsequently defected toward the coup oriented opposition. Unlike Cuba, Chavez has not organized a coherent mass socio-political movement to support his regime. The outpouring of mass popular support reinstating him to power following a coup attempt was mostly spontaneous. It is only after three years into his term of office that a pro-Chavez trade union federation is being organized and neighborhood organizing via the 'Bolivarian Circles' is taking place. Chavez still depends on "institutional" military officers and their personal loyalties to defend the regime. Most of these officers have not been part of any social revolutionary experience; save opposition to two US orchestrated coup efforts. Thirdly Chavez' ideology has never called into question the class based inequalities, and property and wealth of the upper classes. His reforms build around these

obstacles to social justice. Given this complex situation of a political economy of the right, a public administration of dubious loyalty and competence and a foreign policy of national independence, the limits of Chavez anti-imperialism becomes clear: it is political not economic, it tolerates a pro-imperialist bourgeoisie and US MNCs in strategic sectors of the economy and mobilizes the radicalized urban poor which are more consequentially anti-imperialist in relation to the ownership and control of the domestic economy.

Both the anti-imperialist movements and states have built large scale, politically conscious supporters, who are activated for both local, national, and international struggles. All the successful movements and regimes have developed powerful leaders who have long term links to the mass struggle. More important the biggest and most successful movements have grown in direct conflict with the US. In Cuba, Columbia, Bolivia, Venezuela, failed armed intervention or military coups radicalized the mass supporters. Equally significant the anti-imperialist movements are fundamentally class movements, not an amorphous multitude. The mass bases of the guerrillas in Columbia are peasants, the urban anti-imperialist movements are based on salaried and wage workers. In Cuba, the mass of wage workers and peasants and in Venezuela the urban poor are the base of the AIM. What is striking is the absence of any significant sector of the bourgeoisie despite the fact that imperial control of markets, credit and state policy has prejudiced many groups to the point of bankruptcy. The pivotal groups in Columbia, Brazil, Argentina, and Peru are the public employees who have been hammered by the empire dictated budget cuts. In the case of Venezuela, Paraguay, and Mexico the public sector employees have been divided, significant sectors who owe their jobs to political patronage have sided with their pro-imperialist party patrons.

The popular class base of the anti-imperialist movements has influenced the direct action tactics of the movements as well as been engaged because of the use of those tactics.

Tactics and Strategies of the AIM

The AIM, their growth and extension to all parts of the world is a result in part to the success of direct-action politics, which, in turn, is a response to the failures and betrayals of ex-leftist electoral parties. To understand "direct action" politics of the AIM, it is important to contextualize it. Two factors stand out: the increasing aggressiveness of US and European imperialism, both its economic and military faces, and the active collaboration of the traditional Social Democratic and ex-Communist parties and trade unions with the regimes engaged in imperial conquests. In the US variant, it is the absence of any significant electoral or trade union alternative to imperialism, which forces opposition into the street.

The approaches of the AIM differ substantially in the US and Europe from what takes place in Latin America, even as there are points of similarity and convergence of activists. In the US and Europe, the major tactics and focus of organization is the Big Event like Seattle, Genoa, Davos, and Barcelona, where huge numbers of NGO's, trade unions, anti-globalization groups converge to protest against meetings of the imperial powers, such as the WTO and G-7. These events serve to demonstrate the scope and depth of popular opposition to imperialist policies, to educate the "passive public" and perhaps to force the imperial rulers, particularly in Europe, to become more circumspect in their support for US plans of world conquest. These mobilizations also serve as a meeting place for the AIM to exchange ideas, co-ordinate future activities and to create networks of solidarity in case of repression, particularly in Latin America.

In Latin America the major focus of the AIM is on the day to day struggles against imperialism; mobilizations against constantly recurring privatizations, and endless series of SAP and IMF austerity programs and demands on debt payments, the deep penetration of US military operations in counter-insurgency and crop eradication programs and US orchestrated coup attempts.. While these confrontations receive far less publicity than the Big Events of the Northern countries, they involve more workers and peasants and have had successful concrete results in blocking privatization, in sustaining struggles and in educating the local population. Big

Events, like the World Social Forum and its national and even municipal offspring, do take place in Latin America. They serve an educational function, but have more of symbolic or inspirational impact for the participants than any direct impact on imperial conquests. In fact, over time the WSF has evolved from being a critic of imperialism to a much more ambiguous enterprise, especially as one of its key sponsors, the Workers Party of Brazil, has evolved into a pro-imperialist party.

There are more profound differences between the tactics of the Big Events movements in the North and the sustained popular struggles in Latin America. Programmatically Northern movements are a mixture of progressive reformers of imperialism, anti-capitalist radicals and chauvinist protectionist trade unionists, which makes it difficult to concretize on-going activists. Moreover the Big Events, apart from scattered street barricades, a few broken windows, burnt garbage dumpsters, have little sustained impact on the political structures, or daily economic activities of the imperial powers, even of the country in which the events take place.

In contrast in Latin America, AIM movements have paralyzed nation-wide transport and economic activity with sustained mass street blockages, takeovers of public buildings, general strikes against privatization. These actions have had an impact in forcing regimes to withdraw privatization decrees, limited US eradication programs, countered US military intervention and defeated US organized military coups. In a word, the tactics of the Latin American AIM are far more political than simply social, more anti-capitalist than reformist, more tuned to power than to symbolic protests and provide educational experiences through the practice of political leaders rather than by public lectures by overseas notables.

The profound disjuncture between the anti-imperialist struggle of the FARC, the cocaleros, the Venezuelan masses and the movements in the North is evident in the abundant media publicity and solidarity which the latter receives and the minimum attention and solidarity of the former. When sixty Bolivian anti-imperialist activists were killed between January and February 2003 there was hardly an outcry from the Northern NGO's, trade unions or progressive

intellectual; when one Italian activists was killed in Genoa, there was a world outcry, calls for a parliamentary inquiry, and he became a reference point for the Northern movement. In a word, the anti-imperialist movement despite its claims of being "internationalist" still reflects profound differences in the degree of reciprocal solidarity.

The tactical differences reflect in the contrasting strategic goals of the AIM in the North and Latin America. The bulk of the northern movement (the NGO's particularly) are profoundly reformist, they attack "speculative capital", war preparations, the excesses of the MNCs, they call for the Tobin tax and codes of conduct for the MNCs, and support UN resolutions against the wars. In Latin America the AIM struggle to transform the capitalist system, to replace the power holders and express solidarity with the colonized people of the Third World.

More significantly there are deep political differences between the Northern and Latin American intellectuals in relationship to imperialist intervention and solidarity with Cuba. US and European "Progressive" intellectuals condemned Cuba's arrest of US financed agents posing as dissidents and the application of capital punishment to terrorists who pirated a Cuban vessel and threatened the lives of its passengers. In Latin American the great majority of anti-imperialist intellectuals and movements declared their solidarity with Cuba, recognizing the US funding and control of the "dissidents".

The ambiguities and inconsistencies in Northern intellectuals and NGO anti-imperialists is partly explained by the powerful media, peer, and government pressure which label Latin American anti-imperialists as "terrorists", "authoritarians", and "narco-traffickers". Northern progressive intellectuals temper their criticism of imperialism with condemnation of Latin American anti-imperialists who don't fit their preconceived model of an opposition. This policy of making moral equivalences reaches its lowest point in the US colonial war against Iraq, where the leading intellectual critics of the US war, refused to support the Iraqi anti-colonial resistance either during the invasion or even in the post Saddam Hussein period.

Despite a lot of internationalist and solidarity rhetoric, the northern opposition (particularly in the

US) has a murky record: many sectors supported the US invasion of Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, many criticized the US invasion of Iraq, but equally condemned the Iraqi resistance; most criticize ALCA, while also criticizing the leading regimes opposing it in Latin America, namely Cuba and Venezuela.

In Latin America almost all the major AIM movements, and leaders, and leading intellectuals support the Cuban revolution and publicly express their solidarity in most of the mass mobilizations against imperialist organized coups, ALCA and other acts of imperial conquest. Behind the differing attitudes toward Cuba is a more profound strategic difference-the movements and intellectuals in the US are mostly still tied to the pro-imperial institutions of civil society (the "left-wing" of the Democratic Party, the AFL-CIO the pro-imperial, pro-coup trade union confederation) and have always drawn back from supporting successful social revolutions in Latin America. The lack of common vision demonstrates the limits of any strategic alliance between the US and Latin American AIM.

Conclusion

The bulk of the AIM in the US is middle class-professionals, students and NGO affiliates. The great majority of AIM in Latin America are workers, urban poor, peasants, public employees and lower middle class students from the provinces. The movements in the US are strongly tied to the ecology movements, the protectionist trade unions and to peace and progressive citizens movements. In the US, imperialism is seen negatively because of its effects on the environment, civil liberties, loss of jobs and its immoral overseas interventions and deceptions as well as its degradation of democratic politics in the US. In Latin America the AIM are based on the direct negative impacts on living standards, jobs, agricultural production and control over economic policy. The ties between imperialism and repressive states and paramilitary organizations is a key point of confrontation. The result is a far deeper and more comprehensive anti-imperialist consciousness which crosses the "sectoral divides" of the US and European AIM. The theoretical

point is that class relations and different locations in the class structure in Europe, the US and Latin America have a direct impact on the emergence of different levels of anti-imperialist consciousness. The uneven impact of imperialist politics, its direct impact on the lives of Latin Americans and indirect effects in the US and Europe has resulted in the uneven development of militant action, its scope and sustainability. Religious and secular AIM in the Third World converge in their opposition to US dominance but diverge in their strategic goals, particularly in the Middle East.

The emergence of AIM on a world scale, despite their fluctuations in the US and Europe and their repression in the Middle East and Latin America demonstrates the vulnerabilities of US and European imperialism. The transformation of NATO into a colonial occupation army and the rapid development of imperial armed forces is largely a response to the new anti-imperialist resistance as well as a drive to impose colonial rule.

The class configurations of the new AIM, their pre-eminent popular character, and linkage to resistance against overt colonial rule (whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, or via ALCA in Latin America) ensure that the struggle is not likely to be betrayed by defecting bourgeois nationalists. In other words the class forces involved are those most likely to be prejudiced by the abandonment of the anti-imperialist struggle. There are inherent class interests embedded in the movements providing a basis for sustained struggles. The vulnerability of imperialism is clearly evident in a series of tactical defeats; the reversal of the Venezuelan coup of April 2002; the regrouping and increased activity of anti-colonial resistance in Afghanistan; the anti-colonial guerrilla resistance in Iraq; the failure of Plan Columbia to defeat the FARC, ELN, and civic movements; the growing continental resistance to ALCA. Imperial rule is based on class relations and as the resistance grows in the Third World and the human and economic costs in the US and Europe grow, they begin to engender political and social conflicts within and among the imperial powers of the US and Europe and in the not to distant future could result in a unified challenge to imperial power.