



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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## Russian Imperialism, Donbass, and National Self-Determination

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Picture on the cover: Map of Donbas region, Russian-controlled territories between February 2015 and February 2022  
 (Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donbas#/media/File:Donbas\\_\(2015%E2%80%932022\).svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donbas#/media/File:Donbas_(2015%E2%80%932022).svg))

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## Ukraine War: Stalino-“Trotskyist” Chamber of Horrors

On a recently held “anti-war” conference organised by some “Trotskyists” as well as Russian Stalinist parties

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 29 June 2022

On the weekend 25-26 June a shameful conference on the Ukraine War took place. It was organized by an alliance of some European “Trotskyist” organizations and Russian Stalinist parties. Contrary to the misleading title “Emergency International Anti-War Conference”, the purpose of the conference was to rally support for Russian imperialism.

The most important forces among the organizers were, on one hand, three Stalinist parties from Russia: the *United Communist Party* (OKP), the *Russian Party of Communists* (RPK), and the *Association Soviet Union* (ASU). Their “Trotskyist” partners (in crime) have been the *Workers Revolutionary Party of Greece* (EEK) and the *Revolutionary Workers Party of Turkey* (DIP) – both allies of the Argentinean *Partido Obrero* resp. its public faction – the *Partido Obrero (Tendencia)* led by its historic leader Jorge Altamira.

### Russia is not imperialist, and China is socialist?

The Putinista character of this Stalino-“Trotskyist” conference is quite evident if one looks at the statements of these forces published ahead of the conference. Their common fundamental position is the categorical denial that Russia is an imperialist power. Repeating the myth upheld by so many revisionists, they claim that the “Russian economy [is] entirely dependent on imperialism”.<sup>1</sup> As we did show somewhere else, PO and its European allies go even further and claim that the process of capitalist restoration has still not been completed in Russia – more than 30 years after the collapse of the USSR!<sup>2</sup> One of the Russian parties even claims in a statement published two days before the conference that “socialism still exists in China, Cuba, Vietnam, and at the beginning of the XXI century, socialism originated in Venezuela and other Latin American countries.”<sup>3</sup> It is evident that these Stalinists camouflage state-capitalist regimes as “socialist” – something which even the official *Communist Party of Venezuela* strongly opposes!

The RCIT has refuted such nonsense since many years on the bases of numerous facts and figures. As we did show in several books and pamphlets, China has not only become capitalist but has been even transformed into an imperialist power which challenges the U.S. in nearly every area – politically, economically and military.<sup>4</sup> Russia is economically weaker than China but still ranks amongst the dominant powers in the political and military area.<sup>5</sup> Basically, these Stalino-“Trotskyists” deny the imperialist character of Russia and China and adhere to the classic revisionist concept of “Ultra-Imperialism”. According to its inventor, Karly Kautsky, the imperialist Great Powers would become a unified force. Or – to put it in the words of the Stalinist OKP – the enemy is a “single imperialist center (the countries of the Anglo-Saxon world, the EU, Japan)” which threatens Russia.<sup>6</sup>

However, in the real world such a unified imperialism does not exist. Just as capitalism does not (and can not)

exist as one unified capital but rather as *many, competing* capitals, so does imperialism exist (and can only exist) in the form of *several, rivalling* Great Powers. Of course, there can be temporary situations where the Great Powers unite for a specific purpose – e.g. supporting the White counterrevolution in the civil war against the Bolsheviks in 1918-21, or fighting against rebellious countries in the semi-colonial South (like China in 1900, Iraq in 1991 or Afghanistan in 2001). But these are short-term exceptions and not the normal modus operandi of imperialist Great Powers. (Likewise, we note in passing, the capitalist corporations can sometimes temporarily waive differences in face of a massive workers struggle.)

### Russia’s invasion – an act of “anti-imperialist resistance”?

However, in order to justify their defense of Putin’s Russia, the Stalino-“Trotskyists” must find refuge in such revisionist theories. This is the only possibility to justify the idea that Russia would play an “objective” progressive role. To quote again one of the Russian organizer parties: “[O]bjectively, it was Russia, by its cooperation with the remaining socialist countries, primarily with China, and with such countries in Latin America as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, as well as with a number of other countries, primarily with India, that significantly complicated the solution of the second task – the destruction of these socialist countries and their subsequent assimilation. Therefore, both tasks could be solved by the capitalist center only in the event of the destruction and subsequent assimilation of Russia. Thus, the primary and urgent target in view of the growing general crisis of capitalism that began in 2008, and the strengthening of China, as well as, although to a lesser extent, other socialist countries, became the target of the destruction and subsequent assimilation of Russia. Only after the destruction of Russia could the capitalist center begin to solve the second task – the liquidation of the People’s Republic of China and other socialist countries: Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua.”<sup>7</sup>

Based on such “power” of logic from the Stalinist parallel universe, the Ukraine War is not an aggression of the reactionary Putin regime. No, contrary! “It is the NATO leadership, in particular the United States and Britain, that are causing the death and destruction of the Ukrainian people.”<sup>8</sup> How could we ever have imagined naively that it is Russian bombs which are killing the Ukrainians?!

And the Ukrainian resistance? Pshaw, they are just servants of unified imperialism! “The war in Ukraine is not a war between Russia and Ukraine. It is a proxy war waged by the Ukrainian army and the Nazi paramilitary bands on behalf of NATO against Russia. Everything demonstrates this with crystal clarity.”<sup>9</sup>

Hence, Putin’s war is simple an act of anti-imperialist resistance: “... it can be unequivocally concluded that Russia’s “special military operation” in Ukraine is a response to at least

*thirty years of permanent, purposeful and total policy of the capitalist center, the purpose of which was and is the destruction of Russia as a historical subject and assimilation its resource and economic parts in the form the capitalist center need. The main task of this step is to preserve the country and strengthen its independence, and for this reason it is not aggression, at least in the classical or traditional sense.”*<sup>10</sup>

### **On the barricades – for Russian imperialism!**

It is therefore only logical that the Stalino-“Trotskyist” organizers of the conference call for support of Russia’s “anti-imperialist” war. They denounce all left-wing organizations which do not share such a position. *“Cease the policy of an “equidistant” attitude or of neutrality or even pro-NATO/anti-Russian stance regarding the war! Whoever does not see the long hand of NATO in this war will be acting as the handmaid of imperialism.”*<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, at the end of their joint statement, the Stalino-“Trotskyist” organizers raise 14 slogans but not a single one is directed against Putin or the Russian invasion!<sup>12</sup> Fittingly, the OKP proudly refers to their social-imperialist record of having supported Russia’s invasion in the Donbass already in 2014. *“The party has consistently supported the anti-fascist movement, provided all possible assistance to resistance activists, collected and sent aid to the population of the DPR and LPR. Many members of the OKP took a personal part in the battles against the troops of the Kyiv Nazi junta, defending the unbroken Donbass in the ranks of the people’s militia of the republics.”*<sup>13</sup>

Hence, they commit themselves to support Putin’s war until the whole Ukraine has been “denazified”. This is the Putinist language for stating that they will loyally serve the imperialist war until the Ukraine has been brought under the Kremlin’s total control. *“The Communists support the recognition of the independence of the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic, as well as the idea of denazification of Ukraine.”*<sup>14</sup>

The reader would be mistaken in assuming that these would be new position. No, the OKP – and in particular Daria Mitina, its Deputy Secretary General in charge of International Relations – is well known for its longstanding patriotic support for Russian imperialism as we did show somewhere else.<sup>15</sup> It is exactly such a policy of pro-Russian social-imperialism on PO, EEK and DIP which constitutes the political basis of their alliance with the OKP since several years!

Another of the Russian co-organizers also rejects explicitly the call for the retreat of Russian troops. *“So the withdrawal of Russian troops would lead not only to reprisals against the people of Donbass, who did not recognize the fascist coup in 2014, but also against residents of territories already liberated by Russian troops for their active and passive cooperation with these troops.”*<sup>16</sup>

They rather view the war as an excellent opportunity to push Russia’s ruling class to carry out ... a “pre-socialist and socialist transformations”! *“Finally, in Russia itself and in the liberated territories [by this they cynically mean the occupied regions of the Ukraine! Ed.], left-wing parties and workers must seek to force the authorities to carry out pre-socialist and socialist transformations as far as possible, as was stated in the same Statement of the Association ‘Soviet Union’.”*<sup>17</sup>

In other words, these Stalinists view the ultra-reaction-

ary and Great Russian chauvinist Putin regime, which is closely aligned with the monopoly-capitalist oligarchs, ... as “objectively” a pioneer of the country’s transformation towards socialism! What a caricature of Marxism, what a mockery of elementary reason!

### **Alan Wood’s IMT and the Stalino-“Trotskyist” chamber of horrors**

This brief overview should make it clear beyond doubt that this shameful “anti-war” conference is nothing but a Stalino-“Trotskyist” chamber of horrors! Authentic socialists must stay in good distance to such company!

It is therefore particularly shamefully to see that Artem Kirpichenok from the Russian section of Alan Woods’ IMT has been also featured as a speaker at the conference according to the actual list of speakers which was published on the day before the conference started.<sup>18</sup> While we do not know currently if he actually did participate, in any case, it is absolutely impermissible for socialists to lend any kind of support to such a Putinista event (like by featuring as speaker)!

On the other hand, it is by no means surprising that IMT representatives support such a conference since Alan Woods and the IMT leadership themselves are well-known for having an infatuation with pro-Russian social-imperialism. In 2014, they supported Putin’s military intervention in Donbass on the basis of defending the regions’ “right of national self-determination”.<sup>19</sup> Woods, similar to PO-EEK-DIP as well as the Russian Stalinists, also denies the imperialist nature of Russia. Consequently, the IMT has always strictly refused to support the Ukrainians’ war of defense against Putin’s invasion. It is therefore no surprise that a representative of the IMT Russia felt at home at this conference and offered his participation as a speaker!<sup>20</sup>

### **Authentic socialists defend the Ukraine and oppose both imperialist camps!**

In contrast to the Stalino-“Trotskyists”, the RCIT and all authentic socialists recognize that the current conflict has a *dual character* – Putin’s invasion of the Ukraine as well as the escalating tensions between the imperialist Great Powers.<sup>21</sup> The failure to understand this has caused numerous reformist and centrist leftists to arrive at reactionary conclusions. We noted in our *Manifesto*, published a few days after the beginning of the war:

*“It is impossible to have a correct orientation in the current world situation without understanding the complex nature of regional and global contradictions between the classes and the powers. The basis of a correct analysis is the recognition of the fact that we currently face two lines of contradictions. The two processes are interdependent and influence each other but they are not identical. Every opportunist deviation – either towards Russian imperialism or towards Western imperialism – has its theoretical basis in the failure to understand the contradictory character of the current situation.*

*The Russian invasion in the Ukraine is the result of the imperialist character of Russia as well as the escalation of tensions between the Great Powers in East and West. Therefore, the resistance of the Ukrainian people is a just war of defense against an imperialist attack. At the same time, the Western imperialist*



powers try to utilize this war for their own interests. The ruling class in the European Union and the U.S. exploit the war as a pretext to accelerate militarism and armament. They try to utilize Zelensky – a willing lackey of U.S. and EU imperialism – in order to transform the just struggle of the Ukrainian people into a proxy war.”

Such recognition of the complex character of the current conflict is the basis for advocating a dual tactic. Hence, the RCIT views the national war of defence of the Ukrainian people as progressive and legitimate. We therefore support their resistance against the invasion of imperialist Russia. At the same time, we also recognize the reactionary character of the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers. In this conflict, socialists oppose both camps – Russia as well as NATO. We summarize the RCIT’s position in the following slogans:

\* *Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Russian imperialism! International workers and popular solidarity with the Ukrainian national resistance – independent of any imperialist influence!*

\* *Down with all imperialist powers – NATO and EU as well as Russia! In all conflicts between these powers, revolutionaries oppose both camps!*

Defending such an internationalist and anti-imperialist line also includes the task to fight against the poisoning ideas of Stalinism and Pseudo-Trotskyism which betray the oppressed people and support one of the imperialist camps!

#### Footnotes

1 Mobilize to stop the imperialist drive towards world war and nuclear annihilation! Statement by the International Socialist Center Christian Rakovsky, RedMed Web Network, DIP (Revolutionary Workers Party, Turkey), EEK (Workers Revolutionary Party, Greece), RPK (Russian Party of Communists, Rus-

sia), OKP (United Communist Party, Russia), ASU (Association Soviet Union, Russia), MTL (Marxist Workers League, Finland), ROR (Renaissance Ouvrière Révolutionnaire, France), June 24, 2022, <http://redmed.org/article/mobilize-stop-imperialist-drive-towards-world-war-and-nuclear-annihilation>

2 See on this e.g. two pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: Russia and China: Neither Capitalist nor Great Powers? A Reply to the PO/CRFI and their Revisionist Whitewashing of Chinese and Russian imperialism, 28 November 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/russia-and-china-neither-capitalist-nor-great-powers-reply-to-po-crfi/>; The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of “Catastrophism”. On the Marxist Theory of Capitalist Breakdown and its Misinterpretation by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its “Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International”, 27 May 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-catastrophic-failure-of-the-theory-of-catastrophism/>

3 Association Soviet Union: Once again about the defeat and victory in the war in Ukraine (About the statements of some left-wing parties), June 23, 2022, <http://redmed.org/article/once-again-about-defeat-and-victory-war-ukraine-about-statements-some-left-wing-parties>

4 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power. See on this e.g. the book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also by the same author an essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6\\_179-1](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1); China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet? A Theoretical Question with Very Practical Consequences! Continuing the Debate with Esteban Mercatante

# Books of the RCIT

## Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan.  
A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting analyses the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – the U.S., China, EU, Russia, and Japan. He shows that the diplomatic rows, sanctions, trade wars, and military tensions between these Great Powers are not accidental or caused by a mad man in the White House. They are rather rooted in the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system. This rivalry is a key feature of the current historic period and could, ultimately, result in major wars between these Great Powers.

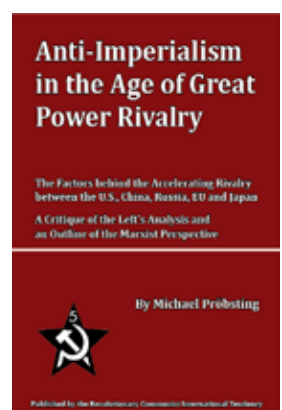
*Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is crucial for assessing the character of the current inter-imperialist rivalry.

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting critically discusses the analysis of modern imperialism by a number of left-wing parties (left social democrats, Stalinists, Trotskyists and others). He demon-

strates that most of these organizations fail to understand the nature of the Great Power rivalry and, consequently, are not able to take an internationalist and revolutionary stance.

The author elaborates the approach of leading Marxist figures like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg to the problems of Great Power rivalry and imperialist aggression against oppressed peoples. He outlines a Marxist program for the current period which is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

The book contains an introduction and 29 chapters plus an appendix (412 pages) and includes 61 figures and tables. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.



and the PTS/FT on China's class character and consequences for the revolutionary strategy, 22 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-imperialist-power-or-not-yet/>; China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4/>; How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China's State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>; China's Emergence as an Imperialist Power (Article in the US journal 'New Politics'), in: "New Politics", Summer 2014 (Vol:XV-1, Whole #: 57). See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

5 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; by the same author: Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia's Imperialist Character, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies, in: *New Politics* Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022, [https://newpol.org/issue\\_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/](https://newpol.org/issue_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/); Once Again on Russian Imperialism (Reply to Critics). A rebuttal of a theory which claims that Russia is not an imperialist state but would be rather "comparable to Brazil and Iran", 30 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-russian-imperialism-reply-to-critics/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

6 OKP: Statement of 8th Plenum of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party: On the situation in Ukraine, June 22, 2022, <http://redmed.org/article/statement-8th-plenum-central-committee-united-communist-party-situation-ukraine>

7 Association Soviet Union: Once again about the defeat and victory in the war in Ukraine

8 Mobilize to stop the imperialist drive towards world war and nuclear annihilation

9 Ibid

10 Association Soviet Union: Once again about the defeat and victory in the war in Ukraine

11 Mobilize to stop the imperialist drive towards world war and nuclear annihilation

12 "Stop making the Ukrainian people cannon fodder for the interests of imperialism! Fight the policy of imperialist countries to prolong the war for their own benefit! No to sanctions against Russia! No to armaments! No to occupation! Stop NATO expansion in Eastern, Northern and Southern Europe! Sweden and Finland, keep out of NATO, the enemy of the international working class! Workers of NATO countries, exit NATO, but also fight for the dissolution of NATO and the dismantling of US bases! Recognise the right to self-determination for the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics! Not a single penny, bullet or soldier for NATO's war! War on imperialist war! The enemy is at home! Down with capitalist restoration that opened the door to imperialism, war, and colonization of the former

*Soviet space! Fight the rise of fascism wherever it rears its head! For a new anti-war Zimmerwald Conference! For the refoundation of the revolutionary International of Lenin and his comrades! For world socialist revolution!"* (Mobilize to stop the imperialist drive towards world war and nuclear annihilation)

13 OKP: Statement of 8th Plenum of the Central Committee

14 OKP: Statement of 8th Plenum of the Central Committee. On the Great Russian chauvinist ideology of the so-called "denazification of Ukraine" see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: A Revealing Document of Great Russian Totalitarianism. Commentary on an article published by the Russian state-owned news agency RIA Novosti, 7 April 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/world-wide/europe/ria-novosti-great-russian-totalitarianism/>

15 See chapters VIII and XXIV in the above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*.

16 Association Soviet Union: Once again about the defeat and victory in the war in Ukraine

17 Association Soviet Union: Once again about the defeat and victory in the war in Ukraine. Or to quote another paragraphs from the same statement: "Obviously, the main task is to prevent the capitalist center from establishing its hegemony throughout the world and transforming the countries of the capitalist periphery and socialist countries into its factual colonies. Therefore, it is necessary such universal and all-round support of Russia, especially of the working people and their political parties, which will contribute - upon completion of the "special military operation" - to forcing the Russian ruling classes to carry out such transformations in Russia and Ukraine, the result of which will be the creation of prerequisites and conditions for the restoration of Soviet socialism and the USSR."

18 Christian Rakovski Balkan Socialist Centre and Red-Med: Final program of the Emergency International Anti-War Conference drawn up: New names added, June 24, 2022, <http://redmed.org/article/final-program-emergency-international-anti-war-conference-drawn-new-names-added>

19 See on this e.g. RCIT: "Self-Determination for Donbass": A Reactionary Slogan in the Service of Russian Imperialism. Theses on the historical, theoretical, and political reasons why this slogan is contrary to the Marxist program of national self-determination as well as to the interests of the current national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people, 27 June 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-donbass/>

20 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The IMT and the Ukraine War: A Shameful Betrayal. Alan Woods and the IMT fail to defend the Ukrainian people against the Russian invasion and effectively refuse to recognize Russia's imperialist character, 2 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-imt-and-the-ukraine-war-a-shameful-betrayal/>; new preface to the Russian translation: [https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-imt-and-the-ukraine-war-a-shameful-betrayal/#anker\\_3](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-imt-and-the-ukraine-war-a-shameful-betrayal/#anker_3); by the same author: NATO-Russia Conflict: The Anglo-Saxon 'Marxist' Tendency. On the IMT's confusion about the role of Russian imperialism, 31 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/nato-russia-conflict-the-anglo-saxon-marxist-tendency/>

21 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 80 RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict and the Ukraine War are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. The most important documents are: RCIT Manifesto: Ukraine War: A Turning Point of World Historic Significance. Socialists must combine the revolutionary defense of the Ukraine against Putin's invasion with the internationalist struggle against Russian as well as NATO and EU imperialism, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/>; Joint Statement of Socialist Tendency (Russia) and RCIT: Defend the Ukrainian People against Putin's Invasion! Down with Russian and NATO Imperialism! 4.6.2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-with-ct-russia-on-ukraine-war-4-6-2022/>

## Ukraine War: Revolutionary Defensism and Non-Revolutionary Defensism

### A comradely critique of LIT-CI which falsely combines its defence of the Ukraine with support for Western imperialist sanctions against Russia

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 15 July 2022

As readers of our publications will be aware, the RCIT shares with the comrades of LIT-CI – an international Trotskyist organization in the tradition of Nahuel Moreno which is based in Latin America – the defence of the Ukraine against Putin’s barbarous invasion. In this spirit, we did sign a joint declaration with this organization (as well as with UIT-CI).<sup>1</sup> In addition, we practically collaborated with these comrades (as well as others) in bringing humanitarian aid to the Ukraine and holding an international solidarity conference in Lviv on May Day.<sup>2</sup>

Our program and practice are based on the recognition on the *dual character* of the conflict. The RCIT calls for the unconditional defence of the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion. At the same time, we strongly oppose all Great Powers in the inter-imperialist rivalry. We say: *Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Putin’s invasion! Neither Russian nor Western imperialism but international socialism!*<sup>3</sup>

Irrespective of our important agreements with LIT-CI on the issue of defence of the Ukraine, we have pointed out that we have also important theoretical and tactical differences with these comrades. These differences are:

- 1) The RCIT characterizes Russia as an imperialist power while LIT-CI rejects our analysis.<sup>4</sup>
- 2) As a consequence, the RCIT refuses to defend Russia in any confrontation with other countries. In the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers of East and West, we take a defeatist position against all states involved. In contrast, LIT-CI calls for the defence of Russia in the case of an attack by NATO.<sup>5</sup>
- 3) While the RCIT opposes support for any imperialist sanctions, LIT-CI takes a different position. It supports – and in complete contradiction to the inner logic of their analysis – the Western sanctions against Russia and even calls for its escalation.

In two longer articles which LIT-CI published recently, the comrades unfortunately repeat their confused analysis and deepen their resulting mistakes. At this point, we will not repeat our detailed criticism which we elaborated in past articles where we critically discussed these LIT-CI positions. We will rather focus on new arguments which the comrades have presented in these two articles.

#### Russia: “a capitalist country highly dependent on imperialism”?

First of all, LIT-CI repeats their statement that Russia would not represent an imperialist country but, quite the contrary, that it would be “highly dependent on imperialism”. In particular, the comrades claim that Russia would be in “complete financial dependence on European imperialism (especially Germany).”

“A model that has a complete financial dependence on European imperialism (especially Germany). Without the flow of funds

from the EU, the Russian economy would grind to a halt. For example, the country’s main company, the state gas exporter Gazprom is indebted beyond its capital value (as are other major companies). In other words, Russia is not an imperialist state but a capitalist country highly dependent on imperialism. It is not by chance that the economic sanctions applied by the invasion, without really going to the bottom of the barrel, are hitting the Russian economy hard. (...) We reiterate that we consider that Russia is not an imperialist country and we do not see Putin questioning its role in the world division of labor but rather defending its own space as an intermediary of imperialist domination.”<sup>6</sup>

Nearly every sentence of this statement is wrong! Russia is in “complete financial dependence on European imperialism”? It is not surprising that the author does not provide any figure to prove his claim! As we did point out in several studies, Russia has a very low level of foreign debt (13.8% of GDP in 2018).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, its total national debt is relatively low compared with other imperialist states. In 2021 Russia public debt was 302,218 million dollars which was the equivalent of 17.02% of its GDP.<sup>8</sup> Compare this to the much higher level of public debt in other imperialist countries – like China (70,3%), the Euro Zone (100,1%), UK (107,0%), the U.S. (134,5%) or Japan (256,5%).<sup>9</sup> In short, Russia supposed “complete financial dependence on Europe” exists only in the phantasy world of LIT-CI!

The LIT-CI article says that the Western sanctions hit Russia hard. They even claim that without the flow of EU funds, Russia’s economy “would grind to a halt.” It is, of course, true that the Western sanctions hit Russia’s economy. But, as we have pointed out in other works, the remarkable thing is rather that despite the unprecedented scale of the sanctions – 11,000 sanctions, the hardest sanctions regime imposed since 1945! – this united front of all Western powers did not manage to bring Russia’s economy down. As everyone can see, the Rubel has stabilized and the effects for the economy are much less than the Western state leaders did hope for.<sup>10</sup>

How is this possible? Well, this is exactly because Russia is *not* a weak, dependent country but rather an imperialist Great Power which can resist the pressure of rivals and find alternative ways for production and trade.

Furthermore, it is not only Russia which has been hit by the sanctions. The Western powers – in particular Europe – have been hit too! In fact, the ruling class in Berlin, Paris, London, Rome and Madrid increasingly panics because of the economic crisis and the approaching energy cuts in winter!<sup>11</sup> In short, the real development of the Russia’s economy in face of the most dramatic sanction of Western powers as well as the massive pressure which Russia itself could impose on its rivals – all these confirms the Marxist analysis that Russia is an imperialist state.

### Is Putin “a Gendarme of Western Imperialism”?

In order to stay consistent in its assessment of Russia as dependent of Western imperialism, LIT-CI goes on in claiming that the Putin regime would not pursue its own imperialist interest but rather those of the Western powers.

In the quote above, the comrades characterize Putin as an “intermediary of imperialist domination”. In another article they call him a “regional gendarme” of Western imperialism. “For Putin, the invasion of Ukraine reinforces his role as an intermediary of imperialism and as a regional gendarme.”<sup>12</sup>

We can not deny that there is an inner logic in LIT-CI position. If Russia is not an imperialist power itself, if it is dependent on Western imperialism, then it must act as a “regional gendarme” of the latter. However, in the real world, this is utter nonsense! Why would the Western Great Powers impose its most severe sanctions against its “regional gendarme”?! Why do the interests of Russia and the US/EU clash in various regions like Mali resp. the Sahel region or in Syria?! Why do they want to hit Russia’s economy hard, as the LIT-CI itself admits? Why do the Western powers send weapons to the Ukraine if they do not view Russia as an imperialist rival?! And, we ask the comrades, is the fact that the Western powers fear a direct confrontation with Russia not also an indicator that the latter is not an “dependent gendarme” but rather an independent imperialist power?!

No, LIT-CI is hopelessly trapped in the labyrinth of its absurd theory that Russia would be not an imperialist power but rather a state in “complete financial dependence on European imperialism.” Trotsky once noted: “The vast practical importance of a correct theoretical orientation is most strikingly manifested in a period of acute social conflict of rapid political shifts, of abrupt changes in the situation.”<sup>13</sup> The Ukraine War and the current escalation of the conflict between NATO and Russia is indeed such an abrupt change in the situation which demonstrates powerfully that a policy based on a wrong theory can not but produce all kind of confusion and political opportunism!

### Again, LIT-CI calls for the defence of Russian imperialism in a direct confrontation with NATO

Sadly, LIT-CI repeats its position that it would defend Russia in the event of a direct military confrontation with NATO. “However, it would take a central importance if the war would change its character and transform into a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia and, in this context, that military alliance would attack this country. For us, in this situation, Russia would have to be defended, because it would mean the aggression of the imperialist NATO against a weaker and more dependent country (Russia). In other words, we would be for the defeat of NATO.”<sup>14</sup>

True, currently the majority of the ruling class of the Western powers wants to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia. Of course, this is not the case because these powers want to save their supposed “regional gendarme” but rather because they view such a confrontation as much too risky and too difficult to win.

However, it is well known that there are sectors among the political elite in the U.S. and Western Europe which push to take the risk of such a direct confrontation. For example, there are calls from influential figures that the

United States and allies should use naval power to ensure that Ukrainian grain can safely transit the Black Sea. Among these proponents are retired U.S. military leaders including Admiral James Stavridis, General Wesley Clark, and General Jack Keane, as well as Democratic representative Elissa Slotkin and the editorial boards of the *Boston Globe* and *Wall Street Journal*. And *Wall Street Journal* opinion writer Seth Cropsey called for “an overwhelming naval task force consisting of small and large surface combatants with submarine and air support.”<sup>15</sup>

While it is currently not possible to know if Washington, London, and Brussels will implement such proposals, it is certainly a realistic possibility. It is the point of view of the RCIT that in case of a confrontation between Western and Russian navy in the Black Sea, socialists must take a dual defeatist position, opposing both imperialist powers. And LIT-CI? What would they do? Would they join the camp of Putin to find themselves in the dubious company of Stalinism and Castro-Chavismo? At least that would be the logic of its above-quoted position!

Trotsky repeatedly emphasized that „theoretical sloppiness always takes cruel vengeance in revolutionary politics.“<sup>16</sup> The total confusion of LIT-CI and its dangerous consequences of social-imperialist support for a Great Power confirms this statement of the leader of the October Revolution!

### Supporting Western sanctions is a classic Stalinist position

As we pointed out in past articles, LIT-CI calls for the hardest possible sanctions of the Western imperialist powers against Russia – despite the fact that the latter is, in their view, a non-imperialist country! Unimpressed by the undeniable logic of their own arguments, the comrades repeat their call for escalation of imperialist sanctions against Russia. “It is a duty of the organizations of the workers’ movement (...) to denounce the ineffectiveness of the imperialist sanctions, which only go as far as the interests of the imperialist countries. It is fundamental to demand the embargo of oil and gas imports as well as the immediate suspension of their payment.”

This is – as we explained in our articles – an impermissible concession to social-imperialism! Socialists support the military struggle of the Ukraine – despite the fact that is ruled by the bourgeois Zelensky government – and such support necessarily includes the delivery of arms.<sup>17</sup> Those pseudo-defenders of the Ukraine, who express platonic support but refuse to call for military aid, ignore the simple fact that it is pretty difficult to win a war without modern weapons!

But the LIT-CI comrades unfortunately go much further and cross a line by supporting imperialist sanctions. Such sanctions do not aid so much the Ukraine but rather help the Western Great Powers to advance its interests in the inter-imperialist rivalry. Socialists must under no circumstances become partisans in the Great Power rivalry!<sup>18</sup>

Of course, we do not support Russia, hence we do not call workers to “break” Western sanctions (as we did, for example, in the case of imperialist sanctions against the Iraq in 1990-2003). We have no side to support in this conflict. This is particularly important as it is the duty of socialists to educate workers, in particular in the imperialist metropolises, in the spirit of internationalist anti-impe-



rialism. This means, among others, to advocate support for an oppressed country under attack by a Great Power. And it also means to explain that workers in imperialist countries must oppose any idea of “national unity” with the ruling class and its chauvinist-militarist foreign policy. Therefore, we repeat, socialists must strictly oppose any support for sanctions imposed by imperialist powers.<sup>19</sup>

The method of socialists is not to support the Great Power policy of imperialist states but rather to call for actions of international solidarity by the working class. In what seems to be a response to our critique, LIT-CI now states: “Making demands is not antagonistic to calling for “workers sanctions” or “worker-led boycotts” against the Russian government and military machine. That is why it is fundamental to support and inform the whole class about the actions of the workers who through their organizations boycott Russian products.”

And in this context, they refer – as a historical example – to the inconsequential nature of the economic sanctions imposed by the *League of Nations* (the predecessor of the United Nations) against Italy in 1935 when the latter invaded Ethiopia. “Despite the aggressive discourse, the economic measures of imperialist sanctions against Russia are partial and are not aimed at defeating the military invasion but at weakening Putin’s government militarily and economically. As were the sanctions of the League of Nations against Italy in 1935, and those applied in the Ethiopian war in the 1930s, they left out fundamental and strategic sectors of the economy such as oil and gas.”

#### Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935: Stalinism support imperialist sanctions

As a matter of fact, the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935-37 and the imperialist sanctions at that time are a striking example which demonstrates the reactionary nature of the LIT-CI position! As is well known, world public opinion condemned Italy’s invasion against Ethiopia and the League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy which however were not implemented consistently.<sup>20</sup>

While most progressive forces all over world rightly called for the defence of Ethiopia and denounced the Italian Mussolini regime, there existed serious differences about the methods how to support Ethiopia. Social democrats and Stalinists viewed the Western imperialist powers as allies in the struggle “against fascism”. Hence they called the League of Nations to impose an economic blockade against Italy and criticised the inconsequential sanctions policy of the Western powers.

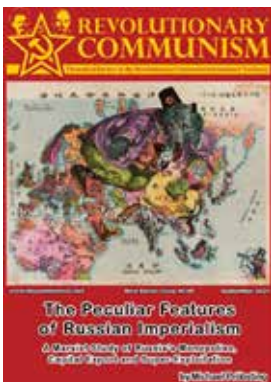
Sectors of the British Labour and the Stalinists were particularly enthusiastic supporter of the League of Nations sanctions against Italy. In 1936, the U.S. Stalinists published a pamphlet which called, among others: “Demand action from the State Department (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the U.S., MP) against Italian conquest in Ethiopia; aid in enforcing economic sanctions; no recognition of the fascist mandate!”<sup>21</sup> The Czech Stalinists demanded the same: “The Czech Communist party sent a telegram to the League of Nations demanding immediate economic and financial sanctions “in the name of one hundred thousand workers in the country.””<sup>22</sup>

The Stalinists called to combine such support for League of Nations sanctions with “workers sanctions”. The U.S. Stalinists, in the above-mentioned pamphlet, added the slogan: “Boycott Italian imports and arouse Negro and white longshore workers against military shipments to Italy.”<sup>23</sup> The French Stalinists also called for “proletarian sanctions” against Italy.<sup>24</sup>

#### Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935: The Trotskyists oppose imperialist sanctions

As we pointed out repeatedly, Trotsky and supporters of the Fourth International unequivocally took the side of the Ethiopia and called for the military defeat of Italian imperialism. However, at the same they strictly opposed the reformist policy of calling for sanctions imposed by the League of Nations or by individual imperialist powers.

The U.S. Trotskyists, for example, stated in their paper in October 1935: “No argument should be necessary to convince a revolutionary socialist that it is impossible for a Socialist party



## Publications of the RCIT

# The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

A Study of Russia’s Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

**Introduction \* Another Denial of Russia’s Imperialist Character \* The Methodological Failure of our Critics \* Russia’s Economy: Dominated by Domestic, not Foreign, Monopolies \* Capital Export and the Problem of “Round-Tripping” Foreign Direct Investments \* “Phantom FDI”: No Russian Peculiarity but a Global Phenomenon \* Russia’s Leading Multinational Corporations and their Foreign Investments \* Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Capital Export \* Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Migration \* Conclusions \* Footnotes**

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

to be neutral in a war between an imperialist robber country and a semi-colonial people. We must call upon the workers to do all they can to defeat the imperialist power because the interests of the international working class demands the defeat of any imperialist power attempting to enslave a backward people. This does not mean that we should agitate to have our own capitalist government place an embargo on Italy. In a case where War is involved the working class must play its role independently of the capitalist government. We can have no faith whatever in any motives of a government representing the capitalist class. We would be bitterly opposed to having our "own" government declare war on Italy because we know that it would do so only to protect its own imperialist interests and not to help Ethiopia." <sup>25</sup>

At the same time, the Trotskyists sharply denounced the social democrats and Stalinists for supporting imperialist sanctions against Italy. "The Labor and Socialist International, the International Federation of Trade Unions together with the Communist International have come out for sanctions by the League of Nations against Italy. THIS IS THE BETRAYAL OF 1914 OVER AGAIN. We are against supporting any capitalist government in any war. Revolutionary socialists are for revolutionary defeatism. The reformist socialists and the communists have now openly shown that they are birds of one feather." <sup>26</sup>

In contrast to the Stalinist confusion combining imperialist and proletarian sanctions, the Trotskyists strictly differentiates between these two methods. "The Workers Party calls for the defense of the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression. (...) It is the independent sanctions of the working class, its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds, mass demonstrations that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples", not the sanctions of finance-capital and its puppet states." <sup>27</sup>

And in another article in their theoretical journal, the American Trotskyists pointed to the social-imperialist nature of the pro-sanctions policy of the reformist parties. "The pro-sanctions policy of the Second and Third Internationals came as a veritable god-send to British imperialism. (...) We accuse these social-patriotic organizations of sabotaging the organization of a real workers' boycott against Italy by directing their attention to a belief in the League sanctions." <sup>28</sup>

Trotsky explained that "economic sanctions, if real, lead to military sanctions, to war." <sup>29</sup> Consequently, he called for the strict separation of forces which lend any support for imperialist sanctions. "The struggle against war, properly understood and executed, presupposes the uncompromising hostility of the proletariat and its organizations, always and everywhere, toward its own and every other imperialist bourgeoisie. Yet among the announced adherents of the London Bureau congress are to be found such notorious supporters of the League of Nations (i.e., imperialist) "sanctions" as the Italian Socialist Party, which is presumably to organize a common struggle against war with opponents of these "sanctions," such as the British ILP claims to be. A prerequisite for the proletarian struggle against war is not unity between pro-"sanctionists" and anti-"sanctionists" but the ruthless separation of them." <sup>30</sup>

### Imperialist Sanctions: LIT-CI versus Trotsky

This small selection of quotes demonstrates beyond doubt that the LIT-CI policy of support for Western sanction is the complete opposite of the Marxist tradition as it was advocated by Trotsky and the Fourth International. The comrades do not understand that there are sanctions and sanctions. The decisive question is *who* imposes such sanc-

tions. If one (or several) imperialist state imposes sanctions against a rival, it is an instrument of Great Power policy. It contains not a bit of progressive internationalism!

In contrast, sanctions imposed by workers in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in an oppressed country is, by its very nature, internationalist and anti-imperialist. Imperialist sanctions and workers sanctions are like fire and water!

This is why the RCIT strictly opposes any support for Western sanctions against Russia. At the same, we strongly advocate workers sanctions against Russian imperialism. As it is well known, there have been already a number of such workers boycott actions – like those of dockers in various countries against Russian ships or of Belarus railway workers against Russian military supply. Such actions – in contrast to imperialist sanctions – strengthen the power, the self-confidence and the internationalist spirit of the working class.

We conclude our article by emphasizing that it is impossible to find a correct orientation in the current period without being able to identify the class character of the imperialist Great Powers. Trotsky once noted: "To teach the workers correctly to understand the class character of the state imperialist, colonial, workers'—and the reciprocal relations between them, as well as the inner contradictions in each of them, enables the workers to draw correct practical conclusions in situation." <sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, LIT-CI is incapable to differentiate between an imperialist and a non-imperialist state in the case of Russia. This is a very serious problem as it makes them prone to openly side with a one camp in an inter-imperialist war. Furthermore, these comrades combine their correct defence of the Ukraine with the impermissible support for Western sanctions.

But socialists can take a position of *revolutionary defensism* only by combining the support for the Ukraine with a dual-defeatist position against both NATO as well as Russia. The contrasting position of LIT-CI can only be characterized as *non-revolutionary defensism*.

We sincerely hope that the comrades of LIT-CI will soon overcome these serious mistakes!

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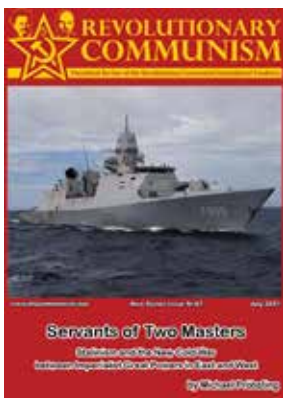
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## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# Servants of Two Masters

*Stalinism and the New Cold War*

*between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West*

*by Michael Pröbsting*

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*

**Introduction \* The New Inter-Imperialist Cold War \* A View on the Military Strength of the Great Powers \* The Main Point of both Statements: Siding with Chinese and Russian Imperialism \* Stalinist Fantasies Shredded in the Light of Reality: The Rise of Chinese Imperialism \* The KKE's "criticism" and its fraternal bonds with the Chinese CP \* Beside the Servants of Assad the Butcher - Who Signed the KKE-initiated Joint Statement? \* The Xi Fan Club: Signatories of the CPUSA-initiated Joint Statement \* The Concept of Multilateralism and Peaceful Coexistence: A Reactionary Illusion \* "Socialism in One Country": The Historical Roots of the Stalinist Concept of "Peaceful Coexistence" \* Serving Two Masters: The Eastern Imperialists as well as Sectors of the Domestic Bourgeoisie \* A Note on the tight-lipped "Trotskyists" (CWI, IMT, ISA) \* Conclusions \* Footnotes**



## “Self-Determination for Donbass”: A Reactionary Slogan in the Service of Russian Imperialism

**On the historical, theoretical, and political reasons why this slogan is contrary to the Marxist program of national self-determination as well as to the interests of the current national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people**

*Theses of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 27 June 2022*

**I**ntroductory Note: The following theses have been influenced by discussions with comrades in Russia – from *Socialist Tendency* with which the RCIT has fraternal relations (see links below) – as well as in the Ukraine. These discussions helped us to better understand the reactionary and pro-imperialist meaning of the slogan “*Self-Determination for Donbass*”.

\*\*\*\*\*

1. The slogan “*Self-Determination for Donbass*” has become a key element in the ideological legitimization of Putin’s invasion. Russia’s army is supposedly fighting in the Ukraine for the “*liberation*” of the “*oppressed Russian people*” living in Donbass. Likewise, this slogan is popular among Stalinists and left populists who – openly or concealed – support Russian imperialism. It has even gained legitimacy among various socialists who, in general, oppose Great Russian chauvinism and Putin’s invasion in the Ukraine but who fail to side with the Ukrainian war of defense. Related to this Putinist slogan is the conception that the Donbass would be historically Russian territory – i.e. part of the notorious “*Ruskij Mir*” (the “*Russian world*”) – and, therefore, “*naturally*” does not belong to the Ukraine but rather to Russia.

2. Marxists strongly oppose the slogan “*Self-Determination for Donbass*”. It is in fundamental contradiction to the socialist program of national self-determination as it has been elaborated by Lenin and the Bolsheviks and later defended by Trotsky and the Fourth International. Furthermore, the slogan has objectively a pro-imperialist meaning since the beginning of Russia’s intervention in Donbass in 2014.

3. In summary, the RCIT rejects the slogan “*Self-Determination for Donbass*” on the basis of three principal reasons.

i) There exists no historical justification for the Putinist assertion. Donbass has always been a region with a majority population of Ukrainians. Russians have always constituted only a (sizeable) minority.

ii) The Russian people in Donbass *are not a nationally oppressed minority* and hardly ever have been so. Hence, the Marxist principle of national self-determination – a program of liberation which is relevant only for oppressed people – does not apply to the Donbass.

iii) There do not exist any independent actors fighting for “*Self-Determination for Donbass*”. More or less all forces in the region which raise this slogan are supporters of Russian imperialism, i.e. they are agents of the Kremlin and not representatives of an oppressed people.

In the following we will elaborate these arguments in more detail.

### The Donbass: a region with a Ukrainian majority population throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century

4. There exists a long-standing debate between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian historians about the question which of the two people arrived first in the earlier history of Donbass. For Marxists this debate is not of particular relevance. In contrast to bourgeois ideologists, we recognize that nations are not an ahistorical phenomenon which supposedly would have existed throughout the history of humanity. In fact, the emergence of nations is a modern development which was related with the expansion of capitalism, the need to create a domestic market, a common language, etc. In the case of Russia, the formation process of nations took place later than in Western European countries since capitalism developed rather belated in the Tsarist Empire and became a dominant mode of production only after the emancipation of Russia’s serfs in 1861. Hence, for the discussion of the national character of the Donbass, it is important to take into account the development since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

5. Since the beginning of the period of nation-building, the Ukrainians have always constituted the majority in the Donbass region with the Russians being a numerically sizeable minority. This has been the case, according to official data, in all periods – the Tsarist Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the revolutionary Soviet Union in the early 1920s, in the Stalinist USSR as well as in the capitalist Ukraine since 1989. As we show in the Table below, the Ukrainians have constantly constituted a majority of between 51% and 60% of the Donbass population in the censuses 1897, 1926, 1959, 1989 and 2001. At the same time, Russians constituted a minority of between 26% and 44% in the same period. (See Appendix)

6. There was a certain increase of the share of Russians in the period after 1945 (without ever becoming a majority). This was the result of the well-known policy of Great Russian chauvinism which became a pillar of the Stalinist bureaucracy from the 1930s onwards. This policy resulted in the systematic discrimination of all non-Russian people and, as its worst excesses, the murderous mass deportation of various smaller nations from 1937 onwards (e.g. the Crimean Tatars, the Chechens, Kalmyks, Ingush, Koreans, Germans and others). Trotsky and the “*Left Opposition*” fought against this reactionary policy from the very beginning which he characterized as “*outright strangulation of any kind of independent national development of the peoples of the USSR.*” As a result of the experience with Stalinism, Trotsky advocated the concrete application of the socialist program of national self-determination in the Stalinist USSR and, in the case of the Ukraine, the slogan of “*a united, free and independent workers’ and peasants’ Soviet*

*Ukraine."*

7. Pro-Russian commentators often refer to the fact that a majority of people in the Donbass region speak Russian language. While this is true, it is no argument which would justify the assertion that the Donbass region would be nationally Russian. As a matter of fact, the language spoken does not automatically reflect the national identity of people. A sizeable section of the Ukrainian people – not only in Donbass but also in other regions in the East and South of the country – speak Russian but, nevertheless identify themselves as Ukrainians (and not as Russians). Hence, it is a mistake to conclude that speaking Russian automatically means that someone belongs to the Russian nation and not to the Ukrainian nation. With such an un-historical, mechanistic conception of nation, one would arrive at such absurd conclusions like that the Walloons and the French-speaking Swiss would belong to the French nation, that the Irish and the Scottish would belong to the English nation, that the Austrians and German-speaking Swiss would belong to the German nation and that the peoples of Latin America would belong to the Spanish resp. the Portuguese nation!

8. One should add that the Russian aggression since 2014, and even more so since 24 February 2022, has massively increased the national identification and self-consciousness among most Ukrainians, including those who speak Russian language. This is reflected in numerous patriotic manifestations, including by many Russian-speaking Ukrainians who courageously oppose the Russian occupation in Donbass, Kherson and other regions. In fact, the only real "*Self-Determination for Donbass*" today is the struggle against the occupation by Russian imperialism and its local proxies!

#### **The Russian population of Donbass has historically not been a nationally oppressed minority**

9. The Russian population of Donbass has historically not been a nationally oppressed minority. Quiet the opposite, in the period of the Tsarist Empire until 1917 as well as in the period of Stalinist dictatorship until 1991, the Russians were the dominating, oppressing nation. In contrast, the Ukrainians were a discriminated and oppressed nation. While this has changed since 1991, as the Ukraine became an independent state, the Russians still retained a number of privileges and did not become an oppressed people. It is true that the Maidan movement in 2014 promoted various forms of reactionary Ukrainian nationalism which resulted in certain forms of discrimination and restrictions for the use of Russian language. Socialists oppose all such nationalist attacks which undermine equal rights and peaceful co-existence between different people. The RCIT calls for full equality of all national and ethnic groups, which includes the abolition of any restriction of the use of the Russian language and culture in the Ukraine.

10. However, one has to situate these developments into the total context of the historic dependence and oppression of the Ukraine by Russia and the historic privileges which the Russian people in the Ukraine did possess. Hence, these first elements of anti-Russian discrimination which appeared in 2014 did not immediately transform the Russians in Donbass into an oppressed minority. This was even more the case as Russian troops and local

allies intervened militarily in spring and summer 2014, soon after the Maidan events. Since then, the Russian state – with the help of its local proxies – has occupied parts of Donbass (from which they expelled many Ukrainians). In short, as soon as reactionary Ukrainian chauvinists threatened to discriminate the Russian population in Donbass, Russian imperialism and its local proxies sent their troops, occupied a part of this region where they acted as oppressors of the Ukrainian people, resulting in the expulsion of many from their homes.

11. The Marxist program of national self-determination, as it was developed by Lenin and later defended by Trotsky, has always been a *program against oppression*. It has never been a liberal program which could be applied to each and every people, oppressor and oppressed. The RCIT considers it as a liberation program which should rally the oppressed people to the struggle against the ruling class and which should help to unite the workers and the oppressed in the struggle for democracy and socialism. This is the revolutionary, liberationist tradition of Bolshevism on which we stand!

*„Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. They must, therefore, unequivocally demand that the Social-Democratic parties of the oppressor countries (especially of the so-called "Great" Powers) should recognise and champion the oppressed nation's right to self-determination, in the specifically political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The socialist of a ruling or a colonial nation who does not stand for that right is a chauvinist."* (V.I. Lenin: Socialism and War [1915]; in: LCW 21, pp. 316-17)

*"Victorious socialism must necessarily establish a full democracy and, consequently, not only introduce full equality of nations but also realise the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to free political separation."* (V.I. Lenin: The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination [1916]; in: LCW 22, p. 143)

*"The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. (...) It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression."* (V.I. Lenin: The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination, in: LCW 22, p. 146)

*"That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of imperialism, and is deceitfully evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. (...) It is from this division that our definition of the "right of nations to self-determination" must follow, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism."* (V.I. Lenin: The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination [1915], in: LCW 21, p. 409)

**The slogan “Self-Determination for Donbass”:  
a propaganda tool for the expansionist foreign policy  
of Russian imperialism**

12. In addition to these historical and theoretical considerations, the slogan “Self-Determination for Donbass” is also politically completely wrong in the current conjuncture. Russian troops invaded Donbass in summer 2014 and created two proxy republics. Only the most fanatic Putinistas can ignore the fact that these “republics” are dominated by people imposed and controlled by the Kremlin. Hence, these “republics” never represented the “right of self-determination” since a) the majority of Donbass are Ukrainians, b) many Russians in Donbass don’t want to leave the Ukraine, and c) it is impossible to characterize imperialist occupation as an act of “self-determination”.

13. There can be no doubt that, even before the beginning of the war, a majority of the Donbass population had no desire to separate from the Ukraine. This was even the case in the days after the nationalist Maidan movement came to power and many people in the East were worried about the consequences for the language and cultural rights. According to three different polls conducted in April 2014 (by the Donetsk Institute for Social Research and Political Analysis, the Kyiv Institute of Sociology and the Pew Research Centre), only a minority of 18%-27% favored secession from the Ukraine while the rest wished to remain part of the Ukrainian state – either in its current form or on the basis of various degrees of decentralization. (Wikipedia: 2014 Donbas status referendums: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014\\_Donbas\\_status\\_referendums](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Donbas_status_referendums))

14. Furthermore, it is necessary to refute the myth – promoted by the Kremlin and its Putinista friends all over the world – about the so-called “genocide” against the Russian population in Donbass. According to these claims the Ukrainian army has killed 14,000 ethnic Russians in Donbas between 2014 and 2022. This Putinist assertion is absurd to the extreme. First, the figure of 14,000 death is certainly a tragedy for those affected but it hardly constitutes “genocide”. Such a banalization of the category of “genocide” represents a mockery of oppressed people who did really suffer from such horrific crimes in recent decades like the Chechens or the Bosnians – small people of 1-2 millions of which hundreds of thousands were killed, injured or raped and many more were expelled

from their homes (“*ethnic cleansing*”). Furthermore, nearly all of those 14,000 deaths occurred during the war period from summer 2014 to mid-2015 (i.e. not in the years since then). Importantly, the figure of 14,000 includes all death, i.e. Russians as well as Ukrainians. Furthermore, the majority of these 14,000 were soldiers (4,400 Ukrainian troops and 6,500 Russian and allied troops) and “only” 3,404 civilians. Again, these civilian deaths include both Ukrainians as well as Russians. (All figures are according to UNHCR: Conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine, 27 January 2022). In short, the claim of “anti-Russian genocide” in Donbass is a Putinista fiction!

15. In summary, the slogan “Self-Determination for Donbass” is incompatible with the Marxist principles of national self-determination. It serves as an ideological pretext for Putin’s Great Russian chauvinist policy and his invasion in the Ukraine. It is a propaganda tool for the expansionist foreign policy of Russian imperialism. Today, the slogan of “self-determination of Donbass” effectively means “self-determination of the Russian imperialism”. It is therefore an utter reactionary slogan. The RCIT denounces all those (semi-)Stalinist, Bolivarian and pseudo-Trotskyist parties which defend this slogan and parrot Putin’s propaganda. Such political adaption to the Putin regime reflects the social-imperialist nature of these parties.

16. Under the current circumstances, the RCIT and all authentic socialists support the military struggle of the Ukraine against the invasion of Russian imperialism. They oppose the bourgeoisie Zelensky government and any form of dependency of Western imperialism. They also reject taking side in the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers (U.S., Russia, Western Europe, China and Japan) or supporting their chauvinist foreign policy (e.g. sanctions). We advocate the perspective of an *independent, free and socialist Ukraine with equal rights for all ethnic minorities and without any restrictions of their language and culture*. Any specific solution for the Donbass region with its mixed composition (for example some form of autonomy) must be the result of the free decision of the people of the region and must not be imposed by negotiations between imperialist powers or central governments.

**Table: The Ethnic Composition of the Donbas in the Twentieth Century**

	1897	1926	1959	1989	2001
Ukrainians	379,000 55.2%	1,222,000 60%	3,784,000 56.4%	4,176,000 51.1%	- 58% (Luhansk Oblast) 56.9% (Donetsk Oblast)
Russians	180,000 26.2%	639,000 31.4%	2,551,000 38%	3,595,000 44%	- 39% (Luhansk Oblast) 38.2% (Donetsk Oblast)

Sources: for 1897-1989: Andrew Wilson: *The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (April 1995), p. 275; for 2001: State Statistics Committee of Ukraine: *About number and composition population of UKRAINE by data All-Ukrainian population census'2001 data*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20111217151026/http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/>

## The Ukraine in the Imperialist Debt Trap

### The international workers and popular movements must campaign for the total cancellation of the Ukraine's foreign debts

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 9 July 2022

The Ukraine currently faces a barbarous war of aggression by Russian imperialism. The RCIT and all authentic socialists call for the unconditional defense of the country against the threat of brutal colonialization<sup>1</sup> – without lending any support to NATO and its imperialist policy of Great Power rivalry.<sup>2</sup>

However, it would be a dangerous mistake to ignore another danger: the financial enslavement of the Ukraine by Western imperialism. The country is already highly indebted to foreign banks and financial institutions. Currently, Ukraine's total external government debt amounts to \$54 billion. More than half is due to private lenders like banks and hedge funds, while most of the rest is owed to imperialist institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Investment Bank.<sup>3</sup>

This year alone, the country is set to pay \$7.3 billion in debt repayments. Heidi Chow, executive director at the Jubilee Debt Campaign, calculates that "if Ukraine continues to make its debt payments, Western banks and hedge funds could make profits of 300 percent."<sup>4</sup>

This is a dramatic example of imperialist super-exploitation! It confirms the Marxist analysis of foreign debt as a capitalist instrument to squeeze surplus value from semi-colonial countries – like the Ukraine – and to transfer it to the imperialist monopolies.<sup>5</sup>

#### Additional burden by Putin's war

Putin's invasion dramatically exacerbates this situation. Morgan Stanley Global Financial Services expects the Ukraine's GDP to drop at least 39% in 2022. If Ukraine loses access to the Black Sea, GDP is predicted to shrink by as much as 60%!<sup>6</sup>

Already now, the war has put a huge strain on the economy. Ukraine's government budget has a roughly \$5bn a month shortfall as tax collection has collapsed due to the fighting. The government's tax revenues and other domes-

tic sources of funding only cover 62% of the state's current budget expenditures.<sup>7</sup> Hence, every month of war dramatically increases the Ukraine's indebtedness!

A recently published report warns: "Despite the talks of hundreds of billions of dollars of reconstruction money and tens of billions of dollars of weapons deliveries, Kyiv has so far this year only received a total of about \$9bn in cash to support government expenditure. As a result, it has had to dip into its international reserves to fund spending. Reserves were down \$3bn in May to \$25.1bn."<sup>8</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the Ukraine could soon default, i.e. not being able to service its foreign debts.

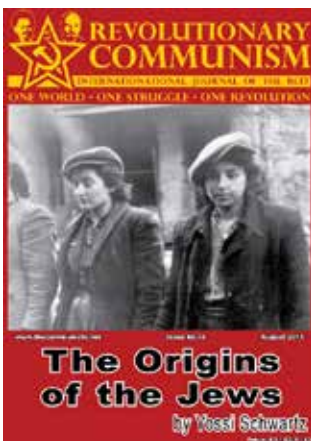
#### Cancel Ukraine's foreign debt! For a popular war against the invasion!

All this demonstrates that the talk of Western state leaders about their "unwavering solidarity" with the Ukraine is pure smokescreen! In fact, all the promised economic and military aid packages serve to deepen the financial enslavement of the Ukraine by the American and European imperialists! As the quote above shows, these monopolies are about to make profits of 300%! Effectively, they get rich by the blood of the Ukrainian popular masses!

It is therefore urgent that the international workers and popular movements – in particularly in North America and Western Europe – campaign for the total cancellation of the Ukraine's foreign debts! Likewise, socialists have to demand free military aid for the Ukraine without political conditions.

At the same time, socialists in the Ukraine must warn against any illusions and any support for Western imperialists. Sure, the Russian invasion is currently the main threat for the Ukrainian people. But socialists must strongly oppose the pro-NATO and pro-EU policy of the bourgeois Zelensky government. One does not fight one robber by becoming a slave of another robber!

The resistance of the Ukraine against the Russian inva-



## Publications of the RCIT

### The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

- Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?
- Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism
- Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism
- Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution: Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism



sion must be transformed into a popular war. Such a perspective also includes the transformation of the economy. All key sectors in industry, services, finances and agriculture must be nationalized under workers' control. Foreign imperialist monopolies – both Russian as well as Western – should be expropriated without compensation. The national resources should be used to serve the defense of the country instead of interest payments to foreign banks.

All this can only be achieved if the country is led not by a pro-Western comedian but by a workers' government opposing all imperialist powers and opening the road towards socialist transformation.

*Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Putin's invasion!*

*Neither Russian nor Western imperialism but international socialism!*

### Endnotes

1 We refer readers to a special page on our website where nearly 100 RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict and the Ukraine War are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. The most important documents are: RCIT Manifesto: Ukraine War: A Turning Point of World Historic Significance. Socialists must combine the revolutionary defense of the Ukraine against Putin's invasion with the internationalist struggle against Russian as well as NATO and EU imperialism, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/>; Joint Statement of Socialist Tendency (Russia) and RCIT: Defend the Ukrainian People against Putin's Invasion! Down with Russian and NATO Imperialism! 4.6.2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-with-ct-russia-on-ukraine-war-4-6-2022/>

2 The RCIT has dealt on numerous occasions with the inter-imperialist rivalry of the Great Powers. See e.g. RCIT: World Perspectives 2021-22: Entering a Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation, 22 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2021-22/>; see also our book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also the following works by the same author: "A Really Good Quarrel". US-China Alaska Meeting: The Inter-Imperialist Cold War Continues, 23 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/us-china-alaska-meeting-shows-continuation-of-inter-imperialist-cold-war/>; Servants of Two Masters. Stalinism and the New Cold War between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West, 10 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/servants-of-two-masters-stalinism-and-new-cold-war/>; for more works on this issue see these sub-pages: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/>.

3 Heidi Chow: It's Time to Cancel Ukraine's Foreign Debt, 06.04.2022, <https://jacobin.com/2022/03/ukraine-foreign-debt-cancellation-imf-global-finance>

4 Ibid

5 See on this e.g. the book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>

6 Alexander Nepogodin: What does the future hold for the regions of Ukraine now controlled by Russia? Russia Today, June 3, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/556495-restoring-peaceful-life-kherson/>

7 Ben Aris: Ukraine mulling debt restructuring as the cost of war drains the government's coffers, Intellinews, July 5, 2022, <https://intellinews.com/ukraine-mulling-debt-restructuring-as-the-cost-of-war-drains-the-government-s-coffers-249594/?source=ukraine>.

8 Ibid



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# Putin's Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs)

*The pro-Russian Stalinist parties and  
their arguments in the current NATO-Russia Conflict*

*by Michael Pröbsting, February 2022*

**Introduction** \* 1. NATO is the sole aggressor! Really? \* Is it relevant for Marxists who is the aggressor? \* What is causing the escalation of tensions between Great Powers: the party of warmongers or the imperialist system? \* Can socialists defend "legitimate spheres of influence" of Great Powers? \* Putin and Great Russian Chauvinism claim that the Ukraine is not an independent nation \* Stalinism versus Bolshevism: The Ukraine and the right of national self-determination \* From Kazakhstan to Syria: Stalinism is siding with the counterrevolution \* Is Russian imperialism a "force of social progress"? Discussion of a remarkable Stalinist document \* Stalinism and social-imperialism: concluding remarks \* Footnotes

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format*

## “We are not winning”

### A disillusioned balance sheet of the EU’s Foreign Minister on the West’s decline in world politics

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12 July 2022

Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, has published a remarkable article on an official website of the EU. Coming back from the recent G20 summit of foreign ministers in Bali (Indonesia), he wrote a disillusioned balance sheet about his political impressions from meeting with his colleagues at this event.<sup>1</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Borrell outlines the well-known foreign policy line of the EU on key issues of world politics. Most importantly, he restates the necessity to support the Ukraine and to sanction Russia as the aggressor.

This is, as we have explained many times, a cover for the cynical policy of Western imperialism. The EU leaders currently support the Ukraine half-heartedly because it serves their interests in the Great Power rivalry against Russian imperialism. They had no problem to make deals with Putin when he was “only” slaughtering the Syrian and the Chechen peoples (who happen to live far away from Western Europe). Neither do these hypercritics have any problems to buy oil and gas from the absolutist monarchs of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates who have killed many more people in Yemen since 2015 than Putin did in the Ukraine (until now).

#### The isolated West

But it is not the reiteration of the EU’s official foreign policy line which makes Borrell’s article remarkable. It is rather the astonishing admission of the massive decline of the Western powers’ influence. Here are some of the most revealing paragraphs.

*“The main takeaway is that in abstract terms everybody agrees on the need for multilateralism and defending principles such as territorial sovereignty and the non-use of force. However, this often looks different when it must become concrete, such as on the fallout from Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine. The hard truth is that national interests often outweigh general commitments to bigger ideals. (...)*

*Discussing these issues during the two sessions and my bilateral meetings gave me a better understanding where different countries stand. Indeed, in the March vote at the UN General Assembly, 140 states condemned the Russian aggression and no member of the G20, apart from the aggressor, opposed this resolution. But on how to move forward and on the consequences of the war, views differ sharply. The G7 and like-minded countries are united in condemning and sanctioning Russia and in trying to hold the regime accountable. But other countries, and we can speak here of the majority of the “Global South”, often take a different perspective.*

*In principle, everyone condemns the attack on a country’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. But when it comes to naming the aggressor and stating who is responsible for the consequences, many are reticent for different reasons. Some are more concerned about the consequences of the war for themselves, rather than about who is responsible for these difficulties and*

*how to end this war; others complain about “double standards” or simply want to preserve their good bilateral relationship with Russia. And many remain vague and not wanting to take sides, because this would jeopardise their geopolitical interests. The global battle of narratives is in full swing and, for now, we are not winning.”*

If we translate these diplomatic formulations into plain English, Borrell openly recognizes that the Western Great Powers have lost their global hegemony. This decline of the U.S. and Western European imperialism has become so obvious that the EU’s foreign minister feels compelled to admit that “the majority of the “Global South” [representing the majority of the world population, MP] often take a different perspective”, i.e. that they follow a policy in defiance to the wishes of Washington and Brussels.

The formulation “the global battle of narratives is in full swing and, for now, we are not winning” is another expression for the same fact – the end of Western hegemony.<sup>2</sup> In fact, as many Putinist writers have pointed out (with much exaggeration but with an element of truth), the Western imperialists feel somehow isolated in global politics.<sup>3</sup>

#### Confirmation of Marxist analysis

Such a public admission by the EU’s foreign minister is extraordinary and reflects the shock of the ruling class of the Western imperialist powers about its decline. It is a powerful confirmation of the analysis which the RCIT and other Marxists have elaborated since a number of years. This analysis can be summarized in the following theses.

1. The decay of world capitalism has provoked a fundamental shift between the Great Powers and deep instability of global relations.
2. It has resulted in the emergence of new imperialist powers- in particular China<sup>4</sup> and Russia.<sup>5</sup>
3. Hence, we speak about the end of the hegemony of the Western imperialist powers.
4. Consequently, the rivalry between Great Powers is accelerating which will inevitably lead to World War III if the international working class and oppressed peoples do not overthrow the imperialist powers before.<sup>6</sup>
5. All Great Powers show an increasing appetite to intervene in semi-colonial countries – the Ukraine War is only the latest spectacular example.<sup>7</sup>

We shall add that Borrell’s public admission is also a powerful argument against the absurd position of numerous Stalinists and pseudo-Trotskyists who continue to deny that Russia and China are imperialist powers.

We ask our critics once more: if Russia and China would be not imperialist powers, how is it possible that the U.S. and the European Union fail to impose their will among the G-20 countries and the Global South?! And how is it possible that Russia has managed to resist the massive financial and economic pressure of Western sanctions until now and, in fact, also causes serious damage to the American, European, and Japanese economies?! Is it not evident

that Russia is only able to resist this pressure, is only able to mobilize powerful allies for its interests, because it is an imperialist Great Power?!

We conclude this brief commentary by emphasizing that the task of socialists all over the world is to defend the Ukraine against the brutal invasion of Putin and, at the same time, to oppose all imperialist powers – in East as well as in West!<sup>8</sup>

### Footnotes

1 Josep Borrell: G20: difficult times for multilateralism, 10.07.2022, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g20-difficult-times-multilateralism\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g20-difficult-times-multilateralism_en). All quotes are from this article if not indicated otherwise.

2 For our analysis of the relation of forces between the Great Powers since the beginning of the Ukraine War see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: World Situation: In the Midst of a Global Political Tornado. Notes on global developments characterized by the Ukraine War, inter-imperialist rivalry, global energy and food crisis as well as spontaneous mass protests, 13 April 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-april-2022/>; by the same author: Is Europe's Ruling Class About to Declare a War Economy? On a programmatic article by an imperialist ideologist on the consequences of the Great Power rivalry, 7 July 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/is-europe-s-ruling-class-about-to-declare-a-war-economy/>; G-20: Inter-Imperialist Rivalry on the Diplomatic Terrain. What do recent developments in the G-20 tell us about Russia's imperialist character? 23 April 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/g-20-inter-imperialist-rivalry-on-the-diplomatic-terrain/>

3 See on this e.g. the above-mentioned pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: World Situation: In the Midst of a Global Political Tornado; by the same author: An Unexpected Admission. A leading ideologist of Russian imperialism on the nature and the consequences of the Ukraine War, 7 July 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/lukyanov-an-unexpected-admission/>.

4 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power. See on this e.g. the above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry; see also by the same author an essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6\\_179-1](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1); China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet? A Theoretical Question with Very Practical Consequences! Continuing the Debate with Esteban Mercatante and the PTS/FT on China's class character and consequences for the revolutionary strategy, 22 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-imperialist-power-or-not-yet/>; China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>; How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China's State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>; China's Emergence as an Imperialist Power (Article in the US journal 'New Politics'), in: "New Politics", Summer 2014 (Vol:XV-1, Whole #: 57). See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

5 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; by the same author: Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia's Imperialist Character, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies, in: *New Politics* Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022, [https://newpol.org/issue\\_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/](https://newpol.org/issue_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/) (the same essay has been republished by *International Viewpoint*, 21. April 2022, <https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7618>); Once Again on Russian Imperialism (Reply to Critics). A rebuttal of a theory which claims that Russia is not an imperialist state but would be rather "comparable to Brazil and Iran", 30 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-russian-imperialism-reply-to-critics/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

6 The RCIT has dealt on numerous occasions with the inter-imperialist rivalry of the Great Powers. See e.g. the RCIT document: World Perspectives 2021-22: Entering a Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation, 22 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2021-22/>; see also: RCIT: The Coming Inter-Imperialist War on Taiwan, 10 October 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-coming-inter-imperialist-war-on-taiwan/>; The Meaning of the AUKUS Pact. The U.S. escalates the inter-imperialist Cold War against China and provokes the EU, 18 September 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-meaning-of-the-aucus-pact/>; Russia Fires Warning Shots against UK Warship in the Black Sea. Down with Cold War-mongering! No support for any imperialist Great Power – neither UK, US nor Russia! 24 June 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/russia-fires-warning-shots-against-uk-warship-in-black-sea/>; see also the following book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also these two pamphlets by the same author: "A Really Good Quarrel". US-China Alaska Meeting: The Inter-Imperialist Cold War Continues, 23 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/us-china-alaska-meeting-shows-continuation-of-inter-imperialist-cold-war/>; Servants of Two Masters. Stalinism and the New Cold War between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West, 10 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/servants-of-two-masters-stalinism-and-new-cold-war/>; for more works on this issue see these sub-pages: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/>.

7 We refer readers to a special page on our website where nearly 100 RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict and the Ukraine War are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. The most important documents are: RCIT Manifesto: Ukraine War: A Turning Point of World Historic Significance. Socialists must combine the revolutionary defense of the Ukraine against Putin's invasion with the internationalist struggle against Russian as well as NATO and EU imperialism, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/>; Joint Statement of Socialist Tendency (Russia) and RCIT: Defend the Ukrainian People against Putin's Invasion! Down with Russian and NATO Imperialism! 4.6.2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-with-ct-russia-on-ukraine-war-4-6-2022/>

8 See e.g. RCIT: Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States, 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>

