



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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Ukraine War: Liberation Struggle & Inter-Imperialist Rivalry

COVID Counterrevolution & Fertility Rate

General Elections in Nigeria * Greece: Social-Patriotic KKE

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.87, March 2023

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Picture on the cover: Ukrainian refugees protesting against the war, 26 February 2022 (Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Russian_invasion_of_Ukraine#/media/File:We_Stand_with_Ukraine_2022_Helsinki_-_Finland_\(51906158420\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Russian_invasion_of_Ukraine#/media/File:We_Stand_with_Ukraine_2022_Helsinki_-_Finland_(51906158420).jpg))

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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COVID Counterrevolution and Fertility Rate

Comparing China and Sweden provides telling results about the devastating consequences of the Lockdown policy

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 9.2.2023

When the COVID pandemic began three years ago, it was only the RCIT and few other authentic Marxists (like *Convergencia Socialista* in Argentina which later joined the RCIT) who understood that the policy of Lockdown and emergency regimes represented a reactionary attack of the ruling class. We explained that the authoritarian policy of capitalist governments was not primarily motivated by considerations of public health but rather an instrument to expand chauvinism and state bonapartist control over the population.

Hence, in contrast to numerous reformist and centrist organisations, the RCIT characterized the reactionary Lockdown policy as *COVID Counterrevolution* and opposed it from early February 2020 onwards. We advocated a health-orientated socialist response to the pandemic¹ and a strategy of popular uprising in defence of social and democratic rights.²

As a result of spontaneous mass protests most Western governments were forced to retreat in the first half of the year 2022 and to lift many measures. By the end of this year, China – the initiator and bulwark of the draconic Zero COVID policy – was shattered by an unprecedented wave of demonstrations. This uprising – the largest protests since the revolutionary events at the Tiananmen Square in summer 1989 – forced the Xi regime to retreat.³

Collapse of China's birth rate since 2020

One year ago, we published an article in which we analysed the consequences of China's Zero COVID for the country's demographic development. Using official figures of China's authorities, we did show that mortality was increasing despite all the pandemic measures. At the same time, the number of babies born had extremely declined.⁴

Recently published data strongly confirm these trends. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the national population was 1,411 million by the end of 2022. This represented a decrease of 0.85 million over that at the end of 2021. While the number of births was 9.56 million, the number of deaths was 10.41 million.⁵

It is the first time that deaths have outnumbered births in China since the famine in 1959-61 provoked by the so-called "Great Leap Forward" – a failed economic experiment

of the Stalinist dictatorship led by Mao Zedong. In this period, the country lost 35 million people, according to former Xinhua reporter Yang Jisheng, who has researched the topic for more than a decade.⁶

It is true that China has experienced a long-term trend of declining birth rate. However, as Table 1 shows this trend has dramatically accelerated since the beginning of the draconic Zero COVID policy. If we take the birth rate of 2019 – the year before the pandemic – as a starting point, we see that this rate had declined by 18.2% in 2020, by 27.8% in 2021 and by 35% in 2022. This is a gigantic drop by any standards!

We see the same trend if we look at China's total fertility rate, i.e. the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime. This rate was fairly flat at an average about 1.66 between 1991 and 2017. However, it fell to 1.28 in 2020 and 1.15 in 2021. And according to calculations from Professor Wei Chen at the Renmin University of China, the 2022 fertility rate was at just 1.08.⁸

Such a collapse of birth rate reflects that China is a society which is increasingly depressed and pessimistic in its outlook for the future. This is hardly surprising: who wants to live in a society where people are regularly put under curfew and surveilled day-by-day where they move, what they do and whom they meet?!

Wang Feng, a professor of sociology at the University of California at Irvine who specializes in China's demographics, presents a doom outlook. "In the long run, we are going to see a China the world has never seen. It will no longer be the young, vibrant, growing population. We will start to appreciate China, in terms of its population, as an old and shrinking population."⁹

Stable fertility rate in Sweden

It is not without interest to compare China's demographic development with that of Sweden. As it is well known, and we have pointed to this in various articles, Sweden was one of the few countries which did not impose a Lockdown policy and similar bonapartist measures during the pandemic. The bourgeois public opinion around the globe furiously denounced Sweden for this and claimed that its policy would "act with reckless disregard for the life of its citizens". As we demonstrated, this was utter nonsense

Table 1. Birth Rate in China from 2015 to 2022⁷

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1.199	1.357	1.264	1.086	1.041	0.852	0.752	0.677

Table 2: Total Fertility Rate of Women in Sweden, 2000-2021¹¹

2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019	2020	2021
1.54	1.65	1.75	1.85	1.91	1.98	1.90	1.88	1.85	1.75	1.70	1.66	1.67

and, in fact, Sweden came out of the pandemic better than most other countries!¹⁰

If we look at total fertility rate of women in Sweden since 2000, we see an oscillation between about 1,5 and 2. If we take the figures for the years of the pandemic 2020 and 2021 (the figures for 2022 have not been released yet), we see that they were only slightly below the level of 2019: 1.70 (2019), 1.66 (2020) and 1.67 (2021). (See Table 2)

What a contrast to the collapse of the birth rate in China in the years of the COVID Counterrevolution! In summary, we see that the Zero COVID policy had extremely negative consequences for China's society while countries like Sweden which refused to implement the authoritarian Lockdown policy fared much better!

What a shame that nearly all so-called "socialists" supported ("critically" or not so critically) the bourgeois Lockdown policy! In some cases, reformist parties helped to implement these repressive measures as part of a capitalist government coalition (e.g. in Spain, Italy, South Africa). Various self-proclaimed Trotskyist organizations supported the policy of long-lasting mass quarantine of the population and only demanded better financial compensation. In many cases, they criticized the bourgeois governments not for their anti-democratic Lockdown policy but for not imposing it longer and more draconically! Worse, in many cases, such "Trotskyist" groups even denounced mass protests against the Lockdown and Green Pass policy as "reactionary" – like e.g. the spontaneous mass demonstrations in Europe and other regions or the dockers strike against the "Green Pass" system in Italy in autumn 2021.¹²

Socialists need to learn the lessons of the COVID Counterrevolution and decisively break with any support for chauvinist state bonapartism!

Footnotes

1 RCIT: A Revolutionary Action Program to fight COVID-19! Workers and Oppressed: Don't trust the State of the Rich and Powerful! Trust only Yourselves! April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/health-program-covid19/>; see also: ALS: A Marxist approach to the international mobilizations against the authoritarian health restrictions, February 2022, https://www.thecommunists.net/home/espaa%3%B1ol/una-aproximaci%C3%B3n-marxista-a-las-movilizaciones-internacionales-contras-restricciones-sanitarias-autoritarias/#anker_1

2 The RCIT has published more than 100 pamphlets, essays, articles and statements plus a book on the COVID Counterrevolution which are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to two RCIT Manifestos: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>; "Green Pass" & Compulsory Vaccinations: A New Stage in the COVID Counterrevolution. Down with the chauvinist-bonapartist police & surveillance state – defend democratic rights! No to health policy in the service of the capitalist monopolies – expand the public health sector under workers and popular control! 29 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/green-pass-compulsory-vaccinations-a-new-stage-in-the-covid-counterrevolution/>; In addition, we draw attention to our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>.

3 The RCIT has published the following documents on the recent mass protests in China: Popular Rebellion against Lockdowns and "Zero COVID", <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-popular-rebellion-against-lockdowns-and-zero-covid/>; COVID-19: What Did Authentic Marxists Say about China's Lockdown Policy in Spring 2020? In contrast to the Lockdown Left, the RCIT opposed chauvinist state bonapartism

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution

What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle

In *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* Michael Pröbsting analyses the dramatic events in spring 2020 which have opened a new historic era. A triple crisis has shocked the world. The Third Depression has begun, characterized by a devastating economic slump of the capitalist world economy which is certainly no less dramatic than the crisis which started in 1929.

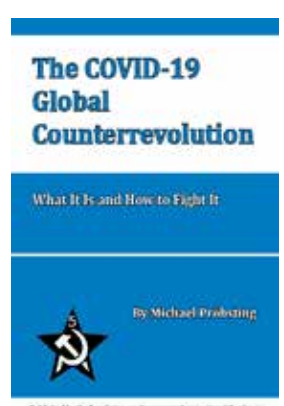
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

And finally, the world faces COVID-19 – a pandemic which endangers many lives and which is exploited by the ruling classes in order to spread fear, to deflect attention from the capitalist causes of the economic crisis and to justify the turn towards chauvinist state bonapartism.

The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution also shows that large sectors of the reformist workers movement and the

so-called left fail to understand the meaning of this triple crisis. Similar to the situation in 1914 after the beginning of World War I we can observe a gigantic wave of opportunist capitulation by many self-proclaimed socialists as they support or at least do not denounce the global lockdown and the suppression of democratic rights which the ruling classes are imposing in the name of combat against the pandemic. *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* offers a Marxist analysis of this historic crisis and elaborates a revolutionary perspective for the struggles ahead.

The book contains an introduction and 6 chapters plus an appendix (176 pages) and includes 5 figures and a diagram.



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4 Michael Pröbsting: China’s Demographic Development and the Zero COVID Policy. The latest official reports about China’s birth and death rates destroy the reactionary conception of the Lockdown Left, 18 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-s-demographic-development-and-the-zero-covid-policy/>

5 National Bureau of Statistics of China: National Economy Withstood Pressure and Reached a New Level in 2022, 17 January 2023, http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202301/t20230117_1892094.html

6 Jeff Pao: China’s demographic timebomb starts ticking down, 17 January 2023, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/01/chinas-demographic-timebomb-starts-ticking-down/>

7 The figures for 2015-2020 are taken from the China Statistical Yearbook 2021 <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2021/index.htm> and the CEIC: Population: Birth Rate: China, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-birth-by-region/population-birth-rate> (accessed on 18 January 2022); The figure for 2021 is taken from Orange Wang and Luna Sun: China’s population up less than half a million in 2021, births plunge again as cri-

sis deepens, South China Morning Post, 17 January 2022, https://www.scmp.com/economy/economic-indicators/article/3163617/china-population-increases-14126-billion-2021-births?utm_source=rss_feed; The figure for 2022 is taken from the above mentioned press release by the National Bureau of Statistics of China.

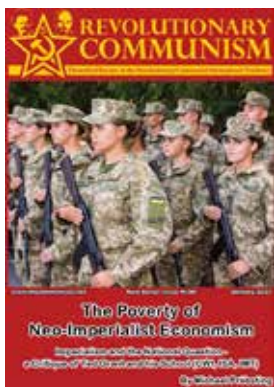
8 Xiujian Peng: China’s population shrink in big picture perspective, 19 January 2023 <https://asiatimes.com/2023/01/chinas-population-shrink-in-big-picture-perspective/>

9 Quoted in Alexandra Stevenson and Zixu Wang: China’s Population Falls, Heralding a Demographic Crisis, New York Times, 16 January 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/16/business/china-birth-rate.html>

10 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: Excess Mortality and Mass Vaccination in Europe ... and Some Unpleasant Facts. In all age groups below 75 years, more people have died in 2021 than in the previous year. The reason for this is not the virus, 18 December 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-excess-mortality-and-mass-vaccination-in-europe/>; by the same author: COVID-19: Sweden’s Total Mortality in 2020. Once again, the figures demonstrate that this is a serious but not unprecedented pandemic, 23 January 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-sweden-s-total-mortality-in-2020-compared-with-past-years/>

11 SBE Statistical Database: Total fertility rate by sex and year, https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101H/FruktksamhetSum/table/tableViewLayout1/; see also SBE: Demographic analysis: Childbearing in corona times, 7 April 2022, <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-projections/demographic-analysis-demog/pong/statistical-news/demographic-analysis-childbearing-in-corona-times/>

12 We have dealt with the pro-Lockdown policy of these organisation in various articles. For references see the footnotes in the above-mentioned article “Protests against “Zero COVID” in China: An Embarrassment for the Lockdown Left”.



Publications of the RCIT

The Poverty of Neo-Imperialist Economism

Imperialism and the National Question -
a Critique of Ted Grant and his School (CWI, ISA, IMT)

By Michael Pröbsting, January 2023

Introduction * Part I. The Grantites’ main flaws on imperialism and national oppression * 1. Confusion on imperialism and the class character of states * 2. Failure to recognise the nature of national oppression * 3. Refusal to support liberation struggles as they take place * Part II. The class basis and the theoretical tradition of Grantite revisionism * 4. Strategic orientation to the labour bureaucracy, Sanders, Chavez, etc. * 5. The Grantites’ utopia: reforming the capitalist state and the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism * 6. Are the police “workers in uniform”? * 7. Woods against Lenin’s concept of revolutionary defeatism * 8. The Marxist theory of antagonistic contradictions and the inevitability of their violent explosion (and their gradualist distortion by Grantism) * 9. Excuse: Comparing imperialist economism in the past and present (Bukharin/Pjatakov/Radek versus Grant/Woods/Taaffe) * Part III. Some objections and Marxist answers * 10. Undermining the unity of the working class? * 11. “The workers would not understand this” * 12. “But the national question can not be solved under capitalism!” * 13. Are national liberation wars doomed to become “proxy wars” in the age of inter-imperialist Cold War? * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 28 pages, A4 Format

What Can We Learn from the Popular Rebellion against Lockdowns and “Zero-COVID” in China?

An Open Letter to the comrades of LIT-CI

By the International Bureau of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14 December 2022

Dear comrades of LIT-CI,
We send you warmest greetings from the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT)!

In the last weeks, you published several articles on the mass protests in China against the Lockdown and Zero-COVID policy imposed by the Stalinist-capitalist Xi regime.¹ We strongly welcome these articles as they reflect large coincidence with the RCIT's position on this issue.² Likewise, we appreciate your reference to the anti-pandemic health policy of the Bolsheviks, something which we also did in our book on the COVID policy published in April 2020.³

It would be great if we could engage in practical collaboration in solidarity work with the popular uprising of the Chinese masses as it constitutes the most important wave of protests since the Tiananmen Square rebellion in 1989.

However, while we welcome your position in support of the anti-Lockdown protests in China, we can not hide our astonishment about your silence about the Lockdown and Zero-COVID policy of the ruling class in the rest of the world. This is even more surprising since this authoritarian policy has been a key issue of the world situation from spring 2020 until early 2022.

In our opinion, such silence is not justified. Even more, we think that it is high time to make an honest balance sheet of your COVID policy. You are, like us, against the Lockdown and Zero-COVID policy of China's Xi regime. Good! But did you oppose this policy in the past three years? Or to put it more directly: why did you support the Lockdown policy around the globe in the past years? Is the enforced quarantine for millions of workers and poor bad in China but good in Latin America and Europe? Surely, you will agree that such a position is totally self-contradictory!

We ask you to take a critical look at your key documents on the COVID crisis. You support the demands of the Chinese masses for an end of the Lockdown policy. But in the last years you sharply denounced governments which attempted to end the Lockdown policy because of popular opposition! You will surely remember that you demanded in your key document on the COVID crisis: “safe quarantine, with housing and full wages for all workers”.⁴ Comrades, let's be clear, this meant that you called for a Lockdown for all workers (“with housing and full wages”).

In the same document (as well as many others), you attacked governments which in your opinion were lifting the Lockdown policy “too early”. “Contrary to what governments say, the pandemic is not under control. On the contrary, it is getting worse worldwide. There are many more infected and killed by COVID than official figures admit. Governments want to hide their absolute inability to preserve workers' lives. They want to justify the end of partial quarantines worldwide. (...) Now, European governments have ended partial quarantines to save companies, as in Italy, Spain, and France. This directly exposes workers to a new wave of contamination by the virus.”

In another article, you did not only justify the capitalist Lockdown policy but even suggested that this would be beneficial for creating working-class solidarity! “To prevent the spread of COVID-19, governments have enacted lockdown measures, like in Spain and Italy, and others in the US have encouraged non-essential workers to stay home and for people to practice social distancing. These efforts have led to the rapid development of solidarity and mutual aid networks across the globe.”⁵

You rightly denounce the ultra-reactionary Zero-COVID policy of the Chinese dictatorship. But you yourself published a kind of programmatic manifesto on your international website which called for support of the Zero-COVID policy! You yourself referred to the supposed success of countries which implemented this draconic policy (like China)! “However, this virus has shown to be far more devastating than flu, and with emerging mutations, the only sensible policy is one that aims for elimination, that is ‘zero-COVID-19’. Some countries aiming for zero-COVID-19 are producing more positive results than trying to ‘live with the virus’.” You demanded that people should remain under lockdown – i.e. de facto imprisoned in their homes – until the pandemic would be over! “No return to work without guaranteed safety: a zero COVID-19 strategy”⁶

Comrades, we welcome you support for the mass protests in China. But allow us to say that it does not demand much courage to oppose the popular rebellion against the Lockdown and Zero-COVID policy in China today. Since the masses defeated this policy first in Europe and other countries in early 2022 and now in China, the global bourgeoisie has beaten a retreat. Hardly anyone advocates the Lockdown anymore and even the most fanatical supporter of the Zero-COVID campaign have become silent.

But, comrades, what did you do in the past three years? Why did you support the reactionary Lockdown and Zero-COVID policy since March 2020?

Comrades of LIT-CI, it is urgent that you start a self-critical discussion about the mistakes of the last years. This should not be a self-centred discussion about the past but one which focuses on drawing the lessons from your experiences. This is essential because, be assured, the next “natural” catastrophes will come and then, the ruling class will again call for police state methods in order to “deal” with social and health problems. If you don't learn from past mistakes, you are condemned to repeat such in the future!

The RCIT – as well as our comrades in *Convergencia Socialista* (Argentina) with whom we fused in summer 2021 – has opposed the COVID policy of the capitalist governments from the very beginning. We insisted that such a pandemic had to be combatted with the expansion of social and health programs under workers and popular control. Since early February 2020, we insisted that the bourgeois governments' strategy is not focused on health policy but rather on expanding the powers of the bonapartist state apparatus against the masses. In response, we advocated a

policy calling the masses not “to stay home” (as the Lockdown Left did) but rather to disrupt the Lockdown policy and to fight in workplaces and on the streets against the anti-social and anti-democratic attacks of the governments around the globe.⁷

Comrades, of LIT-CI, we collaborated this year in the solidarity work with the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people against Putin’s invasion.⁸ We should collaborate now in support of the Chinese masses. And it would be great if we could work together in the future when the bourgeoisie wages its next bonapartist attacks against the masses under the pretext of a “health” policy.

The RCIT would welcome a comradely exchange with you on these issues in an appropriate format which could best serve such a purpose.

Footnotes

1 We refer to these LIT-CI articles: Chinese dictatorship backs down on COVID-19 policy, <https://litci.org/en/chinese-dictatorship-backs-down-on-covid-19-policy/>; Protesters defy the government in a turbulent week for China, <https://litci.org/en/china-is-living-through-turbulent-days-of-defiance-against-the-government/>; China is living through turbulent days of defiance against the government, <https://litci.org/en/china-is-living-through-turbulent-days-of-defiance-against-the-government/>; Protestas obreras y populares desafían la dictadura en China, <https://litci.org/es/protestas-obreras-y-populares-desafian-la-dictadura-en-china/>

2 The RCIT has published the following documents on the recent mass protests in China: Popular Rebellion against Lockdowns and “Zero COVID”, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-popular-rebellion-against-lockdowns-and-zero-covid/>; Protests against “Zero COVID” in China: An Embarrassment for the Lockdown Left, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/china-protests-and-lockdown-left/>; China Protests: The Anti-Lockdown Program of the University Students in Beijing, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-protests-university-students-against-lockdowns/>; Que el FITu y otros partidos de izquierda pongan en pie un Comité de Solidaridad con el pueblo chino que lucha contra la dictadura del PCCh, <https://convergenciadecombate.blogspot.com/2022/12/que-el-fitu-y-otros-partidos-de.html>; Defensores de cuarentenas y pases sanitarios apoyan la lucha de chinos contra cuarentenas ¿Doble vara o una realidad que liquidó sus argumentos?, <https://convergenciadecombate.blogspot.com/2022/11/defensores-de-cuarentenas-y-pases.html>;

3 See chapter „Famine and epidemics: some lessons from Lenin and the Bolsheviks“ in our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A

Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>.

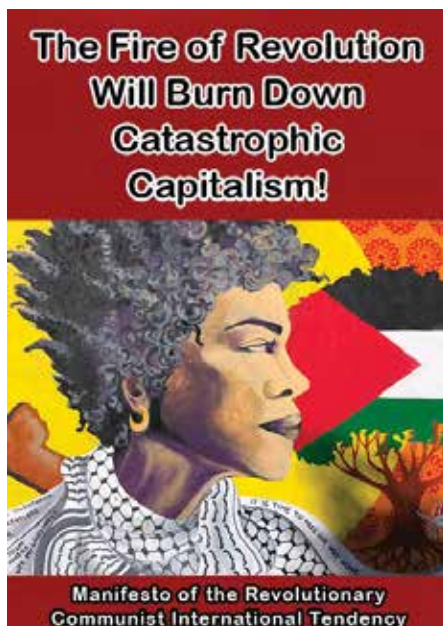
4 LIT-CI: Emergency Program Against the Pandemic and the Economic Crisis, 11 July 2020, <https://litci.org/en/emergency-program-against-the-pandemic-and-the-economic-crisis/>

5 LIT-CI: Organizing During Crisis: Building Working Class Power Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic, 3 April 2020, <https://litci.org/en/organizing-during-crisis-building-working-class-power-amidst-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

6 LIT-CI: Britain: Emergency Programme to defeat COVID, 10 March 2021, <https://litci.org/en/britain-emergency-programme-to-defeat-covid/>

7 The RCIT has analysed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February 2020 we have published more than 100 pamphlets, essays, articles and statements plus a book which are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to two RCIT Manifestos: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>; “Green Pass” & Compulsory Vaccinations: A New Stage in the COVID Counterrevolution. Down with the chauvinist-bonapartist police & surveillance state – defend democratic rights! No to health policy in the service of the capitalist monopolies – expand the public health sector under workers and popular control! 29 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/green-pass-compulsory-vaccinations-a-new-stage-in-the-covid-counterrevolution/>; In addition, we draw attention to our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>.

8 See e.g. Ukraine War: Joint Statement of UIT-CI, LIT-CI and RCIT, 13 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-on-ukraine-war-13-3-2022/>; see also <https://uit-ci.org/index.php/2022/03/14/ukraine-international-appeal-by-various-organisations/?lang=en>; see also RCIT: Convoy and Conference on MayDay 2022 in Ukraine, 4 May 2022, https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/international-workers-aid/#anker_1; for an overview of our solidarity activities see <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/international-workers-aid/>; Ukraine War: Interview with CSP-Conlutas (Brazil) on International Workers Solidarity, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-na-to-russia-conflict/#anker_32



New Program of the RCIT

Manifesto for the Liberation Struggle

Adopted at the III. World Congress of the RCIT in April 2021

- * **Introductory Note**
- * **A New Era of Counterrevolutionary Offensive and Revolutionary Upheavals**
- * **The Capitalist State Monster Attacks Democracy! Defeat Chauvinism and Bonapartism!**
- * **Great Power Rivalry and Imperialist Aggression in the South: Turn the Guns against the Lords of Power and Money!**
- * **Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership: How to Organize and How to Fight?**

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

Perspectives on the General Elections in Nigeria

By Raimi Akegbejo, *Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (RCIT Section in Nigeria)* 17.2.2023

1. General elections in Nigeria kick off in a matter of days. The developments surrounding the elections proceed in the midst of the zig-zags of a capitalist system in revolutionary crises. Steeped in the period following the economic meltdown/crunch of 2008/09, political unrest has peaked on every continent since 2019 but not before the upswing in popular uprisings pushed the world ruling class to adopt bonapartism (as opposed to neoliberalism). This was the general context that led to the emergence of president Muhammadu Buhari in 2015. Faced with brewing civil unrest; an economy buckling under the weight of imperialist exploitation and the burgeoning southward advance of the Salafist northern forces. Only a former military Head of State and potentate of northern conservatism, can hold the center.

2. Today and 8 years later, these factors have worsened disproportionately. Nigeria's neo-colonial economy has been battered by consecutive blows from the 2nd Great Depression which began in 2019; the COVID-19 Lockdowns and travel bans through 2020 to 2021; and the invasion of the Ukraine by Russia since February 2022. The settler colonialist structure is now more than ever frail and shows signs of near collapse as the asymmetric war of the Salafist Fulani militias enters a crescendo. Add to these the smoldering embers of the EndSARS protests of 2020 which may spark a conflagration of mass insurrection at any turn. All of these dramatic changes combine to leave the settler colonialist Northern hegemon, the gate keepers of neo-colonial Nigeria, isolated and weak. Even their imperialist masters have sidelined them while they are in a fierce rivalry with the southern factions of the Nigerian ruling class.

3. Before the last quarter of 2022, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the presidential candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) had the highest chance of emergence since the incumbent government has all the resources to rig the elections in favour of their candidate. However it seems that the scales may have tipped in favour of the most popular candidate, Peter Obi, with tacit/indirect support from the northern faction of the ruling class. This they did through the naira redesign policy which saw millions of people deposit their cash money in banks but were left stranded as they could not withdraw the newly redesigned notes at the same banks.¹

4. This continues to spark pockets of protests in the previous weeks in different states across the country.² In short, it was a recapitulation of the scenes at commercial banks in Lebanon last year September as some went to the banks with machetes while others reportedly stripped naked in the banking halls in protest. Alongside this policy of cash drought that has exacerbated hardship for Nigerians to level indescribable through writing, is the fuel scarcity that has spiked the price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) in the country.³ Even now the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria has issued a warning to commercial banks that the old notes will no longer serve as legal tender and fuelling stations have begun rejecting the old notes.⁴

5. It is true that one of the prime motives for this policy of currency redesign is the plummeting value of the naira

against the Dollar. At the parallel market the naira already sells at about 700 to the dollar. The Buhari regime seeks to improve the strength of the naira against the dollar by making it scarce. In other words it is a mechanical drive towards the imposition of the so-called cashless policy where transactions would now be done through electronic means so as to increase demand for the naira. This has been the recurring feature in the monetary and banking sectors of other semi-colonial countries this period. Just remember that a similar thing occurred in Lebanon as earlier referenced.⁵ Last year, Ghana was declared bankrupt by official data leading to a performative outcry from Akufo-Addo, the Ghanaian president, for reparations from former colonisers.

6. But the timing of this policy amongst other things raises lots of questions. Questions which are easily explained through Buhari's bonapartism but even this bonapartism cannot be properly situated without his origin from the core-north — a basis for his history as a "disciplinarian" military Head of State in the '80's. The same "strong character" which makes him loathe Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a crime lord especially one from an ethnonation down south. So while acknowledging how the economic regression may have spurred such a policy, it is the chauvinism of the northern faction of the ruling class that explains why a regime would impose such a self destructive policy when the elections are just weeks away.

7. The South Western faction of the ruling class correctly recognises this as an attack on Tinubu's candidacy. Tinubu himself has repeatedly claimed that a cabal in Aso Rock is working to scuttle his chances of emerging as president.⁶ The speaker of the House of representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, another stalwart in the South Western faction has threatened to reconvene the Green Chamber to summon the CBN governor Godwin Emefiele.⁷

8. Even the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the main opposition until now, has not been spared by this political crises between the north-south factions of the ruling class. The so called G-5 governors of the southern states where PDP holds power have refused to support the party's presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar.⁸

9. Some analysts have diagnosed the currency impasse and fuel scarcity as an attempt to spark civil unrest such that the elections can be postponed while an interim government is constituted or so that a military coup can ensue.⁹ Both being ploys of the northern hegemon to withhold power. This seems unlikely as any attempt to set up an interim government or stage a coup will be fully resisted by the Southern factions of the ruling class. Moreover, there were several chances last year for them to have used their non-state auxiliaries to do this but the Buhari administration is not as tough as it is made out to be. What is more plausible is that the northern hegemon isolated, weakened and with their imperialist masters also supporting the Obi project they have bought into it.

10. Obi's presidency is better for them than the most powerful politician of Southern extraction who they can hardly control. Any of these scenarios is possible but only the latter is more practicable, the former two can lead to

mass insurrection and a civil war. It is important to point out that these perspectives are based on the present concrete conditions and may change even before the remaining days of the elections run out. Last year we stated that the embattled head of the south western ruling class had very little chances of emerging and that the northern ruling class would hold on to power by a coup; a terrorist take over or otherwise, but the situation changed in the same year and he became the front runner. However the scales have changed again and may favour the most popular candidate Peter Obi with the acquiescence of the northern ruling class. This is the rundown of the zig-zags in the interplay of ruling class schisms in a period of deepening capitalist crises with its attendant political upheaval.

The Character of Post-Election Administrations

11. It remains to be seen how effective these plots and counterplots will reflect in the general elections since the northern faction too is not totally free from or cannot come out blatantly against the Tinubu led faction. However there has been a trend of electoral victories of left populist and left reformist forces in the semi-colonial world majorly Latin America. Yet no sooner had these populist forces emerged did they get enmeshed in deep crises, first Chile and now Peru. The bourgeois populist Peter Obi who enjoys the backing of Western imperialism is sure to face the same fate should he emerge.

12. Obi's administration would be one riddled with an escalated infestation of the problems at the founding of Nigeria has a country. The asymmetric war of the Salafist Fulani is sure to expand causing unwanted consequences in its wake. The worst Obi can do about their push southward is to invite foreign (Western) mercenaries, strengthening the imperialist grip on Nigeria through a Western or otherwise military base.

In fact post-election crises may simply lead to the undoing of Obi's administration. The court ruling against Sen. Adeleke, the PDP candidate in Osun, where the electorate's (delusional) hopes of change were dashed may be proverbial of Obi's future. He may even become the Pedro

Castillo of Africa.

13. The alternative is for him to not only turn a blind eye to the economic and otherwise strengthening of the northern faction of the ruling class but to give it tacit support. Effectively, Obi's presidency will give a southern face to northern settler colonialism until they regroup properly and he is no longer needed. For this is exactly why he enjoys support from Western imperialism to keep a lid on the campaign for a free and independent Biafra thereby sustaining the neo-colonial structure of Nigeria a little while longer.

14. A Tinubu presidency will be nothing short of what his campaign trail has been. From the time of declaring his presidential ambition and through his emergence as the flag bearer of APC at the party primaries, he and the whole South Western faction of the ruling class have been in a thug of war with the northern hegemon. This would characterise his administration should he emerge as president. Both will only deepen the cataclysm that Nigeria is embroiled in.

Revolutionary Program for the Coming Period

15. Revolutionaries must join every genuine campaign against the disastrous naira redesign policy. We must call for a removal of all deadlines regarding the new-old currency swap and for the old notes to be accepted for all transactions and at the banks for deposit and withdrawal. It is possible for this or that politician/candidate to sponsor protests against the policy if they evaluate that it runs contrary to their political ambitions. Even so, given the current level of hardship and confusion in the country the element of mass discontent cannot be a limited or minute factor in any protests going forward. Moreso, the campaign against this wicked policy must lend no political support to any politician or candidate since the emergence of none of them can resolve the current crises. It goes without saying that they do not care for the people, they only want more power through which they can oppress the masses.

16. The currency swap policy shows how the banks are a tool of capitalist machinations and how important it is for



RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

Adopted at the 2nd World Congress of the RCIT in November 2017

Introduction * Foreign Exploiters – Out of Africa! * The Wealth to Those Who Create It! Economic Freedom Now! * Down with the Capitalist Dictatorships and Corrupt Pseudo-Democracies! * Organize the Workers and Oppressed for the Mass Struggle! * For a Government of Workers and Poor Peasants! For a Socialist Revolution! * For Pan-African Unity! For the United Socialist States of Africa! * For a United Front of Struggle! Overcome the Crisis of Leadership – Build a Revolutionary Party Nationally and Internationally! * Appendix

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

the banks to be under workers and poor peasant control. Finally the fuel shortage and cash drought have their roots in the neo-colonial status of Nigeria.

17. That is why revolutionaries cannot throw their lot in with any party in next week's elections which will in no way free the ethnations in Nigeria from the fetters of imperialism. Even left populist forces such as the African Action Congress (AAC) should not be lended any political support because of its strong social patriotism (left [reformist] slogans but underlying loyalty to the settler colonial neo-colonial One-Nigeria) by which it reduces the call for self-determination to mere campaign rhetorics of "restructuring".

18. Paying only lip-service to ethnic cleansing and the genocide of the Christian population that is still active in the Middle Belt,¹⁰ the strong social patriotic sympathy of the AAC has led them into an alliance with the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) another left-wing but social-chauvinist party.¹¹ Neither of these parties are willing to fight the imperialist West and their proxies, the northern hegemon. Alas, the national composition of their candidates is the same as that of the rest bourgeois parties — one southern and one northern politician.

19. We reiterate our support for all groups calling for the boycott of the elections as means to dismantle the neo-colonial constitution called Nigeria. These have been especially self-determination activists and movements for the national liberation of Southern ethnic nationalities. Most notably the Simon Ekpa (Autopilot) faction of the IPOB which is calling for Sit-At-Home boycotts in Biafra/South Eastern Nigeria. It is important to separate the correctness of such a position of boycott from the methods used to achieve it. Just like resistance to the naira swap policy where banks have attacked and set ablaze, the remonstrance of the masses sometimes takes a raw, militant and even anarchist form. The same can be said of the disagreeable methods of achieving Sit-At-Home boycotts.

20. For us the boycotts should be as a result of popular campaigns not enforced by select vigilantes. While the Sit-At-Home boycotts have been a measure of tactical retreat in times of weakness to demand the release of Nnamdi Kanu, the arrested leader of the IPOB. It to become an impediment when the masses are ready to move. However, the enforcement of Sit-At-Home boycotts has been carried out by the locals voluntarily without any supervision from the leadership of the movement. This shows the genuine nature of the struggle for self-determination amongst the masses of the South East. And as such, the boycotts must not be condemned as reactionary like many left-wing currents do. Rather such campaigns should be supported and democratically organised.

** No to Deadlines for the Currency Swap Or Use of Old Notes For Transactions! Put the Banks and Financial Institutions Under the Democratic Control of the Workers and the Popular Masses! Local Resource Control for All Minerals by the Ethnic Nations On Whose Land they Are Found!*

** For Self-Defence Militias to Stop the Genocide in the Middle Belt and parts of the South West! Defend Christians and Non-Muslims from the Salafist "Bandits" in the North and Middle Belt! Drive Out the Nigerian Military and Ebube Agu from the Southeast!*

** Join the Campaign to Boycott the Elections Led by the Southern Movements For Self Determination! Defend IPOB (Autopi-*

lot)! Protect Simon Ekpa from the Nigerian and Finnish governments!

** Freedom and Self-Determination to the Oppressed Ethnic Nationalities in the Middle Belt And South! Disband the Settler Colonial Neo-Liberal Construct Called Nigeria! The Prospective Sovereign States Must Be Founded on A Socialist Basis to be Free from Imperialist Exploitation!*

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On Russia's War Economy

Putin's escalation of militarism puts enormous strain on the country's economy

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14.12.2022

In its daily assessment of the Ukraine War, the *Institute for the Study of War* reported on 12 December that Putin "signed a law allocating over nine trillion rubles (approximately \$143 billion) for defense, security, and law enforcement for the 2023 budget. That amount is about 8 percent of Russia's 2021 gross domestic product according to the World Bank." The UK Ministry of Defence estimates that this will represent over 30% of Russia's entire 2023 budget.¹

If these figures are accurate, such increase of military spending would represent an enormous strain of Russia's economy. Let us put these figures in historical perspective.

In 1913, shortly before the beginning of World War I, Europe's Great Power spent between 3-5% of the national income for defence expenditures. (See Table 1) In other words, Putin's military spending, in relative terms, is already substantially higher than it was the case in Europe in the year before the first catastrophe of the 20th century.

The state of war preparedness of imperialist powers, which would fight each other in World War II, was more uneven in the late 1930s. Some lagged behind in the arms race while others experienced already a rapid armament process resp. were already engaged in military intervention abroad (Japan in China; Germany and Italy in the Spanish Civil War). As a result, some of these states had higher, others lower levels of military spending. (See Table 2)

In the 1960s, the high days of the Cold War with the Nuclear Missile Crisis in Cuba in 1962, the U.S. spent about 7.5-9.5% of its GDP for defence expenditures.⁴ Later, in the 1980s, this share would decline to about 5.5-6.5%.⁵ In contrast, the Cold War was a much higher burden for the Soviet Union. It spent much less for its military than the U.S. in absolute numbers but its economy was substantially smaller. Hence, the Stalinist-ruled degenerated workers state had to use about 15-17% of its annual product for defence expenditures.⁶

In summary, we see that Putin's policy of militarisation has massively increased the burden for Russia's economy. The Kremlin recognises that in order to continue its colonial policy of aggression against the Ukraine and, at the same time, to keep its global status as an imperialist Great Power, it must lay the foundation to create a war economy.⁷

Social cuts and social explosions

This process will have profound consequences. It will cause shortages in other sectors of the economy, disrupt the economic chain, and force the Putin regime to impose a draconic austerity program with massive cuts in spending in the social, health and education sectors. This will inevitably accelerate the contradictions between the ruling class and the popular masses and, sooner or later, this will result in social and political explosions.

There is no doubt that a similar process is taking place in other imperialist states like the U.S., Western Europe, China or Japan. As the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) has repeatedly emphasised, we are living in a period of capitalist decline in which all Great Powers expand their military efforts and adopt a more aggressive foreign policy – both against semi-colonial countries in the Global South as well as against their imperialist rivals.

We have recently published an article in which we emphasised the tendency to militarism and towards deepening of tensions in Russia. We also stated that this is no exception but rather a mirror of the future for other imperialist powers. "Hence, it is likely that not only Russia and the U.S. but also Western European powers, Japan as well as China will increasingly feel obliged to launch military interventions in this or that country of the Global South. Likewise, we will see an escalation of tensions and confrontations between the Great Powers themselves. (...) Such a dynamic of militarism will have profound consequences for each and every imperialist state. The ruling class will be forced to restructure their economy in order to reduce dependency on rivals or on regions which are not under their domination (the so-called "global supply chain" which bourgeois economists discuss a lot currently). They will have to massively expand their arms industry, their armed forces, etc. Furthermore, the ruling class will only be able to wage big wars or to threaten rivals if they have laid the organisational and ideological foundation for mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of troops. (...) While such a shift of ruling class policy towards bonapartism is inevitable given the deepening of capitalist crisis, an acceleration of social and political contradictions and revolutionary explosions is equally inevitable. Domestic policy in North America, Western Europe, and Japan did hardly experience any revolutionary crisis since the late 1940s. There is no doubt that such pacifist times are over and that we are heading

Table 1. Defence Expenditures as a Percentage of Net National Product, 1913²

Britain	France	Russia	Germany	Austria	Italy
3.2	4.8	5.1	3.9	3.2	5.1

Table 2. Defence Expenditures as a Percentage of National Income, 1937³

United States	Britain	France	Germany	Italy	Japan
1.5	5.7	9.1	23.5	14.5	28.2

towards a radically different future! This is why we think that Russia is a mirror of the future for all imperialist powers – in West as well as in East.”⁸

The drastic increase of Russia’s military spending confirms our analysis. The task of revolutionaries in such a period is to defend the oppressed people against imperialist aggression and, at the same time, to advocate a defeatist position against all Great Powers. Each and every crisis of an imperialist regime must be utilised in order to advance the class struggle to overthrow such regimes by an uprising of the working class and the oppressed.

In the case of the Ukraine today, this means supporting the national war of defence of the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion but opposing both camps in the inter-imperialist rivalry between Russia and NATO. We have summarised this internationalist and anti-imperialist position in the slogan: “Defend the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!”⁹

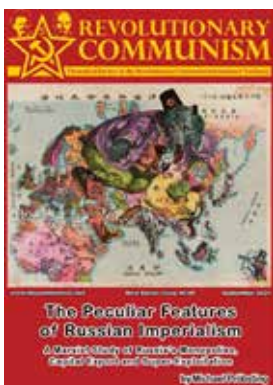
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Publications of the RCIT

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

How to Support Ukraine's Liberation War without Taking Side in the Inter-Imperialist Rivalry?

A fraternal criticism on a new LIT-CI statement and its polemic against the PTS/FT

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 20.2.2023

Introduction

The International Secretariat of LIT-CI, an international Trotskyist organization based in Latin America, has recently published a lengthy statement on the Ukraine War. Essentially, the document is a polemic against the PTS/FT, another Latin America-based Trotskyist organization, whose largest section is the PTS in Argentina but which has also sections in some European countries.¹ It was written against the background of an ongoing debate which is taking place between the U.S. sections of the two organisations, and to which did also contribute.²

It is hardly surprising that the comrades of LIT-CI focus their document on the Ukraine War since they correctly recognize that this is one of the key events in the current world situation. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its section in Russia – *Socialist Tendency* – have sided with the Ukraine's war of national defence against Putin's invasion from the very beginning. While we lend no *political* support for the bourgeois Zelensky government, we call for material support – including military aid – for the Ukrainian resistance. At the same time, we emphasise the *dual character* of the conflict and the necessity for socialists to oppose both camps in the inter-imperialist rivalry between Russia and NATO. Hence, we advocate an internationalist and anti-imperialist position which we summarise in the slogan: "*Defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*"³

We therefore strongly welcome the fact that LIT-CI has been one of the few Trotskyist organisations which has also sided with the Ukrainian people. This has been the basis for issuing a joint statement⁴ as well as joint solidarity activities in support of the Ukrainian people.⁵

In contrast, the comrades of FT refuse supporting the Ukrainian people. They denounce the war as "reactionary on both sides" and shamefully call for mass protests ... against any military support for the Ukraine.

The LIT-CI statement correctly denounces the FT for such a position which "*in practice favors the side of the conquering military, that is, Putin's side.*" They conclude that "*when the TF cries "No to War," in general, it capitulates to Putin through the sterile path of pacifism.*" Furthermore, the comrades rightly emphasize that "*is not admissible to equate the interests and policies of the Kremlin, the oppressor country, with those of Ukraine, the oppressed country.*" Like the RCIT, they say that "*revolutionaries must fight for the military victory of Ukraine, the oppressed and invaded nation. And we must do this without giving any political support for Zelensky and NATO.*" Consequently, they support, like us, the Ukraine's desire to get weapons from wherever possible.

Great Power rivalry: a negligible fact?

While the statement reiterates LIT-CI's correct position of supporting the just war of liberation of the Ukrainian people, it also reflects serious political weaknesses of this organisation in terms of analysis and tactics. These mistakes undermine the political strength of comrades' defence of the Ukraine and make their position vulnerable for attacks of their opponents. Furthermore, these problems involve the danger that LIT-CI might take a social-imperialist position in conflicts between Great Powers.

An essential problem in the field of LIT-CI's analysis of the Ukraine War is its limited angle. They fail to recognise the *dual character* of the conflict. As we elaborated in a number of documents, the conflict involves both the Ukraine's just war of national defence *as well as* the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Western powers and Russia. The comrades of LIT-CI effectively ignore the second element and recognise only on the first.

However, as a matter of fact the historic period we are living in, and which started with the Great Recession in 2008, is characterised by an accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers (U.S., China, Western Europe, Russia and Japan) against the background of the decay of capitalism.⁶ The problem in LIT-CI's analysis is that the comrades are not able to understand the fundamental nature of such inter-imperialist rivalry and, consequently, they ignore the global dimension of the Ukraine. For them, the rivalry between the Great Powers in this conflict does not exist or is only a negligible fact.⁷

A "psychological" reason for such an approach might be that the comrades fear that recognising the element of inter-imperialist rivalry in the current conflict might undermine their position of support for the Ukraine. However, such a concern is unsubstantiated. The task of Marxists is to distinguish between the just war of the Ukraine (which must be supported) and the inter-imperialist conflict (in which one must oppose all Great Powers). The Trotskyists faced similar types of conflicts in the 1930s and 1940 when they supported – in the midst of inter-imperialist conflicts – Ethiopia against Italy in 1935-36 or China against Japan in 1937-45. As the LIT-CI statement itself correctly notes, the Fourth International continued to side with the national liberation war of the Chinese people even when war broke out between the U.S. and Japan in 1941 with U.S. aiding the Chinese resistance against the Japanese invaders.⁸

Hence, we repeat, revolutionaries have no reason to drop their support for the Ukrainian people by recognising the existence of a reactionary conflict between the U.S., Western Europe and Russia. They rather need to combine *revolutionary defensism* of the Ukrainian people against Putin's invasion with *revolutionary defeatism* in the conflict between NATO and Russia.

By ignoring the important conflict between the Great Powers, the LIT-CI comrades undermine the credibility of their position and make it vulnerable to criticism from forces – like the FT/PTS – which denounce the Ukraine War as a “proxy war”.⁹

Denying the imperialist character of Russia

However, LIT-CI’s ignorance of the element of Great Power rivalry is rooted not primarily in any “psychological” mistakes but in their fundamental view of imperialism today. Basically, they deny – ironically like their opponents of the FT/PTS – the imperialist character of Russia and China. Hence, they deny that the conflict between the U.S. and Western Europe vs Russia (or China) is an inter-imperialist rivalry. As we show in another document, the leaders of LIT-CI claim that Russia (and China) are not imperialist states but are rather “dependent on imperialism”, i.e. that these are semi-colonial countries like Brazil, Argentina or India.¹⁰

This is utter nonsense since both Russia as well as China have become imperialist Great Powers in their own rights. We will not elaborate our analysis of these two states and refer interested readers to our respective works.¹¹

From their wrong analysis of Russia as an “dependent” (and not an imperialist) state, the LIT-CI leaders draw the logical conclusion that in case of a direct military conflict between NATO and Russia, they would defend the latter. Such they stated after the beginning of the Ukraine War: “*This [the Ukraine War, Ed.] is not a NATO military invasion of Russian territory. In that case, we would undoubtedly position ourselves in defense of Russia, both because it is an economy dependent on imperialism and because it has been invaded.*”¹²

Hence, the LIT-CI leaders tend to trivialise the element of Great Power rivalry in the global conflict related with the current Ukraine War because they want to avoid drawing the conclusions of their own (wrong) analysis of “non-imperialist” Russia – an analysis which would push them towards a pro-Russian position. As we have said, this is a mistake in the current conflict. However, it implies great dangers for the future since it is only a question of time until there will be a direct military confrontation between NATO and Russia. Will LIT-CI then join the camp of “dependent” Russia and defend it against the U.S. and Western Europe as it promised in the above-mentioned quote? Obviously, this would be a social-imperialist capitulation to the Putin regime. We strongly hope that the comrades will refrain from such conclusions, but it would be the inevitable logic of their denial of Russia’s imperialist nature.

Supporting Western imperialist sanctions?

Unfortunately, this is not the only serious problem in LIT-CI’s position. While they claim that Russia is a “dependent” country, they, at the same time, absurdly support Western sanctions against Russia. “*Furthermore, we must demand from all governments, imperialist or not, the complete severance of diplomatic and trade relations, i.e. an end to investments, exports and imports with Russia. (...) The assets of Gazprom and Russian banks abroad must be expropriated. The assets of Russian companies and oligarchs in other countries must be expropriated.*”¹³

In their new statement, the LIT-CI leadership again crit-

ically mentions the “soft” character of Western sanctions against Russia but utter no word that they would oppose such sanctions. Given their record, this means that they continue supporting sanctions of imperialist powers against a supposedly “dependent” country!

As we did show in several documents, such support is completely wrong and in total contradiction to the long-standing tradition of Trotskyism. The founder of the Fourth International emphasized that “*economic sanctions, if real, lead to military sanctions, to war.*”¹⁴ He therefore insisted that Marxists must break with all those who lend support to such sanctions of this or that imperialist power. “*The struggle against war, properly understood and executed, presupposes the uncompromising hostility of the proletariat and its organizations, always and everywhere, toward its own and every other imperialist bourgeoisie. Yet among the announced adherents of the London Bureau congress are to be found such notorious supporters of the League of Nations (i.e., imperialist) “sanctions” as the Italian Socialist Party, which is presumably to organize a common struggle against war with opponents of these “sanctions,” such as the British ILP claims to be. A prerequisite for the proletarian struggle against war is not unity between pro-“sanctionists” and anti-“sanctionists” but the ruthless separation of them.*”¹⁵

LIT-CI’ support for imperialist sanctions completely violates the principles of the Fourth International! Of course, while Trotskyists oppose such sanctions, they support – in case of a reactionary war like Putin’s invasion of the Ukraine – boycott actions by the organisations of the working class. However, the Fourth International always differentiated between workers and imperialist sanctions. One serves the interests of the oppressed, the other serves the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Such wrote the U.S. Trotskyists during the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935: “*The Workers Party calls for the defense of the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression. (...) It is the independent sanctions of the working class, its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds, mass demonstrations that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples”, not the sanctions of finance-capital and its puppet states.*”¹⁶

“*No argument should be necessary to convince a revolutionary socialist that it is impossible for a Socialist party to be neutral in a war between an imperialist robber country and a semi-colonial people. We must call upon the workers to do all they can to defeat the imperialist power because the interests of the international working class demands the defeat of any imperialist power attempting to enslave a backward people. This does not mean that we should agitate to have our own capitalist government place an embargo on Italy. In a case where war is involved the working class must play its role independently of the capitalist government. We can have no faith whatever in any motives of a government representing the capitalist class. We would be bitterly opposed to having our “own” government declare war on Italy because we know that it would do so only to protect its own imperialist interests and not to help Ethiopia.*”¹⁷

It is a serious mistake of LIT-CI that they are not aware of the class difference between imperialist sanctions and workers sanctions and openly support sanctions of the U.S. and Western Europe against Russia!

Criticising FT/PTS for pacifism is correct but ...

Another inner contradiction of LIT-CI's policy in the Ukraine War is its approach to pacifism. As we quoted above, the comrades correctly criticise the FT/PTS for its pacifist slogans. At the same time, it can not go unmentioned that LIT-CI itself has a record of raising pacifist slogans. As we did show in another article, it has repeatedly called the U.S. and Russia for "nuclear disarmament".¹⁸

Again, this is in total contradiction with the Marxist method. Socialists do not call the imperialist powers to "disarm" as this can only create illusions in the ability of capitalism to transform into a "peaceful" world order. As Trotsky explained, such an approach is typical of petty-bourgeois pacifism but not Marxism!

*"The pretense of "disarmament" has and can have nothing in common with the prevention of war. The program of "disarmament" only signifies an attempt – up to now only on paper – to reduce in peacetime the expense of this or that kind of armaments. It is above all a question of military technique and the imperialist coffers. The arsenals, the munitions factories, the laboratories, and finally, what is most important, capitalist industry as a whole preserve all their force in all the "disarmament programs." But states do not fight because they are armed. On the contrary, they forge arms when they have to fight. In case of war, all the peace limitations will fall aside like so much chaff.... It is pure charlatanism to attempt to distinguish between defensive and offensive machine guns, tanks, aeroplanes. American policy is dictated in this also by the particular interests of American militarism, the most terrible of all. War is not a game which is conducted according to conventional rules. War demands and creates all the weapons which can most successfully annihilate the enemy. Petty-bourgeois pacifism, which sees in a 10 percent, or 33 percent, or 50 percent disarmament proposal the "first step" towards prevention of war, is more dangerous than all the explosives and asphyxiating gases. Melinite and yperite can do their work only because the masses of people are poisoned in peacetime by the fumes of pacifism."*¹⁹

Conclusions

We shall conclude this article by repeating that we strongly appreciate the LIT-CI comrades' political and practical support of the national liberation war of the Ukrainian people. However, their policy contains important mistakes and inner contradictions which undermine their own position of support for the Ukraine and make it vul-

nerable for criticism by centrist opponents of the support for the Ukraine. Furthermore, these defects in their analysis and tactics provoke the danger that LIT-CI might take a social-imperialist position in support of Russia or China in a future war with Western powers.

We therefore urge the comrades to quickly correct these mistakes. Concretely, the comrades in LIT-CI should discuss and change their positions on the following issues:

- 1) Correct your wrong assessment of Russia and China as "non-imperialist" states which would be "dependent on imperialism". Recognise that these have become imperialist Great Powers in their own rights.
- 2) Recognise that the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers (U.S., China, Western Europe, Russia and Japan) is a key feature of the current historic period and will remain so for the foreseeable future.
- 3) In all conflicts between Great Powers, base your policy on the principles of *revolutionary defeatism* as elaborated by Lenin and Trotsky. No support for any imperialist state!
- 4) Recognise that the inter-imperialist rivalry between NATO and Russia is an important element in the current Ukraine War. Combine support for liberation war of the Ukrainian people with revolutionary defeatism in the conflict between NATO and Russia.
- 5) No support for imperialist sanctions like the current policy of NATO against Russia! But yes to workers sanctions against Putin's war and his imperialist-militarist machinery!
- 6) Stop advocating the policy of pacifism such as calling U.S. and Russia for "nuclear disarmament".

Footnotes

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3 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 150 RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and



Publications of the RCIT

The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

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/>; see also: Manifesto on the First Anniversary of the Ukraine War. Victory to the heroic Ukrainian people! Defeat Russian imperialism! No support whatsoever for NATO imperialism! 10 February 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-on-first-anniversary-of-ukraine-war/>

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Publications of the RCIT

Ukraine: A Capitalist Semi-Colony

On the exploitation and deformation of Ukraine's economy
by imperialist monopolies and oligarchs since capitalist restoration in 1991

By Michael Pröbsting, January 2023

Introduction * I. The Marxist Theory of Imperialism and the Concept of Semi-Colonies * II. The Dead-End of Bureaucratic Stalinism * III. The Devastating Social & Economic Consequences of Capitalist Restoration * IV. The Semi-Colonial Deformation of Ukrainian Capitalism since 1991 (1. Oligarchs: the creation of a comprador bourgeoisie; 2. A semi-colonial supplier of raw materials for the capitalist world market; 3. Deep in the trap of foreign debt; 4. Foreign investment: the imperialist plunder of the Ukraine; 5. Migration: the Ukraine provides cheap labour force) * V. Ukraine: A Dependent Country Torn between Great Powers in East & West * VI. Russia's Push to Colonise the Ukraine since February 2022 and NATO's Efforts to Increase its Influence * VII. The Way Forward: From National Liberation to Social Revolution * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 28 pages, A4 Format

Greece: Social-Patriotic KKE Calls for the Defence of “Our Country’s Sovereign Rights”

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 30.9.2022

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) is a long-standing Stalinist party which constantly receives between 5-8% of the votes at elections. It is also a key force in the international Stalinist milieu since it has been the initiator of the so-called *International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties* – a loose alliance which holds annual conferences since 1998 and which collaborates on a federalist and loose basis.

The KKE combines reformist policy with left-Stalinist positions on some theoretical and political issues. For example, as we pointed out recently, the KKE – in contrast to many other Stalinists – considers China and Russia as imperialist states.¹ Let us note in passing that, at the same time, this party has also taken extremely counterrevolutionary position on other issues – like its support for the Assad dictatorship which has drown the Syrian Revolution in blood since 2011.²

However, we also emphasized that while the KKE takes a left-Stalinist stance on some issues of world politics, it also has always adhered to arch-reactionary positions on some issues of domestic policy. One of the party’s most outrageous positions is their unashamed defense of Greek chauvinism, as we demonstrated somewhere else.³ They show such “patriotism” not only against the imperialist EU but also against neighboring countries which are semi-colonies like Greece itself.⁴ This concerns particularly Türkiye and even Macedonia – a small country which has historically suffered from brutal national oppression by the Greek state.⁵

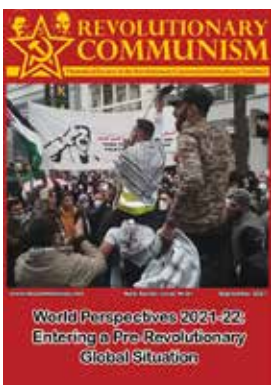
On several occasions in the last years, the KKE officially announced that it supports “the struggle for the defense of the borders and for the sovereign rights of Greece”. At a public rally, its General Secretary, Dimitris Koutsoumbas, literally said: “We communists will, as we have always done in our century-long history, stand in the front row defending our ter-

ritorial integrity and our sovereign rights. We are doing this so that any foreign intruder who dares to attack Greece will be annihilated.”⁶

In an actual press release, the KKE demonstrates that it has not changed an inch. As it always does in times of tensions with Türkiye – Greece’s long-time arch-enemy – the party calls people to rally around the banner. In response to a recent speech of Turkish President Erdoğan at the UN General Assembly, the KKE denounces his “provocative statements” and “aggressive rhetoric”. Most importantly, it warns against Türkiye’s “actions against our country’s sovereign rights.”⁷

This is nothing but a repetition of the KKE’s appeal to anti-Turkish chauvinism. It goes hand in hand with its bourgeois social-patriotic policy of closing ranks with the ruling class in times of tensions with neighboring Türkiye. Such a policy of social-chauvinism is not only a reactionary violation of the principles of Marxist internationalism. It is particularly absurd in the case of the tensions between Greece and Türkiye. The current conflict (like many others between the two countries in the past) is centered around Greece’s “sovereign rights” on numerous small (and often unpopulated) islands which are directly off the coast of Türkiye.

Greece’s possession of this islands rests on the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. This treaty was forced upon Turkey by the imperialist Great Powers which at that time supported Greece and tried to keep the young republic in check. Hence, the treaty has been extremely unfair to Turkey as it gave almost all the islands of the Aegean Sea – the north-east extension of the Eastern Mediterranean – to Greece. Many of these islands, however, lie very close to Turkey’s shore. As a result, these islands serve to extend Greece’s maritime boundaries right up to and around the Turkish coast, leaving Ankara with little access to its surrounding



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Hence, the KKE's call to defend "our country's sovereign rights" is not only an unprincipled and treacherous capitulation to Greek chauvinism. It is also a shameful defense of an unfair treaty against Türkiye which was imposed by the imperialist Great Powers.⁸

The RCIT, like all authentic communists in Greece as well as internationally, rejects the Stalinist-chauvinist policy of the KKE. Revolutionaries can not defend capitalist Greece against Türkiye, not to speak about oppressed countries like Macedonia. Neither can they defend Greece's possession of almost all the islands of the Aegean Sea. In a military conflict between Greece and Türkiye, all other factors being equal, Marxists take a defeatist position against both capitalist camps.

Footnotes

1 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: A Progressive Step Towards Anti-Imperialism. Some Stalinist parties refuse to support Russian or EU imperialism in the current NATO-Russia conflict, 17 February 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/kke-and-nato-russia-conflict/>; see also a pamphlet by the same author: Putin's Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs). The pro-Russian Stalinist parties and their arguments in the current NATO-Russia Conflict, 9 February 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/nato-russia-conflict-stalinism-as-putin-s-poodles/>

2 See on this e.g. the pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“. The bleeding Syrian Revolution and the recent Escalation of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry between the US and Russia – A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism, 21 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syria-great-power-rivalry-and-the-failure-of-the-left/>; On the reactionary position of other Stalinist parties see e.g. by the same author: Stalinism: Assad's Best Friends Forever. A commentary on a joint international initiative of Stalinist parties, 3 July 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/>

[africa-and-middle-east/stalinism-is-assad-s-best-friends-forever/](https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-greek-kke-and-stalinist-chauvinism/)

3 See e.g. an essay by Michael Pröbsting: Stalinist Chauvinism: The Example of the Greek KKE: Is "Defending the Sovereign Rights of Greece" against Turkey and Macedonia Legitimate? Marxist Internationalism versus Bourgeois Social-Chauvinism, 12 November 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-greek-kke-and-stalinist-chauvinism/>; see also chapter II.3 ("Excursion: Greek Chauvinism and the Macedonian Question" as well as chapter V.3 "The Struggle against Greek Chauvinism: The Macedonian Question" in Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/greece-semi-colony/>

4 For our analysis of Greek capitalism see the book by Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony. The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features, November 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/greece-semi-colony/>

5 For our analysis of Turkish capitalism see the essay by Michael Pröbsting: Is Türkiye a (Sub-)Imperialist Power? The economic, political and military features of the Turkish state, its class character and the programmatic consequences for socialists. A contribution to an ongoing debate amongst Marxists, 25 September 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/is-tuerkiye-a-sub-imperialist-power/>

6 See the above-mentioned essay for more quotes and sources.

7 KKE: NATO-US-EU strategic relations with Turkey fuel its aggressive rhetoric, 21.9.2022, <http://www.solidnet.org/article/CP-of-Greece-PRESS-OFFICE-OF-THE-CC-OF-THE-KKE-NATO-US-EU-strategic-relations-with-Turkey-fuel-its-aggressive-rhetoric/>

8 See on this e.g. RCIT: Turkey and the Growing Tensions in Eastern Mediterranean. Theses on the complex contradictions between imperialist and regional powers, the Arab Revolution and the consequential tactics of Marxists, 28 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/turkey-and-the-growing-tensions-in-eastern-mediterranean/>

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Greece - A Modern Semi-Colony

The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – GREECE: A MODERN SEMI-COLONY. The book's subtitle is: *The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features*. It contains six chapters (144 pages) and includes 12 tables, 35 figures and 4 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

Greece is at the forefront both of the capitalist crisis in Europe as well as of the class struggle. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that what the Arab Revolution has been for the world in the past few years, Greece has been for Europe.

Subsequently, the question of the class character of Greece is of crucial importance both for the domestic as well as for the international workers movement: Is it an imperialist

state, a semi-colonial country or something else, and what are its specific features?

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Marxists' theoretical conception of imperialist respectively semi-colonial states. In Chapter II we give a brief historical overview of the development of Greek capitalism. In Chapter III we deal with Greece's failed attempt to become a minor imperialist power. In Chapter IV we outline the historic crisis of Greek capitalism from 2008 until today. In Chapter V we elaborate the most important programmatic conclusions and in the last Chapter we present a summary in the form of theses. The book contains 12 Tables, 35 Figures and 4 Maps. ■

