

# *A Beginner's Guide to Creating Anti-Imperialist Art*

Often artists who are new to the work of the Maoist Internationalist Movement are interested in helping by contributing art but are not sure where to start. The purpose of this guide is to get those people started in contributing to our principal task, which is to build public opinion and independent institutions in preparation for Maoist revolution in North America.

Before we can create anti-imperialist art we must be clear on what it means to be anti-imperialist. Here is our explanation of what imperialism is:

*Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism according to those of us following Lenin and his book by the title of "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism."*

*Imperialism is characterized by monopoly corporations and the compulsion to export capital abroad (for higher profits). Unlike capitalism in earlier stages, in the imperialist stage, capitalism has no more progress to bring the world, only the continuous threat of extinction through world war and environmental catastrophe.*

*Historically, the term before Lenin often referred to colonialism (the direct rule of other countries by a mother country) or conquest of other countries. Lenin also meant for the term to continue that connotation. According to Lenin, the countries with the highest stage of capitalism (imperialist countries of Europe and North America) would periodically re-divide the world through world war. World War today is only the political extension of the economics of competition inherent within capitalism.*

*An imperialist is a member of the ruling class in a society with the highest stage of capitalism. Through their control of the means of production either through ownership or power in government, imperialists would not have to work a day in their lives if they did not want to.*

*"Imperialism" is the word that the petty-bourgeoisie chastises us the most for using. It is grating and unpleasant to the petty-bourgeoisie proud of its country.*

*Imperialism is the cause of contemporary militarism. It is impossible to understand communists today without understanding the interventions and national conflicts caused by imperialism.*

*Examples of imperialist countries are the United States, Japan, Germany, England, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland. We also include Russia and possibly China, though these last two have definitive majorities that are exploited, not exploiters.*

*Examples of imperialists are Bush, Cheney, Rockefeller, Bill Gates, Lee Iacocca, Mitterand, De-Gaulle, Chirac and Tony Blair.*

Our goal is to create art that exposes this system for what it is, while presenting forward looking solutions to how this system can be replaced with one where groups of people no longer have power over other groups of people; where there is no more oppression or exploitation. That is the message of the anti-imperialist.

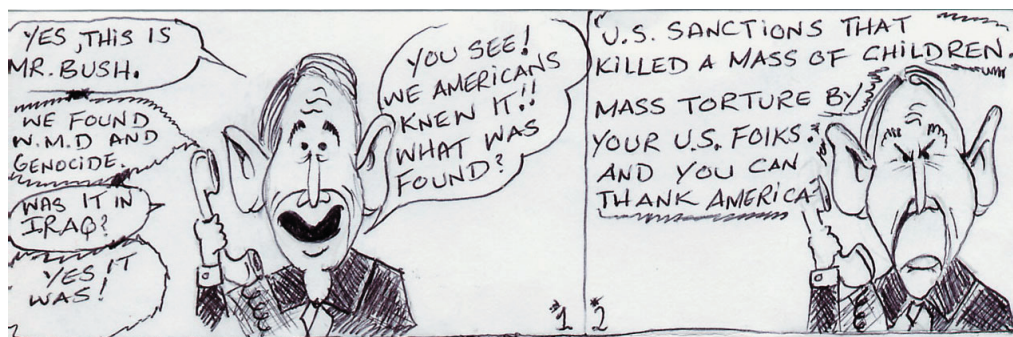
As stated in the definition above, militarism is a major characteristic of the economic system of imperialism. War is inevitable under this system, and that plays out in the real world with the United States and its allies in Europe and elsewhere carrying out military invasions, bombing campaigns and covert operations all over the world. It's almost impossible to mention a Third World country who hasn't been a victim of militarism, but cur-

rent topics of importance include the invasions and occupations of Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan and the threats of attacks on Iran, North Korea, Syria and others.

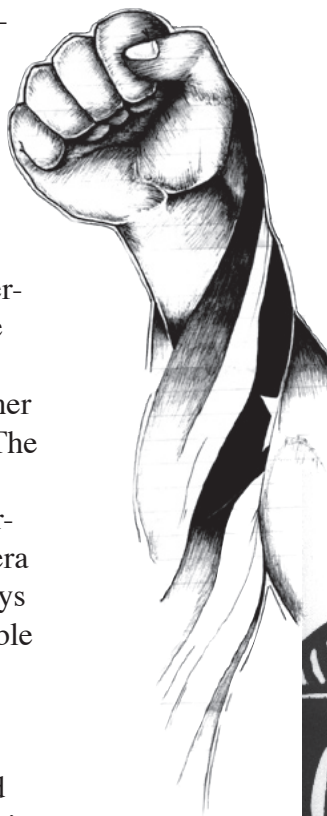
It is in the interests of all oppressed people to combat militarism on all its fronts. So let's take a practical approach to see what exactly anti-imperialist art looks like. The "Parasite's Delight: Buzzards Over Baghdad?" piece is an excellent example exposing the economic motivations behind militarism, specifically the u\$ invasion of Iraq. Another approach is the George Bush cartoon that uses a short dialogue to expose u\$ terrorism in Iraq.

While these examples are good, one thing they are missing is the people's struggle against imperialism. The French filmmaker Jean Luc Godard, who produced some good Maoist films in his life, said that even sociological films on the conditions of the proletariat are not helpful if they exclude depiction of struggle. Exposure of horrific conditions can cause despair as well as action, so the important thing is to show how to rebel. The Fist holding a Boricuan flag is a simple piece that sends a powerful message for the struggle for the liberation of Boricua. The African womyn with child and gun is another fairly simple image of resistance. The resistance is shown in her face and her gun, and the repression is inherent in her Black face, since in the era of imperialism Afrikans have always been on the receiving side of horrible oppression.

The drawing of a prisoner in chains is a much more complicated piece with elements of both repression



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only oppose Bush's tactics in Iraq not imperialism in general. We want our art to be more biting and powerful than the art of the liberals. We want our art to really speak to and motivate the most oppressed sectors of society in the imperialist countries. We want to attack the weakest points of imperialism. We want to strike the issues that are going to do the most to push the struggle forward the fastest.

One of the major things that distinguish MIM is the recognition that most amerikans are allies of imperialism, and that is why we create art with an intended audience of the most oppressed who really would benefit from changing the system. Check out the "He Ain't Heavy" piece. This is a good example of something that most groups calling themselves communist would never print because they say "Support the Troops." We don't succumb to such pro-amerikan patriotism. We see amerika as a nation as the enemy of the world's people and oppose it's militarism and economic exploitation all over the world.

MIM is also unique in it's support for self-determination of all nations. Many groups claim to support the struggles of Blacks or Mexicans or Indigenous people but do so in an integrationist way, usually to cover for a pro-white worker line. They do not support the liberation of Aztlán, the stolen land that was formerly part of Mexico. They do not support an independent Black nation with their own territory. Instead they promote uniting the oppressed with the so-called "workers" of the oppressor nations of north amerika and europe. We call amerikan and european "workers" the labor aristocracy because they live lavish lifestyles on the superprofits stolen from the Third World through imperialist exploitation. Art demonstrating this relationship between amerikans and the rest of the world is very useful for our work.

Because we recognize the right of all nations to organize as separate nations it might be preferable to show only Black people united against a white oppressor in some art. Other times we might want to show Blacks united with Mexicans against police brutality or united with Afghans against the torturous prison system. In prisons, divisions among the oppressed are widespread, so showing unity among prisoners of various nationalities is very important.

To explore questions of MIM line and what are the most important topics for revolutionary artists to take on we refer you again to MIM Notes and MIM Theory. Those are the party organs that put forth our political line in relation to modern day struggles and conditions. For more study on the question of what is imperialism we recommend "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism" by V.I. Lenin. For further study on Maoist art we recommend "Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art" by Mao Tse Tung and MIM Theory 13 on Revolutionary Culture, particularly the article "Chinese Art in Revolution" found on our website as well.

If you are still unsure about where to start, try sketching out some ideas and sending them to us before putting a lot of work into them. We can give you feedback and let you know if you are on the right track to producing something we would use.

One final note on form. At this time, the major uses of art for us are in our newspaper, magazines and fliers, which are usually printed in black and white. For these purposes, black on white art using strong, clear lines are will be easiest to make quality reproductions of.

