

Reader comments on Nick Beams' "Marxist internationalism vs. the perspective of radical protest"

22 March 2000

Dear WSWS,

I am writing to commend you for the web site in general, and for the recent articles by Nick Beams in particular. His response to Chossudovsky was very helpful for me because he explained lucidly the fundamental differences that exist between radical bourgeois and Marxist perspectives on the economy.

Furthermore, his recent response to a reader on the question of national self-determination was very persuasive and well-argued. I too agree that the phrase "national self-determination" has lost much, if not all, of its progressive content in the modern age. First of all, the espousal of this phrase diverts many leftists from focusing on the centrality of class in all questions, especially in foreign relations. Secondly, the term "self-determination," as shown concretely by numerous recent events, has come to mean the "right" of oppressed ethnic groups to oppress and ethnically cleanse civilians who share the ethnic heritage of the former "favored" ethnic group. Finally, all these groups calling for ethnic separatism under the cover of "national self-determination" have a thoroughly bourgeois, pro-imperialist political program.

You are right. Socialists must draw a balance sheet and assess the value and practical worth of the slogan "national self-determination." As it is being increasingly abused by the Great Powers for their own geostrategic interests, it should be discarded, or at the very least, reconsidered by socialists.

AW

16 March 2000



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