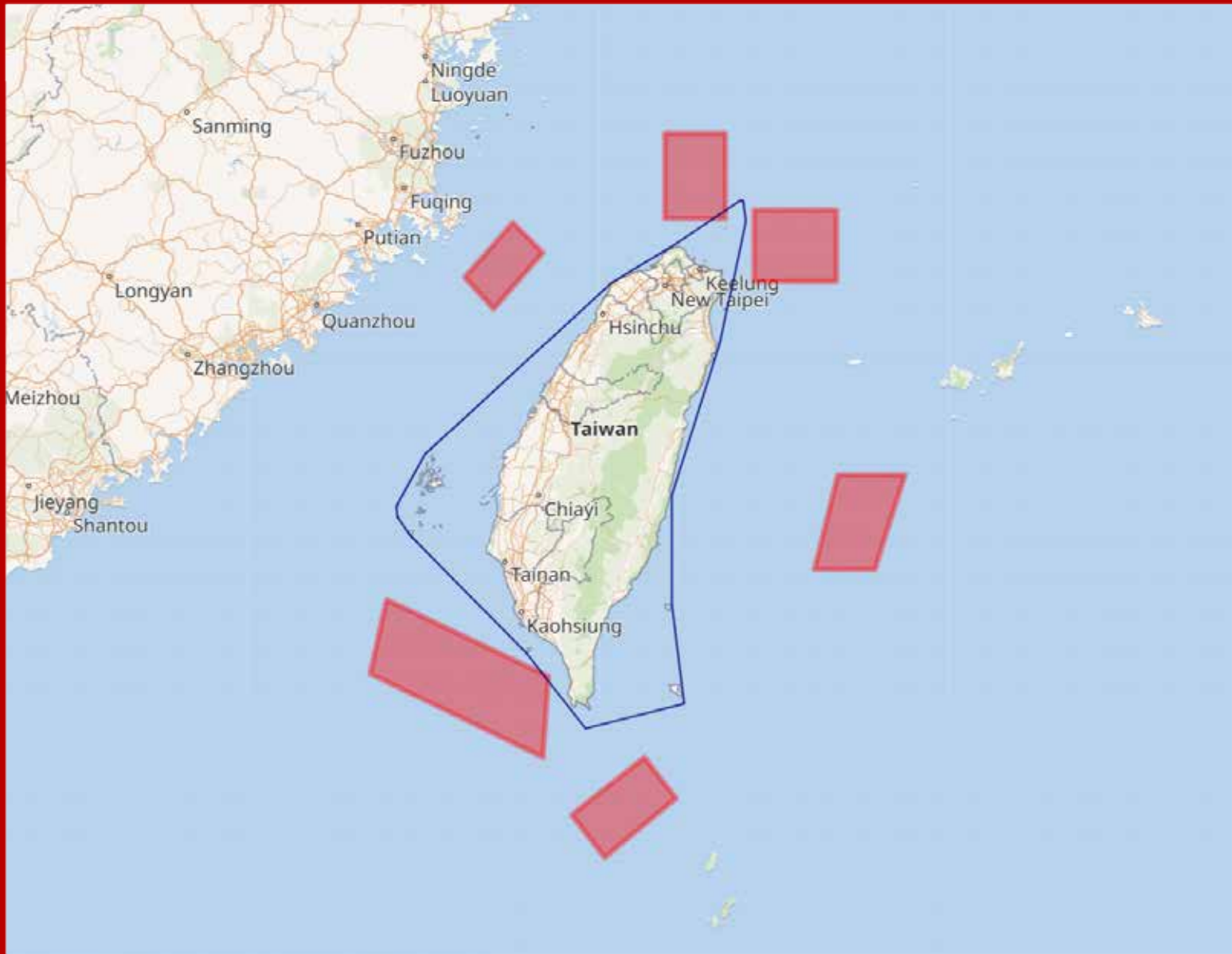




# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



[www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net)

New Series Issue Nr.78

September 2022

## Taiwan: Great Power Rivalry and National Question

Ukraine War, Marxist Tactics & Centrism

On Abbas & the Use of the Term Holocaust

## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.78, September 2022

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Picture on the cover: Map of Chinese PLA's military exercises around the island of Taiwan (Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022\\_Chinese\\_military\\_exercises\\_around\\_Taiwan#/media/File:PLA-Taiwan-202208.map.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Chinese_military_exercises_around_Taiwan#/media/File:PLA-Taiwan-202208.map.png))

*Revolutionary Communism* is the monthly English-language journal published by the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT). The RCIT has sections and activists in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Pakistan, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Russia, Nigeria, Britain, Germany, and Austria.

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## On Mahmoud Abbas and the Use of the Term Holocaust

Yossi Schwartz, ISL the section of the RCIT in Israel/Occupied Palestine, 23.08.2022

Last week, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has provoked the Zionist outrage by his misuse of a Holocaust analogy during a press conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz. In response to a question on whether he would apologize for the 1972 Palestinian attack on Israeli athletes in Munich, he said: "From 1947 until today, Israel has committed 50 massacres in 50 Palestinian villages", and then added, "50 slaughters; 50 Holocausts". [1]

What is the difference between massacres and the Holocaust? It is a question of quantity that turns into quality. Holocaust is massive amount massacres that reach that level of destruction.

The Zionists and their supporters claim that the Jewish Holocaust is the worst crime in history: "The Holocaust has come to be viewed as the worst crime in the history of humanity. The industrialized murder of six million people continues to horrify the world. Few other events during the 20th century have left such a profound impact upon the world. With the Jews of Germany blamed for the defeat of World War I, they found themselves in a battle for survival as Nazism seduced their fellow citizens. As another global conflict arose, the very existence of the Jewish people was at stake. Stripped of their citizenship in Germany and hounded all over Europe, they would face a new nightmare at the concentration camps where millions would perish" [2]

This is not only wrong claim but racist because the Africans during the slave trade and the North American Indians suffered much worse. In addition, the between 1933 and 1945 Sinti and Roma ("Gypsies") suffered greatly as victims of Nazi persecution and genocide that reached the level of holocaust. Like in the case of the Jews building on long-held prejudices, the Nazi regime viewed Roma

both as "asocials" (outside "normal" society) and as racial "inferiors" believed to threaten the biological purity and strength of the "superior Aryan" race. During World War II, the Nazis and their collaborators killed between 250,000 and 500,000 Romani and—25% to over 50% of the estimate of slightly fewer than 1 million Roma in Europe at the time.

The difference is that the European Jews are considered whites.

That Israel committed at least 50 massacres which are war crimes is a fact. Yet these massacres do not constitute Holocausts. Israel accuses Abbas of Holocaust denial and yet in the real world, while Abbas was mistaken by his reference to Palestinian suffering as a Holocaust, Israel that removed by ethnic cleansing 750000-900,000 Palestinians from their country in 1947-8 and hundreds of thousands after 1967 is a Nakba denier.

To demand from Abbas to apologize for the killing of 11 Israelis at the time Israel kills tens of people including 16 children in Gaza is by itself a racist demand.

It is very common for Israel to shout "Holocaust deniers", "Nazis" which serve her to hide its own horrible crimes.

Furthermore, in Hebrew the term Holocaust is Shoah ("Catastrophe"), in Yiddish urban ("Destruction"). The word used to describe the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Shoah ("Catastrophe") is the term preferred by Israelis and the French, most especially after Claude Lanzmann's 1985 motion picture. Holocaust is a word derived from two Greek words meaning 'burnt whole'. In 1895 the term

# Books of the RCIT

## Yossi Schwartz: The Zionist Wars

### A History of the Zionist Movement and Imperialist Wars

In *The Zionist Wars* Yossi Schwartz gives an overview about the process of Zionist colonialization of Palestine as well as the resistance of the indigenous Arab population. He deals in detail with the popular struggles of the Palestinians against their expulsion by the Zionists. *The Zionist Wars* elaborates in detail the character of Israel's military campaigns in 1948 and the following decades which resulted in the expulsion of large parts of the Palestinian population. These wars were also crucial to implement the imperialist subjugation of the Arab countries.

However, as Yossi Schwartz elaborates, the Zionist state has passed its peak already some time ago which has been demonstrated by its failed military campaigns in Lebanon as well as in Gaza.

In *The Zionist Wars* the author also discusses in much detail the program of the communist movement on the Palestinian question. He shows the adaptation and finally capitulation of Stalinism to the Zionist project – culminating in massive arms shipments for the Israeli forces during the War of 1948.

In this book Yossi Schwartz elaborates the analyses and conclusions of Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International for the libera-

tion of Palestine. He also discusses the strength and weakness of his successors in dealing with the Zionist state and the Arab liberation struggle against it.

In *The Zionist Wars* Yossi Schwartz defends the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people and outlines a socialist perspective.

The book contains an introduction and 20 chapters (136 pages) and includes 2 Tables and 4 Maps. The author of the book is Yossi Schwartz, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-zionist-wars/>



Holocaust was used by the New York Times to describe the Ottoman massacre of Armenian Christians. In 1925 the journalist Melville Chater used the term to describe the burning and sacking of the city Smyrna in 1922 in the context of the Turkish genocide against the Armenians.

Thus, the ethnic cleansing of 1947-8 is comparable to the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. In both cases the Jews were exiled. However, today the Zionists and their supporters attack anyone who use the term Holocaust to describe the massive genocide of other people.

Prior to the 1967 war various articles appeared in the West claiming that many wanted Nazis escaped to the Arab countries especially to Egypt where Nasser employed them in his propaganda against Israel. An example is the article "Nazis in Cairo". [3]

In the Zionist magazine Mosaic we find: "Examining the origins of the Six-Day War, Matthias Kuntzel points to the anti-Semitic - and pro-Nazi - influences in Gamal Abdel Nasser's formative years and the Egyptian president's deeply held beliefs about the Jews." [4]

*It was not by chance that Egypt [after 1952] became the El Dorado of former Nazi war criminals and [current] anti-Semites" [5]*

Mosaic also claimed and quoted without any source to prove the claim: "Nasser also denied [the Holocaust] both directly ("No one . . . takes seriously the lie about six-million Jews who were murdered") and indirectly, by claiming that "Ben-Gurion . . . has killed as many Arabs as Hitler killed Jews." . . . Nasser's obsession with the Jewish state was a constant theme of his time in power."

In an article in NYT we find: "While the secret lives of Nazis in countries like Argentina and Paraguay captured the popular imagination in books and films like the *Odessa File* and the *Boys From Brazil*, the Heim case casts light on the often overlooked history of their flight to the Middle East. Until political winds shifted, ex-Nazis were welcomed in Egypt in the years after World War II, helping in particular with military technology" [6]

*"Israel offered as proof that Austrian-born Heim, a former concentration camp doctor accused of carrying out gruesome, deadly experiments on Jewish prisoners, died in Cairo."*

Yet according to the NBC: "There is no indication that Heim played any role with the Egyptian government."

*"Instead, it appears he has lived a quiet life in downtown Cairo since the early 1960s. A later convert to Islam, he bought sweets for friends from a famed confectionery and was known for playing pingpong and taking long walks for exercise" [7]*

On the other hand, in 1967, the Polish culture minister, Kazimierz Rusinek, declared that "it is no secret, that many Nazi criminals serve the Israeli state and live in its territory. I cannot give you a precise number, but I'm certain that more than [one] thousand professionals of the Nazi Wehrmacht serve as military advisers to the Israeli Army." [8]

Was this claim simple Stalinist propaganda? "Later, reporters, not all of them hostile to Israel, mentioned specifically one name: Otto Skorzeny, Hitler's favorite commando leader. Did Skorzeny, in fact, cooperate with the Mossad in the 1960s, and for how long? And if so, why? Why did Israeli intelligence leaders, some of them Holocaust survivors, agree to bond with him? That was the question that the drab-looking Mossad envelope was supposed to answer" [9]

*"The first time that Israel made such a decision was in 1949, when Mamad, the Foreign Ministry's intelligence service and the predecessor of the Mossad, recruited the Nazi Walther Rauff, one of the vilest Holocaust perpetrators then alive and the inventor of the "gas vans," mobile gas chambers in which thousands of Jewish men, women and children were choked to death." [10]*

For years we have heard that Iran is a fascist state: "The rhetoric about the so-called "War on Terror" has led us down the wrong path for 20 years. Terrorism is a tactic. We are not at war with terror. Similarly, our fight is not against radical or extreme Islam. When it comes to the Middle East, particularly Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, it is imperative that we understand the true nature of the threat. We are fighting Islamic Fascism—the political idea in which state actors or nonstate actors are using Islam to rule people through the use of violence" [11]

In the real world, Israel is connected with neo-Nazis in Europe. We find in the liberal daily Haaretz: "Israel Hayom was up in arms this week. In an interview with a Swedish daily, Israel's new ambassador to Sweden had stated the obvious: Israel is shunning the Sweden Democrats, a far-right party with fascist and neo-Nazi roots that is still associated with similar positions. But for the Israeli Hebrew-language daily, this was a "controversial statement." Why? Here is the wonderful explanation the paper gave: "In the past, the Sweden Democrats did adopt far-right positions, including sympathy for fascism and Nazism. However, in recent years it has become a staunch supporter of Israel." [12]

Indeed, every pro-Nazi politician who supports the crimes of the Zionist state and comes to visit Israel is taken to visit Yad Vashem (The Jewish Holocaust Museum). *Down with the Zionist apartheid and all its supporters! For a Palestine red and free from the river to the sea!*

#### Endnotes:

[1] <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/8/18/palestinian-misuse-and-zionist-abuse-of-the-holocaust>

[2] Stephen McGrann: *The Holocaust: Understanding the Worst Crime in History* Kindle Edition

[3] Max Melamet (1967) *The John Birch society, Patterns of Prejudice*, 1:3, 12-14,

[4] <https://mosaicmagazine.com/picks/uncategorized/2017/03/nassers-anti-semitic-war-against-israel/>

[5] Ibid

[6] <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/04/news/04iht-germany.19935220.html>

[7] <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna29058048>

[8] <https://newlinesmag.com/review/the-nazi-fugitives-hired-by-israel/>

[9] Ibid

[10] Ibid

[11] <https://providencemag.com/2020/01/defeat-islamic-fascism-iran-turkey-delegitimize-ideology/>

[12] <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2021-10-29/ty-article-opinion/.premium/neo-nazis-as-long-as-theyre-friends-of-israel/0000017f-dc38-d856-a37f-fdf8653d0000>



# Taiwan: Great Power Rivalry and National Question

## On the conflict between U.S. and Chinese imperialism, its consequences for the crisis of the capitalist world order, on Taiwan's national question and the program of revolutionary defeatism

*Theses of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 20 August 2022*

**Introductory Note:** *The following theses is based on the RCIT's analysis of the imperialist Great Powers and the development of their relation of forces. The document confirms and extends the position which we have elaborated in previous documents on the inter-imperialist conflict on Taiwan (see appendix).*

\*\*\*\*\*

1. The conflict between China and the U.S. about control of Taiwan has become one of the key issues of the world situation and will most likely remain so in the next years. The reasons for this can be summarized as follows: a) The rise of China as an imperialist power and the parallel decline of the U.S. as the long-time hegemon. Today these two states are the dominant rivals among all Great Powers – in the economic, political as well as military field. (Russia is also an important nuclear power.) Both powers are strong enough to hinder the rival from imposing its global domination but not strong enough to do so itself. Currently, the U.S.-China rivalry, with the conflict on Taiwan at its centre, is the key axis of the world situation (in addition to the Ukraine War and the NATO-Russia rivalry).

b) Control of Taiwan is crucial for both powers since 60% of global maritime trade and more than 22% of total global trade passes through the South China Sea.

c) In addition, control of Taiwan is decisive given the fact that its industry is responsible for 63% of the global semiconductor market – a key component of any modern economy.

d) Furthermore, control of Taiwan would decisively facilitate China's naval access to the Pacific – and, hence, to the American mainland as well as the South Pacific islands.

### The implication of the Taiwan crisis for the world situation

2. Given these fundamental factors, a military conflict between the U.S. and China is inevitable in the next years and Taiwan is the most likely flashpoint for this. Such a conflict could only be avoided – apart from the socialist world revolution – if one of the powers beat a “voluntarily” retreat and leaves control of Taiwan to the rival. Such a development cannot be excluded but it is rather unlikely since it would represent a *strategic defeat* for the respective ruling class which could easily provoke a *revo-*

# 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.

### 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

By Michael Pröbsting



Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

*lutionary situation* and a downfall of the political regime.

3. To these fundamental factors, one has to add the increasing domestic instability both in the U.S. as well as in China. The Great Depression of the world economy since late 2019, a draconic Lockdown policy, rising unemployment as well as the looming crisis of the financial and housing sector in China, the deep political divisions within the American monopoly bourgeoisie, the state apparatus and the middle class as well as the skyrocketing inflation and the explosive social tensions – all these developments push the ruling elite both in the U.S. as well as in China to accelerate chauvinist militarism and foreign adventures as distraction.

4. For all these reasons, one can hardly underestimate the global significance of any military confrontation between the Great Powers. As indicated above, a conflict in this region would immediately result in a collapse of the global economy. Given the globally hegemonic role and the military arsenal of both powers, a conflict could easily provoke World War III. A military conflict between the U.S. and China would dramatically accelerate the political polarisation around the globe and push all states to decide for one or the other camp. In this context, a massive consolidation of the alliance between China and Russia as well as between the U.S. and Japan is likely. It is quite possible that even before such a military confrontation, both powers could unleash a wave of economic sanctions and diplomatic manoeuvres against the respective rivals with massive consequences for the global economy and the world order.

5. In any case, a war or near-war between the U.S. and China would fundamentally rattle the world order and could open a global revolutionary situation. This is even more the case as a war on Taiwan could result in substantial losses for both powers, i.e. it could weaken U.S. as well as Chinese imperialism. According to a new report, published by the *Wall Street Journal*, a wargame demonstrated that the U.S. could lose half the Navy and Air Force inventory in a four-week conflict.

6. In summary, two key events have shaped the world situation in 2022.

a) The Ukraine War and dramatic acceleration of the NATO-Russia rivalry.

b) The Taiwan crisis and the massive acceleration of the U.S.-China rivalry.

These two events mark the beginning of a new phase of inter-imperialist rivalry, a kind of *pre-World War III period*.

### **Taiwan's national question and its role in the inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S. and China**

7. Since patriotism and Han chauvinism has become the most important ideological pillar of the Stalino-capitalist regime in Beijing, China's claim to Taiwan is a key component of its political legitimacy. It is based on the assertion that Taiwan is an inseparable historic part of China. However, Marxists reject this as a Han-Chinese chauvinist myth.

8. The island was populated about 6,000 years ago by Austronesian people. In the Middle Ages, Chinese settlers as well as Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonialists entered the island. China under the Qing dynasty conquered Taiwan in 1683. However, its control over the island was rather loose and it repeatedly faced rebellions

– both by the indigenous population as well as by Han settlers (who were often poor peasants fleeing misery on the mainland). The most important of these was the so-called *Lin Shuangwen rebellion* (1786–1788). Another significant uprising took pace in 1862-64 under the leadership of Dai Wansheng. In 1895, the island was occupied by emerging Japanese imperialism which, after some time, imposed an assimilation program, pushing people to adopt Japanese surnames. The colonial masters faced a seven-year resistance, and the rebels proclaimed a short-lived "*Republic of Taiwan*". Finally, with the crushing defeat of the *Empire of the Rising Sun* in 1945, Taiwan was liberated.

9. The Chinese civil war between the peasant army led by Mao's Communist Party and the forces under the command of Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary *Kuomintang* (KMT) had important consequences for the island. After the Maoist forces defeated the KMT on the mainland, Chiang Kai-shek retreated with his supporters to Taiwan. He announced himself as the leader of all of China and proclaimed Taipei as its "*wartime capital*". With the help of U.S. imperialism, Chiang Kai-shek brutally crushed the resistance of the communists and the local population. The most important event – which has become a historic date for the Taiwanese nationalist movement – is the so-called "*2:28 Incident*", referred so because of its start on 28 February 1947. This was a spontaneous popular uprising against the KMT regime demanding some form of autonomy or independence of Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek's troops smashed the rebellion, killing between 18,000 to 28,000 people within a few weeks (according to the findings of an official commission in 1992). This massacre allowed the KMT forces to create a pro-Western military dictatorship which existed until the late 1980s.

10. The claim that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China – the fundament of the so-called *One-China* policy – has been advocated since 1945 by the Stalinist-Maoist regime in Beijing, the KMT dictatorship in Taipei as well as by the imperialist rulers in Washington. The reason was that Beijing wanted to bring the island under its control and that Chiang Kai-shek resp. the U.S. wanted to overthrow the Stalinist-Maoist regime and bring the mainland under their control. Later, after the famous visit by U.S. President Nixon to China in 1972, Washington created an alliance with the Stalinist-Maoist regime against the Soviet Union. For that reason, the U.S. continued to support the *One-China* concept and did not publicly refute Beijing's claim to Taiwan. Nevertheless, it continued to support the KMT regime with military aid and the commitment to defend it in case of an attack by Beijing.

11. However, and this is crucial, the claim that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China was never based on the wishes of the Taiwanese population itself! In fact, until the last three decades, the Taiwanese people never had the chance to express their national culture and identity. First, they were colonized by the Qing dynasty, then Japanese imperialism, then they faced the invasion of the KMT army and the creation of its military dictatorship (with support of U.S. imperialism). Only since the early 1990s, when the KMT regime crumbled, the Taiwanese people gained some political and cultural space to develop their own identity.

12. As a result, Taiwanese nationalism – i.e. the claim that Taiwan has a separate national identity – was initially

directed not only against the Stalinist regime in Beijing but also against the pro-American KMT dictatorship. However, given the lack of working-class leadership, this nationalist movement came under control of bourgeois-liberal forces and resulted in the formation of the *Democratic Progressive Party* (DPP).

13. We should also add that Beijing's assertion – that Taiwan is part of its nation because the island was (loosely) ruled by the Qing dynasty in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century – has no relevance for Marxists. At that time, i.e. the *pre-capitalist epoch* in that region, one could hardly claim that there existed a modern Chinese nation – even less so given the fact that the Qing dynasty was dominated by the (non-Chinese) Manchu. In addition, as we mentioned above, the rule of the Qing dynasty was opposed by large parts of the Taiwanese population. Based on the logic of the chauvinist ideology of the Chinese regime, one could equally claim that Ireland would belong to the British Empire, that several Eastern European countries – which were part of the former Habsburg Empire – would belong to Austria or that Turkey would have legitimate claim to the former colonies of the Ottoman Empire.

14. In the past decades, Taiwanese national consciousness has substantially increased. In 1992, 17.6% of respondents identified as Taiwanese, 25.5% as Chinese, 46.4% as both, and 10.5% non-response. In June 2021, 63.3% identified as Taiwanese, 2.6% as Chinese, and 31.4% as both. While one can discuss if the Taiwanese have become a nationality or a nation, there is no doubt that they constitute a separate people with their own identity. In other words, it is nothing but chauvinist arrogance against a small people to reduce the Taiwanese being "*part of the Chinese people*". In fact, the Stalino-capitalist regime in Beijing is fully aware of this reality and this has been reflected in recent statements of China's ambassador to France that the Taiwanese people would need to be "*re-educated*" if the island is reunified with mainland China.

### Marxists and Taiwan's national question

15. Concerning the national question, Marxists take the wish of a given people as the starting point. Following the tradition of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, we defend the *right of national self-determination, including the right to secession*. The only exception to this principle is peoples who are oppressors of other people or colonialist settlers (e.g. Israel against the Palestinian people, the white settlers in Africa, French settlers in Algeria before 1962 or in New Caledonia until today, the British settlers on Argentina's Malvinas Islands).

16. It is an undisputable fact that most of the Taiwanese people view themselves as a separate people with their own identity and that they strongly oppose unification with mainland China – even more so with a state ruled by a reactionary dictatorship. They are fully aware of the brutal suppression of the mass protest in Hong Kong since 2019. In case of a Chinese annexation of Taiwan, an even more vicious destruction of the limited democratic rights is inevitable.

17. Under such conditions, the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) defends the right of national self-determination of the Taiwanese people. This includes their right to proclaim an independent state.

Hence, socialists, all conditions being equal, support the right of national self-determination against the attempts of Chinese imperialism to annex the island.

18. Having said this, it is essential to recognize that there can be developments in the struggle between classes and states where the democratic principle of national self-determination becomes temporarily subordinated to overriding principles. In a revolutionary war between a workers state and an capitalist aggressor, socialists could be forced to temporarily subordinate the right of self-determination of a nation to the overriding goal of defending the revolution (i.e. during the Russian civil war 1918-21 after the October Revolution). The same can be the case when a semi-colonial country has to defend itself against an imperialist attack (e.g. the Kurdish question in Iraq when the U.S. tried to utilize it in 1991 and 2003). Likewise, it can be the case that the national rights of a small people can become a subordinated factor in a confrontation between imperialist Great Powers (as it was the case with Serbia in World War I).

19. Such inter-imperialist rivalry is currently a dominant factor in the Taiwan question. After the collapse of the Stalinist Soviet Union in 1991, Washington's alliance with the regime in Beijing became gradually less relevant. And with China's rise as an imperialist rival, the U.S. became increasingly supportive for Taiwan's aspiration towards independence. This does not mean that Taiwanese nationalism is a product of U.S. imperialism – as Beijing and its social-chauvinist supporters within the left claim. Nevertheless, it is clear that Taiwan's national question does not exist in a vacuum.

20. In fact, the current developments in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea are primarily determined by the inter-imperialist tensions between the Great Powers and not by the independence movement of the Taiwanese people. The provocative "*Freedom of Navigation Operation*" of the U.S. navy in this region, China's own military manoeuvres, its expansion of control over various islands in the South China Sea, the recent provocative visit of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan – all this was not caused by Taiwanese nationalism but by the rivalry between the two largest imperialist powers.

21. As a matter of fact, the Taiwan question has been subordinated for long to the conflict between the U.S. and China. After 1949, the tensions over Taiwan – most importantly the military clashes during the *First* and the *Second Taiwan Strait Crisis* (in 1954-55 resp. in 1958) – were primarily conflicts between U.S. imperialism and its Taiwanese proxy against China, a Stalinist-ruled degenerated workers state. In this conflict, Marxists defended China against the Yankee aggressors and its proxy.

22. However, China is no workers state since the restoration of capitalism in the early 1990s. Since its rise as an imperialist power more than a decade ago, the RCIT opposes Washington as well as Beijing as equally reactionary powers. Irrespective of all these developments, the Taiwan national question has remained a subordinated factor to the rivalry between the two powers.

23. Because of the specific history of conflict and collaboration between the U.S. and China, Taiwan's de facto independence has existed only because of the military support of U.S. imperialism. The compliance of the bourgeois governments in Taipei – both the KMT as well as the DPP

– with the plans of U.S. imperialism makes sure that the Taiwan question continues to have a subordinated character in the Great Power conflict. If the currently discussed so-called *Taiwan Policy Act* will be adopted by the U.S. Congress, which is likely as it receives bipartisan support, Taiwan would be designated a “major non-Nato ally”, meaning it would be viewed as one of Washington’s closest global partners, especially on trade and security cooperation.

### **The program of revolutionary defeatism and its application under different scenarios**

24. As we have explained in the past decade, both the U.S. as well as China are imperialist Great Powers. Hence, the conflict between these states is *reactionary on both sides*. In any confrontation between these powers, the RCIT advocates the program of *revolutionary defeatism* on both sides. This means that socialists must not support either side in any conflict. They need to fight against all forms of imperialist chauvinism and militarism, against all forms of economic and financial sanctions, protectionism and imperialist armament. They must educate the workers vanguard to identify “their” imperialist state (as well as all others) as the main enemy. In case of a war between the Great Powers, revolutionaries are obligated to follow the principles of Lenin and Liebknecht expressed in the famous slogans “*The main enemy is at home*”, “*defeat is the lesser evil*”, and “*Transform the imperialist war into a civil war against the ruling class*”.

25. The RCIT opposes an imperialist “reunification”, i.e. the annexation of Taiwan by the Stalino-capitalist regime in Beijing. We support the right of national self-determination of the Taiwanese people and we also support their right to have their own, independent state. At the same, we oppose all forms of anti-Chinese chauvinism. In fact, it is crucial to link the struggle for democratic and national rights of the Taiwanese people with the struggles of the Chinese workers and youth against the Stalino-capitalist regime as well as with the mass protests of workers and oppressed in the U.S. It is important to spread such an internationalist and anti-imperialist program, among others, also among the 40 million-strong diaspora from China. Socialists need to side with the Taiwanese people striving for sovereignty without lending any support for Western imperialism. The slogans of socialists need to be: *Defend to Taiwan’s sovereignty! Against Chinese as well as against U.S. imperialism! For a socialist Taiwan as part of a federation of workers states in the region!*

26. Socialists have to take each and every opportunity to undermine the strength of both imperialist camps – the one led by the U.S. as well as the one led by China. The workers and oppressed have no common “motherland” with any imperialist power – nowhere in the world! It is crucial to support each and every mass struggle both in the Western as well as in the Eastern camp. Weaken the imperialists rulers, strengthen the power of the working class and the oppressed – wherever possible. Socialists on each side need to utilize the conflicts and difficulties of “their” governments in order to undermine and eventually overthrow it. Of course, such a conscious rupture with any form of “national unity” with the imperialist rulers must not mean, under any conditions, support for the rivalling imperialist power. That would be nothing but

*inverted social-imperialism!* As Trotsky once said: “*Lenin’s formula, ‘defeat is the lesser evil,’ means not defeat of one’s country is the lesser evil as compared with the defeat of the enemy country but that a military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to the whole people than military victory assured by ‘civil peace.’*” (War and the Fourth International, 1934)

27. In summary, in any confrontation between the U.S. and China, the RCIT takes a revolutionary defeatist position against both powers. The Taiwan national question has been a subordinated feature of the conflict between Washington and Beijing since decades. Hence, any military conflict between Chinese and Taiwanese forces must be understood as part of the Great Power rivalry. Hence, socialists have to take a revolutionary defeatist position also in such conflicts.

28. However, it is not excluded that such a situation could change. In case of a determined attempt of China to conquer the island, Washington could stage a retreat and refrain from sending its navy. It could limit itself to diplomatic protest, economic sanctions and military aid (similar to its current limited support for the Ukraine fighting against Russia’s invasion). Such a development does not seem likely to us for the following reasons:

a) Taiwan – in contrast to the Ukraine – is a historically long-term ally of U.S. imperialism.

b) Taiwan is geostrategically much more important for Washington than the Ukraine because China is a more important rival than Russia.

c) For these reasons, such a limited support of the U.S. for Taiwan would most likely mean that Beijing could annex the island which would be a catastrophic defeat for Washington resulting in a massive loss of its influence in East Asia and globally.

29. However, as we said, it is not excluded that U.S. imperialism could be forced to choose supporting Taiwan only in such a limited way. In such a situation, the inter-imperialist rivalry would no longer be the dominant feature of the Taiwan question. If such a turn in the situation takes place, the struggle of Taiwan – a semi-colonial capitalist country – would become a legitimate war of national defense against the Chinese imperialist aggressor (despite a limited support from the U.S. for Taiwan). In such a case, socialists would be obliged to change their tactics and to defend Taiwan’s independence against the Chinese aggressor. This would be a similar scenario like the Ukraine War today or, to give a historical analogy, like the Sino-Japanese War in 1937-45. In the latter case, Republican China waged a righteous war against Japanese imperialism. The Fourth International of Leon Trotsky supported China in this war irrespective of the military aid of the U.S. for Chiang Kai-shek.

### **The struggle against social-imperialism and pacifism within the workers and popular movement and the need for revolutionary leadership**

30. The escalation of the conflict between the U.S. and China about the Taiwan question will also increase inevitably the political polarisation within the workers and popular movement. It will push reformist, populist and various centrist forces to intensify their support for one or the other imperialist power. The RCIT and all authentic



socialists have denounced such – direct or indirect – support for one or the other Great Power as *social-imperialism*.

31. Support for one or the other imperialist power represent *bourgeois* policy, a version of “popular front” collaboration with the bourgeoisie on the terrain of foreign policy. Such social-imperialist policy is not limited to open support for aggressive foreign policy of one or the other Great Power. There are also various forces which do not openly side with one camp, but which consider – explicitly or implicitly – one of the two powers as the “*lesser evil*”. Marxists unambiguously reject such *concealed social-imperialism* which openly condemns or opposes the policy of only one of the two rivals but not the other.

32. Unfortunately, there exist also a number of centrist organisation which lack clarity about the class character of China (i.e. that it is an imperialist power), which consider the West as a somewhat more “democratic” imperialist camp, and which don’t take a clear position on the conflict between the Great Powers. There is a great danger that if these organisations don’t overcome their confusion and wavering, they will end up tailing this or that social-imperialist force.

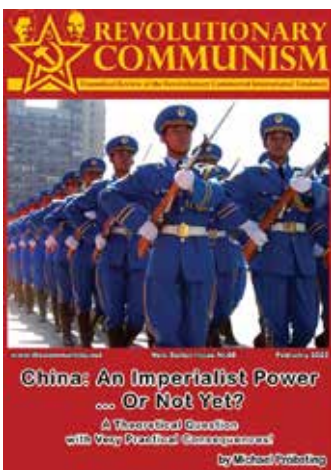
33. There exists a widespread *social-chauvinist arrogance* among so-called “socialists” towards smaller people and their right of national self-determination. Such social-chauvinists refuse to defend the national and democratic rights of such oppressed people and, effectively, side with the imperialist aggressor. Such arrogance can be seen in the approach of such forces to the Ukrainian people defending itself against Putin’s invasion, the Bosnian and the Kosovar people defending themselves against Serbian chauvinism in the 1990s, the Chechens against Moscow, the Catalans against the Spanish State or the Irish people in the north against British imperialism. We have no doubt that many “socialists” will ignore also the rights of the Taiwanese people! It is the duty of authentic socialists to fight merciless against all forms of such *social-chauvinism* against smaller people!

34. The RCIT also opposes all variations of pacifism, i.e. the policy of reformist and centrist organisations which limit themselves to oppose war and to call for peace. The great French socialist Jean Jaurès once said that “*capitalism carries war within itself like the clouds carry rain.*” And so it is! It is ridiculous to oppose war between capitalist states by empty calls for peace. The only consistent engagement for peace is the intransigent struggle against the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. There will be peace only if the ruling class has been overthrown all over the world!

35. In contrast to the pacifist daydreamers, authentic socialists view war as an opportunity to exploit inner contradictions and difficulties of a given imperialist power in order to weaken it and to strengthen the power and the consciousness of the working class. War helps the oppressed to get access to arms and makes it easier to recognize that every fundamental question in capitalist society can only be solved by force. Socialists must have such a forward-oriented perspective to link war with revolution instead of sinking into the backward-oriented Nirvāṃa of impotent pacifism!

36. The RCIT considers it as a key task to wage an intransigent struggle against all forms of social-imperialism, social-chauvinism and pacifism. We repeat that such forces represent – as Lenin said – *bourgeois current within the workers and popular mass organisations* and the task of authentic socialists is to free the masses from such reactionary poison.

37. The strategic task is to build a revolutionary leadership which can lead the working class in the struggle against imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation. Such a leadership, i.e. a new *Revolutionary World Party*, can only be built in consistent struggle against all imperialist Great Powers as well as against their social-imperialist lackeys within the workers and popular mass organizations. We call all socialists to join the RCIT in the struggle to build such a new Workers International fighting for socialist revolution on all continents!



## Publications of the RCIT

# China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet?

*Continuing the Debate with Esteban Mercatante and the PTS/FT  
on China's class character and consequences for the revolutionary strategy*

*By Michael Pröbsting, January 2022*

Introduction \* I. The importance of the dialectical method \* II. A summary of our characterization of China as an imperialist Great Power \* III. On China’s unevenness and vulnerability \* IV. The Taiwan question in its historical and geostrategic context \* V. Is China a Great Power without imperialist features? \* VI. Can China’s development as an imperialist power be aborted? \* VII. China, imperialist wars, and revolutionary tactics \* Footnotes

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*

## A Marxist Slogan and its Caricature

### On the social-imperialist distortion of the slogan “The Main Enemy Is At Home” in the context of the Ukraine War and the Taiwan Strait Crisis

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 17 August 2022

#### Introduction

Two major conflicts are currently shaping the world situation: the Ukraine War and the Taiwan Strait Crisis. In fact, these events mark the beginning of a new phase of inter-imperialist rivalry, a kind of *pre-World War III period*.

The RCIT and other authentic socialists take a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist position in these conflicts. We recognize the *dual character* of the Ukraine War and the NATO-Russia conflict. Hence, we defend the Ukraine – a capitalist semi-colony – against Putin’s invasion. At the same time, we oppose all imperialist Great Powers, i.e. we do not support any side in the conflict between NATO and Russia.<sup>1</sup>

In the Taiwan Strait Crisis, we also oppose both U.S. as well as Chinese imperialism. In this case, the Taiwan national question, i.e. the right of national self-determination of the Taiwanese people, has only played a subordinated role until now.<sup>2</sup>

In short, we apply the program of *revolutionary defeatism* against all imperialist powers – the U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe and Japan. Where an oppressed people is waging a legitimate war of defence (like the Ukraine, Syria and Palestine today or Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya in the past), we stand for *revolutionary defensism*, i.e. we side with their military struggle without lending any political support to their (bourgeois) leadership or to an imperialist power with which this leadership might be allied.<sup>3</sup>

A large number of self-proclaimed “Marxist” organisations have failed in taking such an approach. They refuse to defend the Ukraine and, often, they even side with Russia resp. with China.<sup>4</sup> Others do not openly side with Russia or China but direct their political fire only against the Western powers which means that they consider Moscow and Beijing as a “lesser evil”.<sup>5</sup> Such an approach is tantamount to open or concealed *social-imperialism*, i.e. support for an imperialist power under the disguise of “socialist” policy.

The RCIT has critically discussed the policy of Stalinists, social-democrats, Bolivarians and centrists on these issues in a number of documents. We explained the huge difference between the authentic Marxist program and its distortions by these forces. At this place we do not intend to repeat this criticism. Rather, we shall focus on a specific slogan which has often been cited by such advocates and appeasers of social-imperialism.

In nearly all cases, these organisations have justified their opportunist policy by referring to the well-known Marxist slogan “*The Main Enemy Is At Home*”. They argue that since their centre is located in the Western hemisphere (usually Western Europe, North America or Latin America), their political duty would be to oppose first and foremost “their” imperialist bourgeoisie.

In this essay, we will explain that such an approach is fundamentally wrong and has nothing to do with the internationalist and anti-imperialist principles of Marxism.

#### The historical context of the slogan “The Main Enemy Is At Home”

In order to correctly conceive the meaning of this slogan, it is necessary to elaborate both the slogan in itself as well as its historical context. As it is well-known, it was the German revolutionary workers leader Karl Liebknecht who coined the slogan “*The Main Enemy Is At Home*” in a leaflet for May Day 1915 in which he denounced the imperialist world war.

Let us begin with reproducing the whole passage of this leaflet in which this slogan was raised for the first time. “*International proletarian class struggle against international imperialist genocide is the socialist commandment of the hour. The main enemy of every people is in their own country! The main enemy of the German people is in Germany: German imperialism, the German war party, German secret diplomacy. This enemy at home must be fought by the German people in a political struggle, cooperating with the proletariat of other countries whose struggle is against their own imperialists. (...) How long should the gamblers of imperialism abuse the patience of the people? Enough and more than enough slaughter! Down with the war instigators here and abroad!*”<sup>6</sup>

While this specific phrase was coined by Karl Liebknecht – who was martyred in January 1919 together with Rosa Luxemburg soon after they had founded the Communist Party – the basic concept was already elaborated before by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Shortly after the beginning of the war in early August 1914, the Russian Marxists issued a Manifesto in which they declared not only their opposition to the imperialist slaughter but also called for the utilisation of the specific war conditions for advancing the class struggle and the overthrow of the ruling class – a concept which was coined in the famous slogans of the “*defeat of one owns country as the lesser evil*” and of the “*transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war*”.

“*In each country, the struggle against a government that is waging an imperialist war should not falter at the possibility of that country’s defeat as a result of revolutionary propaganda. The defeat of the government’s army weakens the government, promotes the liberation of the nationalities it oppresses, and facilitates civil war against the ruling classes. This holds particularly true in respect of Russia. A victory for Russia will bring in its train a strengthening of reaction, both throughout the world and within the country, and will be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the peoples living in areas already seized. In view of this, we consider the defeat of Russia the lesser evil in all conditions.*”<sup>7</sup>

“*The conversion of the present imperialist war into a civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan, one that follows from the experience of the Commune, and outlined in the Basle resolution (1912); it has been dictated by all the conditions of an imperialist war between highly developed bourgeois countries. However difficult that transformation may seem at any given moment, socialists will never relinquish systematic, persistent and un-deviating preparatory work in this direction now that war has*

become a fact.”<sup>8</sup>

These ideas were later explained in more detail – most importantly in the pamphlet *“Socialism and War”*, written by W. I. Lenin and G. Zinoviev. In this document, the leaders of the Bolshevik party outlined the fundamental principle of their program. *“The standpoint of social-chauvinism is shared equally by both advocates of victory for their governments in the present war and by advocates of the slogan of ‘neither victory nor defeat’.* A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, and cannot fail to see that the latter’s military reverses must facilitate its overthrow. Only a bourgeois who believes that a war started by governments must necessarily end as a war between governments, and wants it to end as such, can regard as “ridiculous” and “absurd” the idea that the socialists of all the belligerent countries should express their wish that all their “own” governments should be defeated. On the contrary, it is a statement of this kind that would be in keeping with the innermost thoughts of every class-conscious worker, and be in line with our activities for the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war.”<sup>9</sup>

### The meaning of the slogan

What is the meaning of this concept?<sup>10</sup> First, it is crucial to recognize the context – the imperialist World War I. This was a gigantic slaughter initiated and waged by nearly all imperialist Great Powers at that time: Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Britain, Russia and, from April 1917 onwards, the United States.

Second, Lenin drew attention many times the famous formula of Prussian military theoretician Carl von Clausewitz that *“war is a mere continuation of policy by other means.”*<sup>11</sup> The fundament of any Marxist policy is the *class independence* of the proletariat from any political and ideological influence of the bourgeoisie and its lackeys within the official organisations of the labour movement. This principle must be maintained also under the conditions of war. As Lenin once said: *“With reference to wars, the main thesis of dialectics (...) is that ‘war is simply the continuation of politics by other [i.e., violent] means’.* (...) And it was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who regarded any war as the continuation of the politics of the powers concerned – and the various classes within these countries – in a definite period.”<sup>12</sup>

This means that authentic socialists must not support the policy of its ruling class – neither in times of peace nor war –, must not support any form of political, economic or military warfare against the opponents of its ruling class, must not enter any kind of “national unity” or “popular front” with the capitalist class, no support for or participation in institutions of class collaboration, must not lend support to the idea of a common “fatherland” (common with the bourgeoisie), etc. Marxists have to explain the real motives of the ruling class and must outline the authentic interests of the working class.

In contrast to the ruling class and its reformist lackeys, authentic Marxists reject the idea that the workers should refrain from fighting for its interests in times of war. No, the class struggle – for economic demands, for democratic rights, for national liberation, for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie – must be continued in the age of peace as well as in the age of war. Socialists don’t accept the argument that the workers should defer the struggle for their interests because it could provoke difficulties for “their” impe-

rialist fatherland.

Quite the opposite, socialists welcome any difficulties of “their” imperialist bourgeoisie and strive to utilise it for advancing the liberation struggle of the working class up to the overthrow of the regime.

Finally, it is crucial that Marxists wage a relentless struggle against the whole ideology of the imperialist “fatherland”. Such a struggle must be conducted already in times of peace, already now. We workers have nothing in common with the ruling class, its culture, its “values”, its corrupted lackeys in parliament and within the labour movement. Our brothers and sisters are not the rich people with the same passport but the migrant workers who face exploitation (and even super-exploitation) in the same workplace, in the same neighbourhood; our brothers and sisters are the workers and oppressed in other countries and also in those countries against which “our” bourgeoisie is waging war. The decisive issue is not the passport but our common nature as an exploited and oppressed class – across the borders and irrespective of the skin colour! In short, it is an essential task of socialists to educate the workers and oppressed in the spirit of anti-chauvinism to immunize them against any patriotism towards the imperialist “fatherland”, and to win them for rupture *with every form of political and ideological identification with the imperialist national state!* This is the true meaning of the famous words from Marx and Engels’s *Communist Manifesto* – *“The workers have no fatherland”*.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, the principles of revolutionary defeatism can be summarized as Trotsky did shortly before the beginning of World War II: *“Defeatism is the class policy of the proletariat, which even during a war sees the main enemy at home, within its particular imperialist country. Patriotism, on the other hand, is a policy that locates the main enemy outside one’s own country. The idea of defeatism signifies in reality the following: conducting an irreconcilable revolutionary struggle against one’s own bourgeoisie as the main enemy, without being deterred by the fact that this struggle may result in the defeat of one’s own government; given a revolutionary movement the defeat of one’s own government is a lesser evil.”*<sup>14</sup>

### What the slogan does not mean: aiding the imperialist rival

The concept of *“The Main Enemy Is At Home”* has suffered various distortions as we can currently see very clearly in the context of the Ukraine War and the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Let us deal with such distortions.

*“The Main Enemy Is At Home”* does not mean that the Great Power rival of “our” imperialist bourgeoisie is the “lesser evil”.<sup>15</sup> In fact, this was an often-raised slander by various opponents who attacked the Bolsheviks during World War I for supposedly aiding the victory of the imperialist enemies of Russia. Various Mensheviks accused Lenin that the slogan *“Russia’s defeat would be the lesser evil”* would express support for German imperialism. Georgii Plekhanov – the famous *„Father of Russian Marxism”* who in then last phase of his life became a notorious social-chauvinist defender of his imperialist fatherland – once characterized the internationalist anti-war platform as *“the minimal program of German imperialism.”*<sup>16</sup>

Gregor Alexinsky, a former Bolshevik deputy who became a close associate of Plekhanov in 1914, denounced

the internationalists of having a “desperate desire for a German victory.”<sup>17</sup> Soon after the beginning of the war, he even went so far to accuse the Russian internationalists of conspiring with the German general staff against “the fatherland”!<sup>18</sup> (Later, after the February Revolution 1917, Alexinsky became a prominent figure in advocating the witch-hunt against Lenin and the Bolsheviks as “German Spies” – as the headline of a reactionary paper read which reproduced a slanderous statement of Alexinsky.<sup>19</sup>)

Even Trotsky, who at that time had still not broken with his anti-Bolshevik prejudices, accused Lenin’s program of defeatism to “to fall victim to the same national limitedness which is the essence of social-patriotism.”<sup>20</sup>

To these critics, Lenin replied: “The phrase-bandyng Trotsky has completely lost his bearings on a simple issue. It seems to him that to desire Russia’s defeat means desiring the victory of Germany. (Bukvoeyed and Semkovsky give more direct expression to the “thought”, or rather want of thought, which they share with Trotsky.) But Trotsky regards this as the “methodology of social-patriotism”! To help people that are unable to think for themselves, the Berne resolution (...) made it clear that in all imperialist countries the proletariat must now desire the defeat of its own government. Bukvoeyed and Trotsky preferred to avoid this truth, while Semkovsky (an opportunist who is more useful to the working class than all the others, thanks to his naïvely frank reiteration of bourgeois wisdom) blurted out the following: “This is nonsense, because either Germany or Russia can win” (Izvestia No. 2).”<sup>21</sup>

However, while Lenin had to deal with vile slanders, today we have a number of Stalinists, populists and pseudo-Trotskyists who have adopted such reactionary nonsense as their political platform program by consciously supporting foreign imperialist powers against their “own” bourgeoisie!

However, this was never the meaning of Lenin’s strategy and neither has it any similarity with Trotsky’s program after he joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. They all made clear that revolutionaries have to raise the program of defeatism – “The Main Enemy Is At Home”, “defeat as lesser evil”, “civil war”, etc. – in each and every country during an inter-imperialist war. Such stated the Bolsheviks in a conference resolution in spring 1915: „In each country, the struggle against a government that is waging an imperialist war should not falter at the possibility of that country’s defeat as a result of revolutionary propaganda. The defeat of the government’s army weakens the government, promotes the liberation of the nationalities it oppresses, and facilitates civil war against the ruling classes.”<sup>22</sup>

Trotsky wrote in his theses “War and the Fourth International” (published in 1934) under the chapter heading “‘Defeatism’ and Imperialist War”: “In those cases where it is a question of conflict between capitalist countries, the proletariat of any one of them refuses categorically to sacrifice its historic interests, which in the final analysis coincide with the interests of the nation and humanity, for the sake of the military victory of the bourgeoisie. Lenin’s formula, “defeat is the lesser evil,” means not defeat of one’s country is the lesser evil as compared with the defeat of the enemy country but that a military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to the whole people than military victory assured by “civil peace.” Karl Liebknecht gave an unsurpassed formula of proletarian policy in time of war: “The chief enemy of the people is in its own country.”

*The victorious proletarian revolution not only will rectify the evils caused by defeat but also will create the final guarantee against future wars and defeats. This dialectical attitude toward war is the most important element of revolutionary training and therefore also of the struggle against war. The transformation of imperialist war into civil war is that general strategic task to which the whole work of a proletarian party during war should be subordinated.”*<sup>23</sup>

In summary, the Marxist concept “The Main Enemy Is At Home” has nothing to do with aiding an imperialist rival. It is an internationalist principle which is applied internationally in each and every Great Powers involved in an inter-imperialist conflict. It is therefore impermissible, for example, for socialists in Western countries to support – directly or indirectly – Russia against NATO in the name of “The Main Enemy Is At Home”. It is equally impermissible for socialists to direct their political fire only against one imperialist camp instead of both. Likewise, it is wrong for socialists in the West to support Russian measures against NATO (e.g. cutting of energy exports) or of Russian socialists to support Western sanctions.

### **The slogan must not be applied in a semi-colonial country defending itself against imperialist aggression**

Equally crucial, the slogan “The Main Enemy Is At Home” can only be applied in a conflict between two reactionary camps in which socialists can not support either side. However, it has no place in a conflict between an imperialist aggressor and an oppressed people, a semi-colonial country.

In such a conflict, “The Main Enemy Is At Home” applies only to the imperialist power but not to the non-imperialist country. Therefore, this principle can not be applied in the case of the Ukraine – a capitalist semi-colony – which is defending itself against an imperialist aggressor. In a conflict between an oppressor and an oppressed country, socialists have to side with the latter.

In such a conflict, the slogan “The Main Enemy Is At Home” has to be applied differently by socialists in the imperialist state involved. Here, socialists must not only refuse supporting “their” bourgeoisie but they must also advocate the victory of the oppressed people which is under attack of the imperialist state. They must work towards undermining and sabotaging the imperialist aggression and towards aiding the liberation struggle by any means necessary. Hence, socialists do not oppose but rather support any military aid which such an oppressed people might receive from other states (including from other imperialist powers).

Lenin insisted on such a differentiation between inter-imperialist conflicts and wars between imperialist powers and (semi-)colonies already in his writings during World War I. “National wars waged by colonies and semi-colonies in the imperialist era are not only probable but inevitable. About 1,000 million people, or over half of the world’s population, live in the colonies and semi-colonies (China, Turkey, Persia). The national liberation movements there are either already very strong, or are growing and maturing. Every war is the continuation of politics by other means. The continuation of national liberation politics in the colonies will inevitably take the form of national wars against imperialism.”<sup>24</sup>

This principle was later upheld by Trotsky’s Left Opposi-



tion against the Stalinist bureaucracy. *"The slogan "Defence of the Fatherland" would be a false disguise serving the interests of imperialism in all bourgeois countries, except the colonial and semi-colonial countries that are carrying on a national revolutionary war against the imperialists."*<sup>25</sup>

Later, after the persecution and annihilation of the Trotskyists in the USSR, the Fourth International continued the struggle for such a program. *"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 (...). The struggle against war and its social source, capitalism, presupposes direct, active, unequivocal support to the oppressed colonial peoples in their struggles and wars against imperialism. A "neutral" position is tantamount to support of imperialism."*<sup>26</sup>

*"In the colonial and semi-colonial countries the struggle for an independent national state, and consequently the "defense of the fatherland," is different in principle from that of the imperialist countries. The revolutionary proletariat of the whole world gives unconditional support to the struggle of China or India for national independence, for this struggle, by 'tearing the backward peoples from Asiaticism, sectionalism, and foreign bondage, . . . strike[s] powerful blows at the imperialist states.'" <sup>27</sup>*

*„Imperialism can exist only because there are backward nations on our planet, colonial and semi-colonial countries. The struggle of these oppressed peoples for national unity and independence has a twofold progressive character, since, on the one hand, it prepares favorable conditions of development for their own use, and on the other, it strikes blows at imperialism. Hence, in part, the conclusion that in a war between a civilized imperialist democratic republic and the backward barbarian monarchy of a colonial country, the socialists will be entirely on the side of the oppressed country, notwithstanding its monarchy, and against the oppressor country, notwithstanding its "democracy"."*<sup>28</sup>

In summary, the slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* can not be applied to the struggle of a semi-colonial country

like the Ukraine which is defending itself against the invasion by Russian imperialism. It applies only to imperialist powers.

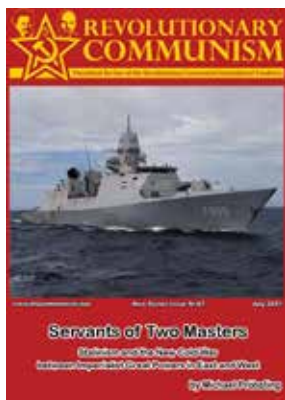
**What the slogan does not mean: failure to support an oppressed people tactically supported by one's "own" imperialist power**

Western socialists who oppose siding with the Ukraine against Russian imperialism often refer to the support by NATO imperialists for Kiev. It is true, as we have pointed out on various occasions, that there can be national struggles which have only a subordinated role in an imperialist war (e.g. Serbia in World War I, Kosova after NATO invasion in 1999).

However, there have also often been legitimate national liberation struggles which were *intermixed* with an inter-imperialist conflict but *did not become subordinated*. Examples for such national conflicts were various struggles during World War I (e.g. the Irish Easter Rebellion in 1916 which was supported by Germany) as well as various national liberation wars shortly before or during World War II. Among the latter were Ethiopia's war against Italy in 1935-36 (with the League of Nation putting sanctions against Italy and several states, including Nazi-Germany, sending military aid to Ethiopia),<sup>29</sup> China's war against Japan 1937-45 (supported by the U.S.),<sup>30</sup> the partisan war in Italy and on the Balkans in WWII against the German occupiers (receiving aid by Western powers), or the struggle of the Arab peoples and the Indians against the British (receiving aid from Germany and Japan).

Stalinists, social democrats as well as ultra-leftists repeatedly referred to the support of this or that Great Power for such a national liberation struggle in order to justify their refusal to support such.

The Marxist classics, in contrast, refused such a reactionary betrayal of progressive liberation struggles. They un-



## 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**



derstood that socialists, while opposing any influence by imperialist powers, they must not refrain from supporting such struggles itself. Lenin, in the course of World War I, summarized quite well the approach of Marxists on just liberation struggles of the oppressed despite imperialist interference: *"The general staffs in the current war are doing their utmost to utilise any national and revolutionary movement in the enemy camp: the Germans utilise the Irish rebellion, the French—the Czech movement, etc. They are acting quite correctly from their own point of view. A serious war would not be treated seriously if advantage were not taken of the enemy's slightest weakness and if every opportunity that presented itself were not seized upon, the more so since it is impossible to know beforehand at what moment, where, and with what force some powder magazine will "explode". We would be very poor revolutionaries if, in the proletariat's great war of liberation for socialism, we did not know how to utilise every popular movement against every single disaster imperialism brings in order to intensify and extend the crisis. If we were, on the one hand, to repeat in a thousand keys the declaration that we are "opposed" to all national oppression and, on the other, to describe the heroic revolt of the most mobile and enlightened section of certain classes in an oppressed nation against its oppressors as a "putsch", we should be sinking to the same level of stupidity as the Kautskyites."*<sup>31</sup>

Later, Lenin emphasised that it is inevitable that wars of different character can be intermingled. *"Marxists have never forgotten that violence must inevitably accompany the collapse of capitalism in its entirety and the birth of socialist society. That violence will constitute a period of world history, a whole era of various kinds of wars, imperialist wars, civil wars inside countries, the intermingling of the two, national wars liberating the nationalities oppressed by the imperialists and by various combinations of imperialist powers that will inevitably enter into various alliances in the epoch of tremendous state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates."*<sup>32</sup>

The Fourth International of Leon Trotsky continued the defence of the Marxist program on the issue of war. They opposed reactionary wars but supported liberation struggles of the oppressed like those of the Chinese or the Ethiopian people or of Republican Spain in the 1930s. *"Only, where the struggle is imperialistic only on one side, and a war of liberation of non-imperialist nations or of a socialist country against existing or threatening imperialist oppression on the other, as well as in civil wars between the classes or between democracy and fascism—the international proletariat cannot and should not apply the same tactic to both sides. Recognising the progressive character of this war of liberation it must fight decisively against the main enemy, reactionary imperialism (or else against the reactionary camp, in the case of a civil war), that is, fight for the victory of the socially (or politically) oppressed or about-to-be oppressed: USSR, colonial and semi-colonial countries like Abyssinia or China, or Republican Spain, etc."*<sup>33</sup>

From such a fundamental differentiation between reactionary and progressive wars follows that Marxists advocate accordingly very different tactics. We are against the escalation of reactionary wars and therefore, socialists oppose the delivery of armaments in such wars. But things are very different in liberation wars! In such cases, socialists support the delivery of armaments! Trotsky stated, on the occasion of the Italo-Ethiopian war in 1935: *"Of course, we are for the defeat of Italy and the victory of Ethiopia, and therefore we must do everything possible to hinder by all*

*available means support to Italian imperialism by the other imperialist powers, and at the same time facilitate the delivery of armaments, etc., to Ethiopia as best we can."*<sup>34</sup>

The Trotskyists took a similar clear position of supporting the Chinese war of defence against the Japanese invasion. In a document adopted at its Founding Conference in September 1938, the Fourth International declared: *"It is the bounden duty of the international proletariat and above all of the revolutionary vanguard, to support the struggle of China against Japan. (...) The perspectives outlined above obligate the workers in all countries, and especially the revolutionary vanguard, to support China's struggle against Japan by all possible means."*<sup>35</sup>

The Fourth International supported the Chinese resistance despite the fact that the dominating force was the thoroughly bourgeois and treacherous Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek and which strongly relied on U.S. and British imperialism. *"While holding down the oppressed masses and retreating step after step before the Japanese invaders, the Kuomintang drew closer to British and American imperialism in the hope that these powers, fearful for their own interests in China, would be obliged to halt Japan's onward march."*

Likewise, the Fourth International warned that the clash between the imperialist powers could result in a World War – a warning which was confirmed by reality only a few years later. *"At the same time, by the pursuit of their predatory aims in China, the Japanese imperialists have accentuated the inter-imperialist antagonisms which are forcing mankind to the brink of a new world war."*

In addition, the Trotskyists drew attention to the fact that if the working class does not succeed in driving out the Japanese invaders but leaves this task rather to the Western imperialists, China would end up as a colony of the latter. *"The imperialists of the West will intervene against Japan only to preserve their own robber interests in the Far East. If Japanese imperialism should be defeated in China by its imperialist rivals, and not by the revolutionary masses, this would signify the enslavement of China by Anglo American capital. China's national liberation, and the emancipation of the Chinese masses from all exploitation, can be achieved only by the Chinese masses themselves, in alliance with the proletariat and oppressed peoples of all the world."*

All such difficulties and dangers did not stop the Fourth International to continue supporting the national liberation war of the Chinese people. They rather recognized the dual character of the conflict and supported the just war while opposing all imperialist Great Powers.

It is therefore a caricature of the slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* to conclude that socialists should oppose military aid for an oppressed people by their "own" imperialist bourgeoisie! This is like opposing German weapons for Ethiopia, America weapons for China or Western aid for the partisans in Europe in WWII. In fact, such a form of "anti-imperialism" is a caricature of Marxism, a variation of social-imperialism!

Trotsky had nothing but contempt for such pseudo-socialists. *"The struggle against war and its social source, capitalism, presupposes direct, active, unequivocal support to the oppressed colonial peoples in their struggles and wars against imperialism. A "neutral" position is tantamount to support of imperialism. Yet, among the announced adherents of the London Bureau congress are found ILPers who advocate leaving the courageous Ethiopian warriors against marauding Italian fascism*

*in the lurch on the grounds of "neutrality," and "Left" Poale Zionists who are even at this moment leaning upon British imperialism in its savage campaign against the legitimate, even if confused, struggle of the Arab peasantry."* <sup>36</sup>

### **The slogan must not be misused as excuse for social-imperialist national narrow-mindedness**

Finally, it is important to point to another distortion of the slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* – national narrow-mindedness. By this we mean the approach by various Stalinists, populists and centrists to content themselves with opposing their "own" bourgeoisie ... and not caring about the rest of the world! What is the class character of other powers (e.g. Russia and China), is a national liberation struggle going on in another country (like the Ukraine), does a complex national question exist in an area of conflict (e.g. Taiwan) – all this is not of particular interest for many Western socialists. They act according to the principle *"we oppose our own ruling class and the rest of the world is too complicated for us"*.

Such an approach is the complete opposite to the internationalist principles of Marxism. As a matter of fact, one can not fight against the "own" bourgeoisie without an analysis of the rest of the world – since one "own's" country is inextricably linked with the world economy, world politics and international class struggle! Without such an analysis one does not know which opponents of one's "own" country should be supported and which not. Without such an analysis, it is impossible to join the international class struggle, to organise international campaigns or to build a world party of socialist revolution!

Usually, the real reason for such political national narrow-mindedness is not intellectual "laziness" but rather opportunist political calculations. If such forces refuse to develop clear positions on key issues of world politics and global class struggle, it is much easier for them to build alliances with social-imperialist forces! In short, national narrow-mindedness in the context of world politics and international class struggle can only but aid social-imperialism.

Trotsky once stated: *"Marxist policies 'in one country' are as impossible as the construction of a socialist society 'in one country'. Any group that attempts to develop a political line confined to national questions is inevitably doomed to sectarian degeneration."* <sup>37</sup> This statement is particularly relevant today in a world characterised by global conflicts and wars!

### **Conclusion**

Let us conclude our essay by summarising its main findings in form of a few theses.

1. The slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* arose in the context of World War I, a devastating clash between imperialist Great Powers. It was explicitly directed against imperialist governments which were in conflict with rivals.

2. The meaning of the slogan, as understood by the Marxist classics, can be summarised that the working class in such imperialist countries must under all conditions remain politically independent of the ruling class. It must not lend any support to the political, economic, military, diplomatic and ideological efforts of the bourgeoisie

as these are part of its Great Power policy. The working class must oppose all forms of "national unity" and wage the struggle for its interests without considering its consequences for the imperialist state. It should approach an imperialist war as an opportunity to weaken the ruling class and eventually to overthrow it. It is essential that socialists combat against all variations of chauvinism and imperialist patriotism. Workers have nothing in common with "their" national bourgeoisie but everything in common with migrants and with the workers and oppressed in other countries.

3. The slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* does not mean that the imperialist rival of "our" bourgeoisie is a "lesser evil" or even an ally in the class struggle. This is a caricature which the social-patriotic supporters of the imperialist war 1914-18 used for slandering Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Marxists always categorically refused lend support to any imperialist power – the domestic as well as the foreign. Today, many Stalinists, populists and centrists in Western countries positively pick up this idea and claim adherence to the slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* ... by supporting Russian and Chinese imperialism or by claiming it would be the "lesser evil" compared to NATO. As a matter of fact, such a caricature is nothing but a social-imperialist distortion of the anti-imperialist essence of such slogan.

4. The slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* must not be applied in a semi-colonial country which is defending itself against imperialist aggression. This slogan is only relevant in reactionary wars, i.e. wars in which socialists intransigently oppose both sides and advocate their defeat. It does not apply in just wars where one camp is waging a progressive liberation struggle (a national liberation war, a civil war of the workers, a revolutionary war of a workers state). The reason is simple: in such a war, the main enemy is the imperialist resp. reactionary aggressor – not the leadership of the own country.

5. Hence, it is impermissible for Marxists to refuse supporting a semi-colonial country defending itself against an imperialist aggression under the pretext that the "own" bourgeoisie would support this country. This is another caricature of the slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* which effectively only aids the imperialist invader! Lenin and Trotsky emphasised repeatedly that it is nearly unavoidable that Great Powers try to exploit difficulties of their rival (difficulties like the resistance of an oppressed people). It does not follow at all from this that Marxists have the right to refuse supporting the liberation struggle of such a semi-colonial country! Socialists have to differentiate between the legitimate struggle of an oppressed people (which they must support irrespective of the approach of their "own" bourgeoisie) and the inter-imperialist rivalry (where they must support neither one nor the other Great Power).

6. Finally, the slogan *"The Main Enemy Is At Home"* must not be misused as an excuse for national narrow-mindedness. Many opportunists use this principle as a pretext to limit themselves to problems of the domestic class struggle and "forget" – or better don't care – about a concrete analysis of global conflicts and the international class struggle. Such "laziness" spares them to develop clear positions on these issues ... which makes it easier for such national narrow-minded opportunists to build alli-

ances with social-imperialist forces! In short, such national narrow-mindedness can only but aid social-imperialism!

7. The struggle for a consistent program of internationalism and anti-imperialism requires the intransigent struggle against all forms of social-chauvinism. It requires first and foremost the systematic work towards the creation of a world party of socialist revolution. It is such an organisation which can conduct such a systematic struggle and which can lead the working class towards global socialist revolution – the only way to end imperialist wars and exploitation and to open the era of peace and prosperity!

### Footnotes

1 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 100 RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and the current NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. In particular we refer to the 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/>

2 For the RCIT's position on the Taiwan Strait Crisis see: Taiwan: Pelosi Visit Might Provoke War between the U.S. and China. Down with both imperialist Great Powers, for a policy of Revolutionary Defeatism! 1 August 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/taiwan-pelosi-visit-might-provoke-war-between-the-u-s-and-china/>; see also The Coming Inter-Imperialist War on Taiwan. Revolutionary Defeatism against both Great Powers – the U.S. as well as China! 10 October 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-coming-inter-imperialist-war-on-taiwan/>; Michael Pröbsting: China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet? A Theoretical Question with Very Practical Consequences! RCIT Pamphlet, 22 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-imperialist-power-or-not-yet/>

3 For an extensive elaboration of the Marxist program of revolutionary defeatism and defensism see two books 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/>; 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, 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>, see in particular chapter 12 and 13.

4 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/>; Russia: An Imperialist Power or a "Non-Hegemonic Empire in Gestation"? (Reply to Claudio

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5 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 "Chinese Imperialism and the World Economy", 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/10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6\\_179-1](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6_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/>.

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13 We note, as an aside, that this task is different in semi-colonial, oppressed countries. Here anti-imperialist patriotism against any Great Power is not only legitimate but also progressive.

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30 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Ukraine War and the Second Sino-Japanese War: A Historical Analogy. The dual tactic of Marxists in the Ukraine War today draws on the approach of their predecessors in the war between China and Japan in 1937-41, 10 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-second-sino-japanese-war-a-historical-analogy/>

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## 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



## ISA: A Kautsky-Type of International

By Nao Hong (shelthey), RCIT IEC member, 28 July 2022

Lately, comrade Pröbsting has exposed several internationals and Stalinists for their politics of class collaboration with Russia under different guises of “lesser-evilism”. Nevertheless, in addition to correct pointing out the nature of parties like KKE, RKRK, and IMT [1], there are also different branches of social-imperialist internationals. Such internationals on one hand declare the same politics as them but national sections take a correct position in spite of wrong international leadership views. Example of such international is a historical split from CWI - *International Socialist Alternative* and their sections in Russia and Ukraine.

### No weapons to the Ukraine Resistance?

While the Russian and Ukrainian sections of ISA (*“Socialist Alternative”*) take a correct position, calling for military supply, attacking revisionists, and “neutralist” with its members heroically even taking part in national resistance like in Ukraine, [2] it seems that their international leadership takes a different stance. They wrote a lengthy contribution of analyzing the conflict (*“Five Months After the Invasion of Ukraine”*) which has been published on the main page of their website as well as in the latest issue of their theoretical journal.

However, there is not a single word acknowledging the position of their Russian comrades and their differences with the ISA leadership! Reading this text, it is evident that the ISA has even hardened its explicit opposition against any military support to the Ukraine Resistance which it denounces as “pro-NATO escalation”.

*“ISA is totally opposed to all the imperialist powers. Ukraine today faces a long drawn out war of attrition. Zelensky’s approach is to demand more and more weapons from the west, hoping militarily to push Russia out from Donbas. If this was to succeed, it would only be at the cost of a massive level of casualties, and a vast destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and workplaces. It would likely require a much more direct intervention by NATO precipitating a much wider conflict. This would leave Ukraine completely dependent on Western imperialism, which itself could at any time change its approach to demand unacceptable concessions from Ukraine. The reality is that the Ukrainian people in this situation face a choice, either to end up as vassals of Russia, or of Western imperialism. Unless, of course, the working-class, in defending itself from Russian occupation, can develop new methods of struggle relying on working class solidarity.”* [3]

Is the ISA leadership blind to the destruction brought by Russia? Is the ISA ignoring the fact that Russia is already erasing cities and civilians not to speak causing massacres!?? How can sending NATO weaponry make it worse and take more lives? In their pacifist ramble, ISA stands not as a consistent defender of the oppressed but as shameless pacifists.

### A critical “give up” to modern Tenno

Let us make a historical analogy. Would the ISA also have opposed that the U.S. army sent provisions to the Chinese

resistance against the Japanese invaders in World War II? Would they also have said that this is an “escalation which would only kill more people”??? If so, they would probably ask for “good” mobilization of Chinese peasants with hoes to be thrown on Hirohito butchers because sending arms by allies would “escalate the conflict against Japan”.

Moreover, ISA is opposing mass mobilization because it is done “wrongly”. *“Nevertheless, this top-down, and in all likelihood one-off, mobilization is not the same as a mobilization based on, and organized by the working-class. By linking it, as Zelensky does, to the provision of weapons by the western imperialists means that, in effect, the imperialists would control how effective such a mobilization could be. Once reoccupied, the region would be handed back to the same owners, those responsible for exploiting Ukrainian workers and rural laborers before the war, and leaving the way open for the return of a better prepared Russian army at a later stage.”* [3]

Generously, the ISA also mentions once: *“ISA fully supports the right of the working class in Ukraine to defend itself from Russian aggression, including, of course, militarily.”* But these calls say nothing about the actual national resistance.

If we make again the analogy to 1930s: the ISA would have opposed any support for national resistance in China because it was led by the bourgeois General Chiang Kai-Shek. It would have waited for peasants and workers in China to be slaughtered by the Tenno (the Japanese Emperor) because mobilizing peasants by the bourgeoisie is bad because of its “anti-communist leadership”.

In other words: their support for Ukraine is no better than calling it to surrender.

### Kautsky strategy of subordination

If anything, the ISA’s approach to its Russian and Ukrainian comrades is reminiscent of the Second International during World War I. During this conflict, Karl Kautsky called every section to adapt to its own national strategy while, at the same time, the German section completely surrendered to the Kaiser’s imperialism.

In modern conditions: while SA in Russia/Ukraine takes a strong defeatist position and recognizes the dual character of the conflict, European sections are pursuing a social-imperialist line in their national section’s interest subordinating Russian and Ukrainian sisters and brothers to their politics.

If we go further, we can see how it is even more cynical. In the past months, major ISA websites published several articles, mostly written by the international leadership, with the same positions of de facto “dual defeatism” without a single word from comrades in Russia or Ukraine! It is even more absurd that RCIT has internationally spread informative interviews with Ukrainian ISA comrades while ISA sections in other parts of the world simply ignore them!

We have to ask if the ISA works for its comrades or if they are just using SA in Russia and Ukraine as cannon fodder to defend its positions internationally? Sure, if even Western comrades disagree, they could at least have made it known what their Russian and Ukrainian comrades



thought about Russia's war in the Ukraine!

In other words, ISA treats SA in Eastern Europe as its own "puppets" to present to the Western left how they hold their positions and having people in war-driven territories supporting them, totally ignoring Russian and Ukrainian comrades' criticism! This is indeed the Second International strategy with XXI century cynicism!

### Can international socialist organizations have different positions on the nature of imperialist powers and wars?

Comrades would ask why it is important to have consistency in positions. Surely, every person or section can have some difference on that and its positions.

In general, and in itself, it is true. However, imperialism is a global system of nations and their unequal position in the world. While we recognize this difference and every national section adapts to the situation locally, it is important to have analytical and programmatic unity on the most important conflicts in the current world situation like wars, revolutions, civil wars. Without such a unity, comrades in the ISA could end up in a situation where the Russian or Ukrainian sections fight against Putin's invasion while their comrades in the EU or USA try to boycott arms deliveries which their comrades in the Ukraine desperately need!

It was said during the years 1914-18 that Kautsky and

Plekhanov were definitely enemies but that they would shake each other's hand after the end of the war. It is clear that comrades could find themselves in a similar situation where ISA sections in the U.S. and Russia call each other traitors and social-imperialists and, after the end of the war, they would continue their politics in the same international! Thus, ISA would behave like a body where the left and right hands beat own body to death but declare themselves in unity and agreement!

Clearly, such a situation in the ISA (as well as other international organizations) is absurd and cannot be considered as a truly functional international socialist organization. From the RCIT, we call comrades to split from such an unhealthy and cynical organization to build a true international with a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist program!

### Footnotes

[1] <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/russia-and-the-theory-of-lesser-evil-imperialism/>

[2] For instance, readers can be referred to my interview with SA member in Ukraine to grasp views of comrades in Russia and Ukraine: <https://telegra.ph/Intervyu-s-ukrain-skim-socialistom-na-sluzhbe-v-zone-Operacii-obedinen-nyh-sil-OOS-05-04>

[3] <https://internationalsocialist.net/en/2022/07/war-and-its-consequences>

## Books of the RCIT

### 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

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *THE GREAT ROBBERY OF THE SOUTH*. The book's subtitle is: *Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital*. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. The book is in English-language. It has 15 chapters, 448 pages and includes 139 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is *Michael Pröbsting* who is the International Secretary of the RCIT.

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He shows that the relationship between the small minority of rich capitalist countries and the huge majority of mankind living in the semi-colonial world forms one of the most important elements of the imperialist world system we are living in. The Great Robbery of the South shows that the past decades have been a complete confirmation of the validity of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its programmatic conclusions. *The Great Robbery of the South* demonstrates the important changes in the relationship between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Using comprehensive material (including 139 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that never before

has such a big share of the world capitalist value been produced in the South. Never before have the imperialist monopolies been so dependent on the super-exploitation of the semi-colonial world. Never before has migrant labor from the semi-colonial world played such a significant role for the capitalist value production in the imperialist countries. Never before has the huge majority of the world working class lived in the South – outside of the old imperialist metropolises.

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future. Order your copy NOW! \$20 / £13 / €15 plus p+p (21\$ for US and international, £9 for UK, €10 for Europe)

