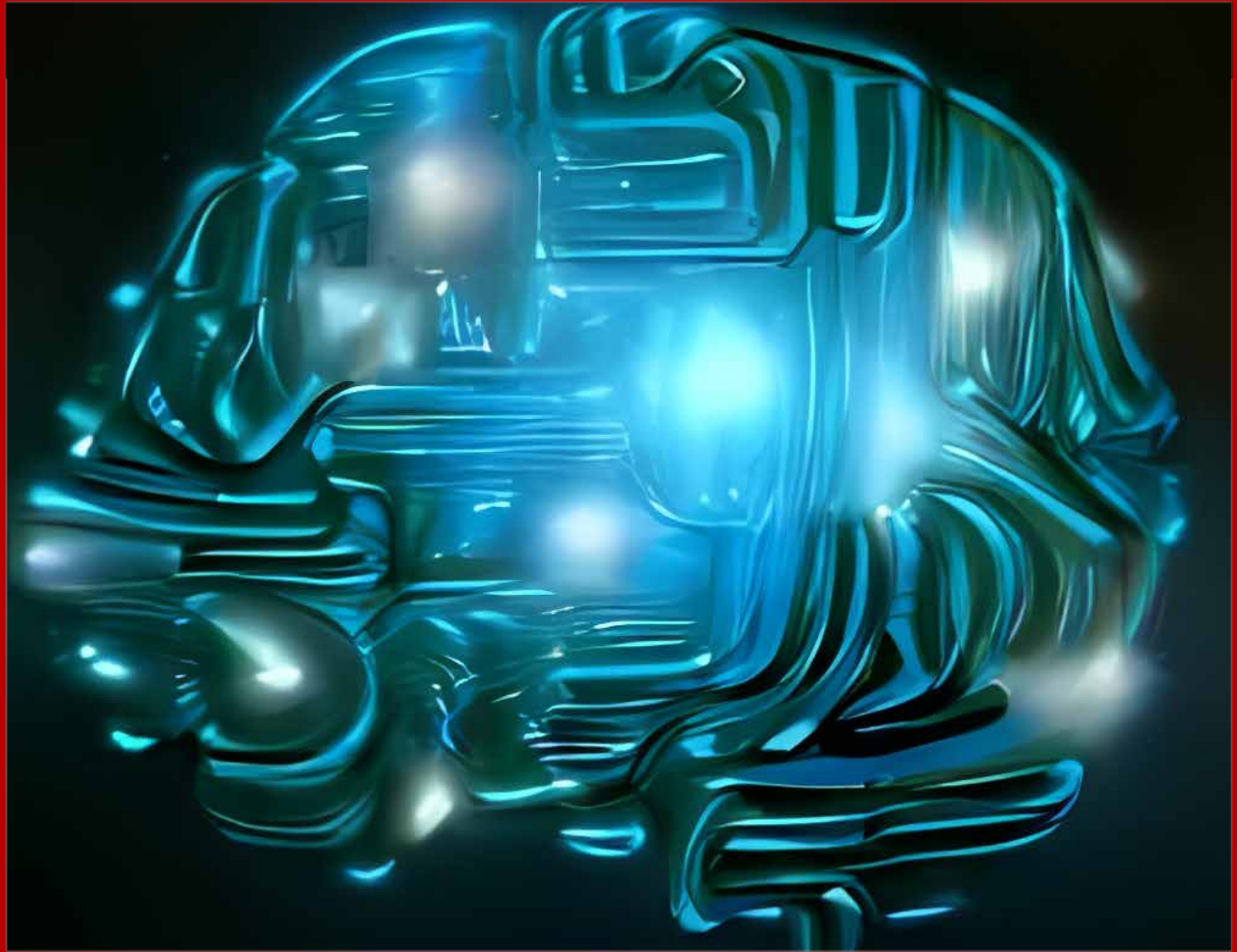




REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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June 2023

Artificial Intelligence: Leviathan Monster Serving the Ruling Class

U.S, China and Great Power Rivalry

Sudan & Permanent Revolution * Ukraine War & NATO

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.90, June 2023

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Picture on the cover: Artificial Intelligence (Source: Wikipedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1c/Artificial_intelligence_prompt_completion_by_dalle_mini.jpg)

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Sudan and the Permanent Revolution

by Yossi Schwartz, ISL (RCIT section in Israel/Occupied Palestine), 07.05.2023

More than 500 people have been killed since battles erupted on 15 April between the forces of army (SAF) chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his number two Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commonly known as Hemedti, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Both were the official military forces in the country at the time.

The two rival generals have agreed to multiple truces but none has effectively taken hold and the number of civilian deaths continues to rise and chaos is spreading in the capital, Khartoum. Sudan has known many civil wars but it is the first time it is in Khartoum, where 5 million people live.

About 75,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in Khartoum as well as in the states of Blue Nile and North Kordofan, and the western region of Darfur, according to the UN. [1]

Former prime minister Abdalla Hamdok was thrown from power when Burhan and Daglo seized power in a 2021 coup that derailed what was called Sudan's transition to democracy, established after the dictator Omar al-Bashir was ousted following mass protests in 2019.

"After Omar al-Bashir was removed from power in 2019, Sudan's authorities and partners overlooked countless calls from Sudanese protesters and activists for justice and reforms. Darfur's most affected communities were ignored. The Security Council replaced its peacekeeping force with a political mission, UNITAMS, to support Sudan's political transition, but with no mandate to provide civilian protection." [2]

"The SAF and the RSF have a history of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, whether in the context of counterinsurgency operations in Darfur, indiscriminate aerial bombings in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, or crackdowns against protesters in Khartoum and elsewhere." [3]

"Beginning in 2003 in Darfur, the Sudanese government and allied militias known as the "Janjaweed" – which government

forces armed, supported, and fought alongside – committed crimes against humanity and war crimes, including summary executions, sexual violence, and torture, as part of counterinsurgency operations. In 2011, in the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, the SAF conducted a campaign of indiscriminate aerial bombardments and ground attacks in which these forces deliberately killed and forcibly displaced civilians and destroyed civilian property" [4]

The planned integration of the RSF (Rapid Support Forces) led by Hemedti into the regular army is the main reason for the fight between the two generals.

The RSF, created in 2013 with many troops recruited from among the Janjaweed, committed grave abuses in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan. Increasingly deployed to Khartoum from 2019 onwards, RSF forces led an attack on protesters in June 2019 that killed 120 protesters and injured 900. [5]

Following the October 2021 coup, Sudan's security forces clamped down on popular protests, killing at least 125 people while injuring and arbitrarily detaining hundreds. [6]

"Sudan's security forces have unlawfully detained hundreds of protesters since December 2021 and forcibly disappeared scores as part of its broader clampdown on opposition to the October 25 military coup, Security forces have beaten and otherwise ill-treated detained protesters, including stripping child detainees naked and threatening sexual violence against women". [7]

"In early March 2022 the United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in Sudan reported that more than 1,000 people were arrested between October 25 and March 3, including 148 children. The security forces have targeted people who are active or perceived to be active in the protest movement, Human Rights Watch found. Some were arrested during or in the immediate aftermath of demonstrations, and others were grabbed off the streets, or from their cars or homes" [8]



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

Israel and Sudan

Following the War of 1967, the Khartoum Arab League summit of 1967, held 29 August to 1 September 1967, declared in unison their three No's: *"no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel"*.

Israel's strategy toward Sudan at that time was laid out by Reuven Shiloah, the founding father of the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency. According to Shiloah, the people of the region belong to two rings of threat: an external ring that involves non-Arab nations and an internal ring. Shiloah prioritized among elements of the second circle the Maronites in Lebanon, the Druze in Syria, the Kurds in Iraq, and the peoples of southern Sudan.

Sudan's independence

Sudan won its independence in January 1956. Israel was against the possibility of a Sudanese Egyptian alliance under a Nasserite banner and found an ally in the Umma Party of Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, son of the Mahdi, Sudan's 19th century anti-colonial hero. The Umma Party was keen to counter Nasserite political and military influence in Sudan.

"As early as 1954, contacts were established between Umma Party officials and Israeli diplomats in London and, in late August 1956, a senior Sudanese official reportedly visited Israel to discuss economic assistance to the Umma Party. At a more senior level, August 1957 witnessed a meeting between Sudan's prime minister Abdalla Khalil of the Umma Party and Israel's foreign minister Golda Meir in Paris. In accordance with the Paris understandings, Israel's prime minister David Ben-Gurion appealed to the US President Eisenhower to extend political and financial support to the Umma Party government" [9]

"The huge Moslem country, three times bigger than Texas, could either be a bridge or a dam to communism in Africa. The trend of the Khalil government is definitely pro-Western and in the Arab League alignment the government leans towards Iraq rather than Egypt", [10] wrote the editor of the New York Times in unequivocal Cold War terms.

Abdalla Khalil's government did not last to reap the fruits of his appeals to Israel and the U.S. Protests against the proposed American led by the communist Anti-Imperialist Front and the pro-Egyptian National Unionist Party (N.U.P.) destabilized his government as a result.

Because of the closure of the Suez Canal, Sudan was not able to market its 1957 cotton crop and the 1958 crop proved a failure. Incapable of mustering a functional ruling majority in parliament, he effectively invited the army generals to assume power – which they did in November 1958. Abdalla Khalil welcomed the coup that ousted him, saying it blocked an attempt to annex Sudan by Nasser's Egypt. The flirt with Israel ended there. The parliament that Abdalla Khalil attempted to control had in July 1958 approved legislation to boycott Israel in a wave of support for Egypt in the context of the tripartite war. This short piece of legislation was repealed by a joint session of the cabinet and the sovereignty council, Sudan's collegial presidency, on 6 April 2021.

The quest of Sudan's local rulers for new sources of credit to manage an economy in crisis and stabilize the capitalist system, whether with guns or with money led them to new relations with Israel.

Sudan's military ruler, General Abd al-Fattah al-Burhan, met with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Uganda's Entebbe on 3 February 2020. The Sudanese leader said the meeting came *"within the framework of Sudan's efforts for its national and security interests"* and stressed Tel Aviv's role in supporting Sudan's efforts to exit the U.S. state terrorism list. The event was coordinated by the U.S. with involvement of Sudan's regional patrons: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), and Egypt. The step was received with appreciation by the Trump administration. Within weeks, Sudanese airspace was open to Israeli planes.

"A joint U.S.-Israeli delegation held talks with General al-Burhan in Khartoum on 22 October 2020 in a final push for an agreement. On 23 October 2020 former U.S. president Donald Trump declared that Sudan would be the third Arab country to normalize relations with Israel on the tails of the U.A.E. and Bahrain, as part of his administration's so-called Abraham Accords. The office of the Israeli prime minister said on 25 October 2020 Tel Aviv would send 5 million U.S. dollars' worth of wheat to its new friends in Khartoum to make peace warm, or rather edible" [11]

On 14 December 2020 the U.S removed Sudan's designation as a 'state sponsor of terrorism'. The normalization deal was sealed on 7 January 2021 in Khartoum by Sudan's Harvard-educated justice minister Nasr al-Din Abd al-Bari and the former U.S. treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin. In return, the U.S. provided Sudan with a 1 billion U.S. dollar bridge loan to clear its arrears with the World Bank as part of a larger effort to address Sudan's crushing foreign debt burden

"Once Sudan had joined the Abraham Accords, the U.S. military began cooperation with the Sudanese military reminiscent of the 1970s, when Sudan's army was a pillar and beneficiary of U.S. military strategy in the region amongst other functions as a bulwark against the Derg regime in Ethiopia and against Libya. Commanders of the U.S. Africa Command spent a few days in Khartoum in January 2021 to discuss 'strategy' with their Sudanese army and U.S. military ships docked in Port Sudan, a development described in U.S. military news stories as "fundamental change in the bilateral relationship between the United States and Sudan" [12]

"Al-Burhan and his military colleagues dream of a return to the time Sudan as U.S. client during Jaafar Nimayri's later years in power as Sudan's president, Sudan's military received between 1977 and 1985 a cumulative arms package of 1.4 billion U.S. dollars, the single largest commitment of U.S. military-economic resources to sub-Saharan Africa. The U.S. provided Sudan during these nine years with 135 million U.S. dollars in military aid, 160 million U.S. dollars in foreign military sales financing credits, 506 million U.S. dollars in economic support funds, approved more than 581 million U.S. dollars in foreign military sales cash transfer, and authorized 7 million U.S. dollars in military training and education to train 625 military students" [13]

The conflict between the generals and Israel

"On December 5, 2022 a "Framework Agreement" was reached to resolve the protracted tensions between the regular army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), that previously partnered with the army in ousting dictator Omar al-Bashir in 2019 amid major public demonstrations. This framework envisions a two-

year transition to civilian rule and the RSF's merger into the army. Yet the commander of the RSF, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo, has insisted that this merger be extended to ten years, further incensing Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the army chief who heads the transitional Sovereignty Council." [14]

"The army is backed by reconstituted Islamist factions that formed the core of Bashir's regime, while Hemedti is rumored to enjoy tacit support from National Umma Party leader Mariam al-Mahdi, who is suspected of trying to break the army-RSF partnership in the hope of accelerating the transfer of power to a civilian coalition led by herself. Indeed, Hemedti challenged Burhan shortly before the fighting erupted by calling for an immediate transfer to civilian rule. Many of Hemedti's troops are also followers of the Mahdiyya movement, which harkens back to the Islamic state that Mahdi's ancestors established in Sudan in the late nineteenth century." [15]

Israel's approach to Sudan during the current situation is a boomerang. Israeli authorities have failed to cultivate relations with Sudanese civilian parties, focusing entirely on Burhan, his subordinate officers, and to a lesser extent the RSF. For three successive governments in Jerusalem, no serious effort was undertaken to show the Sudanese people the potential benefits of normalization with Israel. A single attempt to establish a "Sudan-Israel Friendship Association" in Khartoum quickly faded away, and humanitarian aid sent by an Israeli NGO did not receive any publicity. A handful of Sudanese civilian delegations have visited Israel, but these quiet, infrequent trips are dwarfed in number by the high-ranking military delegations that have arrived on semi-secret missions to seek assistance. This imbalance has exacerbated the wide opposition to normalization among Sudanese people, many of whom understand that Israel has been providing intelligence, weapons and cyber tools to the military in order to quell recent protests.

Thus, there is no reason for the revolutionary Marxists to support the army or the RSF nor the civilians who support close relations with Israel and the USA. The only way forward is for the masses led by the working class to fight for democracy. A struggle leading to a worker's revolution supported by the poor peasants and the regular soldiers.

The transitional demand for a revolutionary constituent assembly is a key demand. Arming the masses is another key demand, as well as turning the regular soldiers against the generals Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commonly known as Hemedti who are selling Sudan to the imperialists is another key demand.

Endnotes:

[1] Agence France-Presse Sun 30 Apr 2

[2] Ibid

[3] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/28/un-human-rights-council-should-respond-sudan-crisis>

[4] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/25/questions-and-answers-sudan-and-laws-war>

[5] Ibid

[6] Ibid

[7] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/28/sudan-hundreds-protesters-detained-mistreated>

[8] Ibid

[9] <https://www.arab-reform.net/pdf/?pid=19528&plang=en>

[10] Bigart, Homer. "Sudan to Ask U.S. for Aid and Arms During Nixon Trip." *New York Times*, 19 Feb. 1957, pp.1 and 14. <https://www.nytimes.com/1957/02/19/archives/sudan-to-ask-us-for-aid-and-arms-during-nixon-trip-premier-toput.html>

[11] <https://www.arab-reform.net/pdf/?pid=19528&plang=en>

[12] Ibid

[13] Lefebvre, Jeffrey A. "Globalism and regionalism: US arms transfers to Sudan." *Armed Forces & Society* 17.2 211-227 (1991)

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[15] Ibid

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/>



China Is Cutting its U.S. Treasury Bond Holdings

Financial consequences of the political and economic decline of the American hegemon

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12 May 2023

According to the latest data published by the U.S. Administration, foreign states are increasingly reducing their holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds since the beginning of the Ukraine War.¹ In total, foreign holdings declined from \$7703.6 billion (February 2022) to \$7343.6 billion (February 2023), i.e. by minus 4.7%. (See the Table in the Appendix)

It is particularly remarkable, that the two largest foreign holders of U.S. Treasury bonds – Japan and China which held a combined 30.3% of all U.S. Treasury bonds by February 2022 – reduced their share even more. Japan cut its holdings from \$1303 to \$1081.8bn (-17.0%) and China from \$1028.7 to \$848.8bn (-17.5%). Britain, the third-largest foreign state which currently has a share of 8.8% of all foreign holdings, slightly increased its holdings in the same period from \$627 to \$643bn.

It does not need special emphasis that China's and Japan's reduction of foreign holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds by nearly 1/5 within only 12 months is an extraordinary development. Basically, it reflects two main tendencies in global economy and politics which are related with each other but not identical.

In general, such a development shows the decline of the hegemonial position of U.S. imperialism and, as a result, of its financial instruments like the Dollar or its Treasury bonds. This is a long-term process which has accelerated since 2008 when the Great Recession opened a new historic period of capitalist decay. As we did discuss in a recently published article in detail, the share of the dollar in global trade declined from 73% in 2001 to 55% in 2021. However, since the beginning of the Ukraine War in February 2022, this process has drastically accelerated, and the share of U.S. Dollar further declined to 47% within only 12 months!²

This is, as the RCIT explained in other works, a reflection of the general economic and political decline of the U.S. as a hegemonic power. In production of capitalist value, top global corporations, in world politics etc., the U.S. is no longer an unchallenged dominator but faces powerful rivals – most importantly China.³

Loss of confidence in the U.S. market

Such a weakened position of the U.S. results in a decline of confidence of other states in Washington's financial instruments. The current crisis US debt-ceiling crisis and, in general, the slump of the capitalist world economy, could accelerate this process even more.⁴ For such reasons, even imperialist powers like Japan, who are politically allied with the U.S., are reducing their holdings of Treasury bonds.

For the same reason, we note in passing, it not only foreign states but also domestic investors who are losing confidence America's economic strength. All US creditors combined offloaded a total of \$425.9 billion worth of US Treasury securities in 2022.⁵

At the same time, the decline of the U.S. has accelerated

the inter-imperialist rivalry. On one hand, the rising imperialist powers – China and Russia – feel increasingly confident to challenge the old hegemon. On the other hand, Washington deploys an aggressive foreign policy in order to contain the Eastern challengers. This is the background for the unprecedented policy of economic and financial sanctions against Beijing and Moscow as well as the rapid armament.⁶

Hence, China considers its financial exposure to the U.S. market as increasingly risky not only from a business point of view but also for political reasons. The freezing of \$300 billion in foreign reserves belonging to the Central Bank of Russia by Western governments after the beginning of the Ukraine War has been a warning signal for Beijing.⁷

The Middle Kingdom is therefore eager to reduce its holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds not only for economic but also for political reasons. In fact, its holdings have dropped by now to the lowest level in nearly 13 years. China's Treasury holdings peaked at over \$1.3 trillion in fall 2013, with the country as the largest creditor to the U.S.

Nikkei, a prestigious newspaper based in Japan, quotes a strategist at a U.S. asset manager saying: *"Since the Russian invasion [of Ukraine], a move away from Treasuries ... would be an understandable reaction to the political developments,"* adding that he sees the Chinese motivation as *"wanting to maintain their independence and not be at risk."*⁸

Multi-polar imperialist chaos

The decline of the U.S. as the long-term hegemon, the process of de-dollarization, the reduction of foreign holdings in U.S. Treasury bonds – all this has provoked discussions if China will replace the U.S. as the leading Great Power. As we explained somewhere else, we think that such a conclusion is completely wrong.

China – or any other imperialist power – can not replace the U.S. as hegemon for the foreseeable future. China is not strong enough to replace the U.S. at the throne of the imperialist world order. But it has been strong enough to topple Washington from its throne! Hence, it is rather accelerated inter-imperialist rivalry and crisis which is "replacing" the U.S. as a hegemon.⁹

The end of the "(U.S.) rule-based order" will not open a new order in any meaningful sense. Many Stalinists and Bolivarians advocate for some time the concept of a "multi-polar world order" as the alternative to U.S. hegemony. However, it is pure illusion to imagine that such a "world order" could have a stable character and allow a peaceful co-existence of several Great Powers. No, the "multi-polar world order" can not but be an "order" of imperialist chaos and a prelude to another World War between the Great Powers – if the international working class does not overthrow the ruling class before.

As we said somewhere else: *"In conclusion, it is clear that a "multi-polar world order" can not and does not mean any peaceful or progressive global system – it rather means, and can only mean, multi-imperialism, i.e. a world dominated by sever-*

al rivalling Great Powers. Such a concept does not contain an inch of progressiveness! Marxists never opposed the “unipolar” imperialist world order because it was “unipolar” but because it was imperialist! We don’t choose between an “unipolar” or a “multi-polar” imperialist order – we oppose both equally! Neither, to give an analogy, do we have a preference between Apple or Microsoft or between Facebook, Weibo or VK! All imperialists and all capitalists “are worse”, as the saying goes.”¹⁰

We reiterate that the task of socialists in such a period is to oppose all Great Powers (U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe and Japan) on the basis of the program of *revolutionary defeatism*. In any conflict between imperialist states, all of them are the “greater evil”. Socialists should work towards utilizing such inter-imperialist conflicts to weaken the ruling class and to advance the class struggle for their overthrow.¹¹

Hence, the RCIT rejects all ideologies which claim that this or that imperialist state would be a kind of “lesser evil” than the U.S. or that a “multi-polar world order” could provide a way out of imperialist militarism. We call all authentic socialists who agree with such an approach to join ranks and to fight for a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist program!

Footnotes

1 U.S. Department of the Treasury: Major Foreign Holders of Treasuries, https://ticdata.treasury.gov/resource-center/data-chart-center/tic/Documents/slt_table5.html (accessed on 11 May 2023). All figures in this article are from this table if not indicated otherwise.

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4 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: “Markets are wild”: Banks and Stock Markets Teeter on the Brink. Some notes on the nature of the crisis and its political and economic consequences, 15 March 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/banks-and-stock-markets-teeter-on-the-brink/>

5 Chu Daye: China’s US Treasury holdings fall to a 12-year low in 2022 as crackdown fuels impetus to diversify away from dollar-backed assets, Global Times, 16 February 2023, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202302/1285581.shtml>; see also: Ralph Jennings and Amanda Lee: US debt ceiling crisis gives China more cause to cut Treasury bond exposure, promote yuan as world currency, South China Morning Post, 3 May 2023, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/economic-indicators/article/3219271/us-debt-ceiling-crisis-gives-china-more-cause-cut-treasury-bond-exposure-promote-yuan-world-currency>

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

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10 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: “Multi-Polar World Order” = Multi-Imperialism. A Marxist Critique of a concept advocated by Putin, Xi, Stalinism and the “Progressive International” (Lula, Sanders, Varoufakis), 24 February 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/multi-polar-world-order-is-multi-imperialism/>

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Appendix: Table. Foreign Holders of U.S. Treasury Securities, February 2022 – February 2023

	February 2022	February 2023	Change
	(in Billions of Dollars)		(in %)
Japan	1303	1081.8	-17.0%
China (Mainland)	1028.7	848.8	-17.5%
Total Foreign Holders	7703.6	7343.6	-4.7%

“Can China Replace the U.S. as Hegemon?” - A Misleading Question!

On the discussion about the perspectives of the Great Power rivalry

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 April 2023

Given the tumultuous events in world politics, it is hardly surprising that the debate about the Great Power rivalry and its perspectives takes a central place in the debate among socialists today. Naturally, this discussion is closely related to the theoretical understanding of imperialism and, in particular, to the class characterisation of rising powers like China and Russia.

We have argued since a number of years that the rise of China ¹ and Russia ² as new Great Powers has resulted in an acceleration of the inter-imperialist rivalry. ³ This makes the orthodox Marxist theory of imperialism – as it had been elaborated by Lenin and others – particularly relevant for an understanding of the current world situation. At this place, we shall not repeat our analysis of imperialism as such or of China and Russia and refer readers to the relevant publications of the RCIT. ⁴

Here, we shall rather deal with an important argument of our opponents who reject our analysis and claim that China and Russia are not imperialist powers but rather “semi-colonies”, “semi-peripheral” or “sub-imperialist” states. (We shall add that a significant sector of the Stalinists and Bolivarians even claims that China would be a “socialist” country!) They object that neither of the two Eastern powers would be strong enough to replace the U.S. as the hegemon of the world. Hence, they conclude that China and Russia could not be imperialist resp. not “as imperialist” as the U.S.

As evidence for their argument, our opponents refer to the still existing superiority of the U.S. in terms of military power or to the position of the US-Dollar as leading currency. However, such arguments are misplaced. First, they ignore the rapid catching-up process of China (and Russia to a lesser degree). China’s currency is increasingly used for cross-border payments and receipts. Last month, the yuan became the most widely-used currency for cross-border transactions in China, overtaking the dollar for the first time, according to official data. ⁵ Likewise, the Eastern power are rapidly increasing their military spending.

As a result, we see a significant shift in world politics. The U.S. and the EU could convince only their closest allies to join their policy of sanctions against Russia since the beginning of the Ukraine War. ⁶ At the same time, China and Russia are expanding their influence. According to a report by Bloomberg, 19 countries have expressed an interest in joining the BRICS – an alliance led by China (and Russia as junior partner). Among these are powerful states of the Global South like Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Egypt, and Indonesia. ⁷

Furthermore, our critiques ignore the fact that the U.S., while still an important power, is no longer the hegemon of the world. As we did show in several studies, China is already the leading country in terms of creation of capitalist value as its dominant position in global manufacturing indicates. Likewise, it did already overtake the U.S. (or is close to overtake, depending on the method of calculation) when it comes to the worlds’ leading corporations and billionaires. ⁸

Must there be a “hegemon”?

Having said all this, one has to point out that there exists a fundamental, methodological flaw in the approach of our critics. Intellectually trapped in the mechanistic thinking (à la Hilferding, Otto Bauer or Bukharin in his later phase) that stability and equilibrium would be the “natural state of things”, they imagine that there must be a hegemon of the imperialist world order. Hence, they defend the idea that the U.S. will be the hegemon in world politics until it has been replaced by another power. Since no other imperialist power has become a new hegemon until now, they conclude that the U.S. must still be in a dominant position. Furthermore, they argue that since Beijing (or Moscow) have not toppled the U.S., China (or Russia) still have not become full imperialist powers.

Such an approach wrongly imagines that the capitalist world can only exist if it is dominated by a hegemon. However, the opposite is the case. World capitalism is not characterised by the domination of a single trust but rather by the domination of a number of monopolies which are in constant competition with each other (which includes building alliances with some corporations against others).

It is similar in world politics where usually several Great Powers are in rivalry with each other instead of a single Great Power which would dominate all others. This was the case in the period from late 19th century to World War I in 1914-18, in the inter-war period as well as during World War II in 1939-45. It is true that the U.S. established a dominating position towards other imperialist powers from the mid-20th century onwards. But such a subordination of inter-imperialist rivalry was caused by the fact that the conflict between the imperialist camp and the Stalinist states – led by the USSR – came to the fore. It was only for a short period – after the collapse of Stalinism in 1989-91 – until the later 2000s that the U.S. was indeed the undisputed hegemon of the world. In fact, the epoch of imperialism is characterised not by stability and equilibrium but rather by instability and crisis.

At this point, it is worth reminding that such a mechanist view ignores the fundamental laws of dialectics. In his philosophical writings, Engels pointed out that “*motion is the mode of existence of matter*” ⁹ and that therefore “*all equilibrium is only relative and temporary.*” ¹⁰ Those who imagine that the world capitalism usually exists with a single hegemon at the top fail to understand that conflicts and instability are the prevailing characteristic of imperialism.

N. A. Karev, a leading philosopher of the great Deborin school which dominated the philosophical discussions in the young Soviet Union in the 1920s before it was crushed by Stalin, remarked appropriately in a polemic against A. A. Bogdanov and his supporters: “*Hence, the state of equilibrium are subordinated and temporary moments in the process of motion and development. The fundamental and determining is the motion.*” ¹¹

Towards a world of imperialist chaos

Contrary to the assertion of our critics, the U.S. can lose its hegemonic status not only in case it is *replaced* by another power. In fact, history has shown that the process of decline of a hegemonic power is usually a process where it becomes weaker and is no longer able to have a determining influence. It is only after a period of sharp crisis and conflicts when another power becomes a hegemon.

One can think about the agony of the Roman Empire in the 4th and 5th century AD which finally collapsed but was not replaced by any other hegemon for some time (despite repeated attempts by the Byzantine Empire).

When Britain – the hegemonial power for most of the 19th century after 1815 – started to decline, it was not replaced by another power. It took two world wars and decades of crisis until the U.S. became the hegemonial force among the capitalist states.

It is therefore completely mistaken to recognise the end of U.S. hegemony only after it would have been replaced by China. No, the actually ongoing process is that Washington can no longer determine world politics, but, at the same time, no other single power can either. The period in which we are living is characterised by the rivalry between several Great Powers (U.S., China, EU, Russia and Japan – with the first two as the largest ones). None of these is able to play a hegemonic role.

The result of such an absence of a single hegemon is an acceleration of conflicts and tensions, armament race and threats of war. Ultimately, this will result in another World War if the working class does not overthrow the militarist ruling class before. In our above-mentioned book *“Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry”* we noted: *“The decline of the West and the rise of the East mean, in the first place, an acceleration of the contradictions between the Great Powers. It means more trade wars, more proxy wars and, eventually, major wars between the rivals. The West will not go down without a desperate struggle for hegemony. And it would be foolish to exclude the possibility that the West could win such a confrontation. If the working class does not succeed in overthrowing the capitalists bandits in time, it is, however, also possible that the result of such a world war will be rather annihilation of all participants.”*¹²

Hence, the question if China can replace the U.S. as hegemon is misleading. No, China can not replace the U.S. as hegemon for the foreseeable future. It is rather accelerated inter-imperialist rivalry and crisis which is replacing the U.S. as a hegemon. China is not strong enough to replace the U.S. at the throne of the imperialist world order. But it has been strong enough to topple Washington from its throne!

Many Stalinists and Bolivarians advocate a “multi-polar world order” as the alternative to U.S. hegemony. In fact, as we explained somewhere else, is a silly illusion to imagine that such a “world order” could be stable and peaceful co-existence of several Great Powers. Capitalism can not exist without competition and rivalry!¹³

The task of socialists in such a period is to oppose *all* Great Powers. Authentic socialists have no side to choose in the Great Power rivalry. In any conflict between imperialist states, all of them are the “greater evil”.

Likewise, Marxists reject *all* kind of ideology which claim that this or that imperialist state would be a kind of “lesser

evil” than the U.S. The same applies for bourgeois-pacifist conceptions which imagine a peaceful co-existence of several imperialist powers.

At the same time, socialists emphasize the necessity to combine opposition against all imperialist Great Powers (U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe and Japan) with support for the liberation struggle of oppressed people (Ukraine, Syria, Palestine, etc.). The RCIT calls all authentic socialists who agree with such an approach to join ranks and to fight for a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist program!

Footnotes

1 For our analysis of capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power see e.g. the book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also by the same author: *“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%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1; China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet? A Theoretical Question with Very Practical Consequences! Continuing the Debate with Esteban Mercatante and the PTS/FT on China’s class character and consequences for the revolutionary strategy, 22 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-imperialist-power-or-not-yet/>; China’s transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>; How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China’s State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>; China’s Emergence as an Imperialist Power (Article in the US journal ‘New Politics’), in: “New Politics”, Summer 2014 (Vol:XV-1, Whole #: 57). See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT’s website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

2 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. The most important ones are 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 (this pamphlet contains a document written in 2001 in which we established for the first time our characterisation of Russia as imperialist), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; see also these essays by the same author: *Russia: An Imperialist Power or a “Non-Hegemonic Empire in Gestation”? A reply to the Argentinean economist Claudio Katz*, in: *New Politics*, 11 August 2022, at <https://newpol.org/russia-an-imperialist-power-or-a-non-hegemonic-empire-in-gestation-a-reply-to-the-argentinean-economist-claudio-katz-an-essay-with-8-tables/>; *Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies*, in: *New Politics* Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022, https://newpol.org/issue_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/; *Once Again on Russian Im-*

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4 For our elaboration of the Marxist theory of imperialism 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, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>.

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6 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 170 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/>; 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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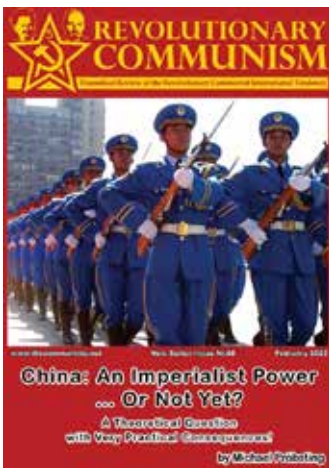
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Publications of the RCIT

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

“Ukraine is a Proxy of the West?” – Facts versus Myths

New studies show the limited character of Western aid to the Ukraine

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 5 April 2023

Since the beginning of the war on 24 February 2022, a number of self-proclaimed Trotskyists have not tired of asserting that the Ukraine would merely serve as a “proxy” of Western imperialism. To give two examples.

At its recently held World Congress, the ISA, once more, confirmed its position. It talks about “the ‘Ukraine model’ of an indirect proxy war” of U.S. imperialism. The whole conflict is reduced to the claim that Washington would “wage its own proxy war against Russia in its own interests. By using vicious economic sanctions, and by arming the Ukrainian state and general Ukrainian resistance against the invasion the US aims to strike blows against Russia, and through this undermine China, alongside its escalating economic and technological warfare against China itself.”¹ As a result, as we have pointed out in several articles, the ISA shamefully calls workers in Western countries to sabotage any military aid to the Ukraine.²

The *Fracción Trotskista* (led by the Argentinean PTS) basically shares the same position. In a recently distributed leaflet, its supporters in the U.S. wrote: “This is a reactionary proxy war being fought by two capitalist camps.”³ The comrades even deny the imperialist character of Russia and China and oppose any support for the Ukraine’s struggle for national self-determination.⁴

Socialist approach

The RCIT and all authentic socialists have always opposed such an approach. Of course, it is true that the U.S. and Western Europe are sending military and economic aid to the Ukraine, hoping to weaken their Eastern rival. However, this does not mean the Ukraine’s war of national defence would be a struggle “in the service of Western imperialism”. The war is the result of Putin’s determination to transform the country into a colony of Russia and the determined resistance of the Ukrainian workers and popular masses to defend their freedom.

We consider the Ukraine as an capitalist, semi-colonial country where its people are waging, first and foremost, a just war of national defence.⁵ Consequently, the RCIT and its comrades in Russia unconditionally support the Ukraine’s liberation struggle (including their right to get weapons) without lending any political support to the bourgeois and pro-NATO Zelensky government. At the same time, we advocate a strict policy of intransigent opposition against all imperialist powers – in West as well as in the East. Hence, we do not support any chauvinist Great Power policy (e.g. economic and financial sanctions, diplomatic and cultural boycott).⁶

The main defect of the arguments of those socialists who claim that the conflict in the Ukraine would be merely a “proxy war” is their denial that the Ukrainian people are fighting for their fundamental national rights. According to the ISA, FT and like-minded organisations, the Ukrainian people fight because Western imperialism tells them to do so. But, as a matter of fact, the Ukrainian masses have a long history of defending their national right of self-determination against Russia.

mination against Russia.

While all “proxy war”-theorists talk a lot about “imperialism”, they forget or deny that a key feature of imperialism is national oppression and super-exploitation of oppressed people – directly (in colonies) or indirectly (in semi-colonies). However, one can not be a Marxist without recognising the central place of such imperialist oppression and without recognising the just character of national liberation struggles of peoples in (semi-)colonies.⁷

True, Western powers try to utilise the Ukraine War for their own interests. However, this is not an unprecedented development. As we did show in other documents, it has happened many times in history that one Great Power tried to utilise a national war against a rivalling Great Power (e.g. the Irish rebellion against Britain in 1916, Ethiopia’s war against Italy in 1935/36, China’s war against Japan 1937-45). But such tactical support by this or that Great Power did not alter the total character of these just national wars.⁸

Revealing facts

It is not our intention at this place to repeat our arguments on this issue. We rather want to draw attention to two new documents which show the real amount of Western aid for the Ukraine. Contrary to the claims of Putinistas and “proxy war”-theorists, U.S. and EU aid to the Eastern European country is not “unprecedented”.

One document is a statement of the Michael McCaul, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. The second is a detailed study published by the *Kiel Institute for the World Economy*. As the author of these lines has reported in detail about these documents, we limit ourselves to summarise the main findings.⁹

The Chairman of the U.S. House Committee has revealed in a public statement that only a small proportion of U.S. aid to the Ukraine directly does to the Ukraine. “Of the 113 billion dollars appropriated across four supplementals, approximately 60 percent is going to American troops, American workers, and to modernizing American stockpiles. In fact, only 20 percent of the funding is going directly to the Ukrainian government in the form of direct budgetary assistance.”¹⁰

In other words, only 1/5 of U.S. aid for the Ukraine actually goes directly to the Ukraine while 3/5 goes to the Pentagon and other American institutions! Hence, the Ukraine aid is first and foremost “aid” for U.S. imperialism, or to be more precise, subsidies from the U.S. public budget to U.S. monopolies and the Pentagon.

The study of the German-based *Kiel Institute for the World Economy* provides a lot of data about the Western aid to the Ukraine in detail and makes interesting historical comparisons. As we did show in detail in our above-mentioned article, the study reveals that – calculated as share of economic output – aid to the Ukraine has been rather small for major Western powers like the U.S., Germany, France or Britain (between 0.31-0.37% of GDP).¹¹

The study also shows that U.S. aid to the Ukraine is much smaller than contributions during past wars. This becomes evident as the authors provide figures for U.S. aid to the USSR and other allies during World War II or for U.S. military spending in the Korea War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War in 1990/91, the Afghanistan War in 2001 (plus the following occupation) or the Iraq War in 2003 (plus the following occupation). Military spending per year in all these wars was much bigger than Western aid to the Ukraine in 2022. Even average annual U.S. military expenditures in Afghanistan were slightly larger than aid for the Ukraine.

Conclusions

These two documents demonstrate that – contrary to the claims of Putinistas and “proxy war”-theorists – Western aid to the Ukraine is not “unprecedented” by historical standards. These facts show that its support is rather limited. This is even more the case as there exists a growing trend within the leading circles of Western imperialism to push the Ukraine to bring the war to a close and to accept a stalemate with Russia, i.e. to accept Putin’s occupation of several regions in the South and East of their country.¹²

The main conclusions, in our view, are the following.

1. The boasts of Western governments about their “unprecedented” aid to the Ukraine serve both domestic as well as foreign-policy purposes. However, their support is not particularly large by historical standards.

2. Furthermore, one must take into account the gap between aid promised to the Ukraine and aid which has been actually delivered. In addition, as the U.S. Chairman of the House Committee has revealed, only 20% of U.S. aid goes directly to Kyiv while 60% goes to U.S. monopolies and the Pentagon.

3. We therefore strongly refute the thesis of Putinistas and “proxy war”-theorists that the Ukraine would not fight for their national liberation but merely for interests of Western imperialism. Socialists should support the right of the Ukraine to get material aid (including weapons) from wherever possible. They should oppose any political conditions attached to such aid by Western governments. Such a stance needs to be combined with a revolutionary defeatist approach against all imperialist powers – in West as well as in East.

The RCIT calls all authentic socialists who share such an approach to intensify collaboration and to join forces in fighting for a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist position. We have summarise such an approach in the slogan: *Defend the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion! Beware of NATO and Zelensky – transform the resistance against the Russian occupation into a Popular War! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

Footnotes

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Loudly Proclaimed Opportunism and Deafening Silence

On the Russian RRP's support for the social-chauvinist KPRF and its failure to oppose Putin's war against the Ukraine

By Alexey Sedov, Denis Sokolov and Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 3 May 2023

The *Revolutsionnaya Rabochaya Partiya* (Revolutionary Workers Party, RRP) recently held a conference in Moscow where it adopted a comprehensive resolution about the political situation in Russia and elected a new leadership.¹ The RRP is a sizable organisation which has its political origins in the tradition of distorted "Trotskyism" à la Ted Grant.² It is nationally isolated but has some loose relations with the Italian PCL.

Strangely, the PCL "salutes" the RRP for its supposed "revolutionary intervention ... against the war of their own imperialism".³ These are compliments which might have a place in the phantasy world of an Italian opera but have no basis in Russian reality. The RRP document adopted at its Moscow conference confirms once more that nothing could be further from the truth. As we did show in past documents, the RRP has failed for more than a year to take any clear stance against the imperialist war of the Putin regime. In its practical policy, it rather supports out-right chauvinist forces like Zyuganov's KPRF which enthusiastically supports the barbarous invasion of the Ukraine.⁴

Again, the new RRP statement – despite its length of 2,500 words – does not contain a single critical word about the war resp. the "Special Military Operation" as it is officially called in Russia! In fact, they do not even mention the war at all and only speak about the "Ukrainian crisis"! What an example of hypocritical Orwellian language to call a war with tens of thousands of deaths only a "crisis"!

Likewise, the RRP does not even mention the imperialist character of Russia – despite the ongoing most aggressive demonstration of imperialist militarism!⁵ So much for the RRP's supposed "revolutionary intervention ... against the war of their own imperialism"!

Zyuganov's servants

The RRP's Moscow resolution makes it clear what is the focus of its leaders' considerations: "This year's key political event in Moscow will be the mayoral election." As we explained in a previous article, the RRP opportunistically supported Zyuganov's KPRF at the municipal elections in September 2022 and even stood its own candidates on the KPRF's list. According to the resolution, the RRP will continue such shameful policy at the next election in Moscow. "We must make full use of this election as an opportunity to agitate with the masses and to work with the KPRF's grassroots activists. The form of our participation consists in agitating for the candidate of the KPRF, a mass workers' party, but with our own slogans, relying on the progressive points of the KPRF program. We must, working with the candidate, involve him in solving the urgent problems of workers and residents."

This approach is ridiculous from the beginning to the end. First, the KPRF is no "mass workers party" as it has no links to mass workers organisations. Second, since the beginning of the war, it has stopped being a pole of attraction for those sectors of the masses who oppose the Putin regime. Zyuganov and his party have been fanatical sup-

porters of the imperialist project of "Ruskij Mir". They always praise "our heroic boys" in the trenches in Donbass and vote in the State Duma for all measures to support the war. Zyuganov proclaimed at his meetings with Putin that he unambiguously stands behind the Kremlin's policy of Great Russian expansionism. In other words, the KPRF is an outright social-imperialist party!⁶

The RRP's support for the KPRF at the mayoral elections in Moscow is an explicit demonstration of political backing for the social-imperialist policy of this party. This is even more the case because the KPRF's candidate is ... Zyuganov's grandson! The latter has no record of political activity in the party, in other words, his only "achievement" is to be the grandson of the party leader since 1993. These two elements - deafening silence on Putin's war and opportunist support for the KPRF – go hand in hand. It is clear that any public opposition of the RRP leaders against Putin's war would endanger their opportunist manoeuvres towards the KPRF. If the RRP leaders would take a clear internationalist and anti-imperialist position against the Kremlin's invasion of the Ukraine, Zyuganov would not allow them to kiss his feet! So, the RRP leader prefer to stay silent.

According to the RRP's report on its Telegram channel, it even invited representatives of the KPRF and Komsomol and asked them to address the conference in Moscow! Surely, the RRP leaders are in very good terms with the "Ruskij Mir" Stalinists! In short, Zyuganov is Putin's servant and the RRP leaders are Zyuganov's servants!

The security situation

Some naïve foreign friends of the RRP might defend them by claiming that their comrades can not speak out against the war because of the repressive conditions imposed by the Putin regime. Such a defence is completely misplaced. First, nobody – including Putin – has forced the RRP leaders to support the KPRF. In fact, most progressive and anti-war forces deeply despise Zyuganov's party because of its outspoken Great Russian chauvinism and its support for Putin's invasion.⁷

Secondly, there exist several socialist organisations in Russia who publicly oppose Putin's war. In addition to the RCIT's comrades in "Socialist Tendency"⁸, we refer to the comrades of "Socialist Alternative".⁹ Even left Stalinist forces like the RKSM(b) manage to speak out against Putin's war!¹⁰ So, we see that the left Stalinists are less coward and more anti-imperialist than the RRP leaders!

Thirdly, it is obvious from its own reports that the RRP is not worried at all about the security situation. On its VK account it has published countless pictures of all participants of the Moscow conference.¹¹ It also published a four-hour long video of the conference!¹² The RRP even prints the full names of the six comrades which were elected by the conference for its Moscow Committee!

In other words, the RRP feels fully safe in Putin's Russia

because it is allied with KPRF – the second-largest party in the country which has close relations with the Kremlin – and because it does not publicly oppose the regime’s imperialist war. So, they see no problem to let the FSB, Russia’s security service, know the identity of their members!

Of course, the situation is very different for authentic socialist organisations which oppose the Kremlin’s imperialist war. Such forces have to operate very carefully in the current situation given the reactionary Bonapartist character of the regime.

Break with the capitulators to social-imperialism!

Supporters of the RRP which want to oppose Russian imperialism and its war against the Ukraine must break with the policy the leadership. Currently, the RRP is deeply trapped in the policy of social-chauvinism and opportunist adaptation to the social-imperialist KPRF. In general, non-binding declaration they might oppose “imperialism” and “wars”. But when it comes to *Russian* imperialism and *Russia’s* war against the Ukraine, the RRP leaders shamefully capitulate. It is not surprising that they adore Ted Grant and his tradition which also capitulated repeatedly to imperialist powers and their wars against semi-colonial countries.¹³

Authentic revolutionaries must take a clear and principled stance on the Ukraine War which is based on internationalist and anti-imperialist principles. This requires, first, to recognise the imperialist character of Russia. Secondly, this means to support the Ukraine’s war of national defence against Putin’s invasion. Such support has to be combined with a policy of *revolutionary defeatism* in conflicts between Great Powers (the U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe and Japan), i.e. intransigent opposition against each and every of these powers. The RCIT has summarised such an approach in the slogan: *Defend the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion! Beware of NATO and Zelensky – transform the resistance against the Russian occupation into a Popular War! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

Unfortunately, the RRP leaders are hard-headed opponents of such an internationalist and anti-imperialist stance. Hence, it is obligatory for authentic Marxists to break decisively with them – in Russia as well as internationally. The supporters of “*Socialist Tendency*” looks forward collaborating with all revolutionaries who join us in the struggle against social-imperialism and chauvinist patriotism!

Footnotes

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comradely relations, courageously fights for this prospect. While Zuganov’s Stalinist CP sided with the Putin regime by voting for war credits, the RRP opposed its own imperialism and its war from the outset, consistent with the Leninist tradition. The RRP is the main Trotskyist organization in Russia, one of the most substantial far-left formations in the country. We who fight against all imperialisms, starting with our own, salute the revolutionary intervention of our Russian comrades against the war of their own imperialism. It augurs well for the refounding of the revolutionary International, which the winds of war make more necessary than ever.” (Marco Ferrando: *The war in Ukraine one year later. The nature of the conflict and the position of revolutionaries*, PCL, 22 February 2023, <http://ito-oti.org/the-war-in-ukraine-one-year-later/>)

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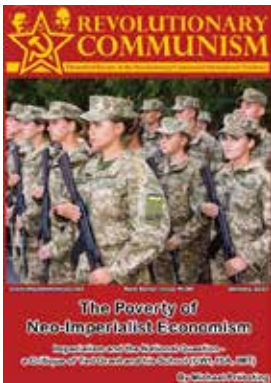
[ukraine-war-beating-the-dummy/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/). Furthermore, we refer readers to: Joint Declaration of the Anti-Imperialist Conference of Revolutionary Socialists in Russia: Our Solidarity is with the Ukrainian People! The working class of Russia and all the oppressed need to organize to stop the war and the occupation of the Ukraine, 26 November 2022, https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-anti-imperialist-initiative-of-revolutionary-socialists-in-russia/#anker_2; Report: Joint Anti-Imperialist Initiative of Revolutionary Socialists in Russia. Conference of socialists from different organisations agrees to coordinate forces in the struggle against Russian imperialism and the Putin regime, 28 November 2022 https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-anti-imperialist-initiative-of-revolutionary-socialists-in-russia/#anker_6.

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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

Artificial Intelligence: A Leviathan Monster Serving the Ruling Class

Theses on Artificial Intelligence and its application in the period of capitalist decay. A first approach from a Marxist viewpoint.

Resolution of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 7 May 2023

Preface: The following set of theses does not claim to analyse all aspects of AI or to answer all questions raised by the application of such technology. It is only a first approach of the RCIT which needs further elaboration and analysis.

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a new form of modern technology which is rapidly spreading both in the sphere of capitalist production, social reproduction as well as consumption. It has potentially far-reaching consequences for the future of capitalism and for people's lives. Hence, it is imperative for socialists to have a correct understanding of the role and the dangers of AI in the current period of capitalist decay and to take a clear position on how to approach this technology.

What is AI: A brief technical definition

2. As a general technical definition of AI, we can say that its purpose is to replicate key features of what constitutes a human being respectively to imitate other forms of life (e.g. thinking, learning, problem-solving, biochemical functions of human organs). This can be the case both on macro (robots) as well as on micro (nanorobots) level. The method to achieve this is the programming of machines (computer, robot, or other devices) with intelligent software systems. Ultimately, the objective purpose of AI within the context of class society is to replace human beings by machines as much as possible.

3. Hence, AI is already applied to a wide range of fields and, given its relative infant stage, it has much more far-reaching potential. Without claiming completeness, here are several examples. It is used for the creation of all kinds of robots – in the field of industrial machinery, as autonomous vehicles, as pseudo-human beings (e.g. Sophia, the first “social” robot), police dogs (in New York), or as autonomous weapon systems (from killer machines to autonomous ships and drones). It is used for comprehensive surveillance systems (facial recognition, the “Green Pass” system which was tested during der COVID Counterrevolution, etc.). There are plans to apply AI in nanorobotic, e.g. as biological machines operating within human bodies to identify and destroy cancer cells, for manipulating industrial raw materials like coal and silicone, for environmental purpose against microplastics, etc. It can be applied in the field of the so-called *internet of things* which coordinates several single-purpose AI into a complex system. Finally, there is creative AI like ChatGPT and similar concepts. These are software which mimic human behaviour like creating texts, pictures, videos, music, etc. Such software is also essential to create comprehensive virtual realities like Zuckerberg's Metaverse.

On the concrete danger of AI

4. Such applications of AI create all kind of dangers which have in common that they massively expand the power of the ruling class to control and to destroy and, in addition, that they inherit the potential risk of getting out of social control. There is no doubt that the application of AI and robots will have dramatic consequences in workplaces. A study published by Goldman Sachs in March 2023 calculates that roughly two-thirds of current jobs in the U.S. and Europe are exposed to some degree of AI automation and that generative AI could substitute up to one-fourth of current work. According to the same study, the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs is globally exposed to automation. Clearly, numerous jobs in many industries are at risk – from production to administration, from service to education. At the same time, AI is extremely energy intensive and will have negative consequences for the environment which is already close to collapse given the climate change caused by reckless rape of natural resources by capitalist monopolies.

5. Furthermore, the application of AI as autonomous weapon systems has, by definition, devastating consequences – even more so if such machines take autonomous decisions about the use of weapons of mass destruction etc. Things stands similar with the use of AI by the police or for comprehensive surveillance systems, i.e. as an instrument for what we have called *Chauvinist State Bonapartism*. As such it has been already applied in China and other countries in the period of COVID Counterrevolution (e.g. the “Green Pass” system in 2020-22). Nanobots can certainly be useful but also contain huge potential risks. It is unknown how complex dialectical systems like human bodies react to it. Furthermore, there is the danger of a scenario called “*Grey Goo*” by Eric Drexler (a pioneer of nanorobotics) and which means that plenty use of nanobots leads to unstoppable nanobots-pandemic that transforms everything organic into inorganic. Handing over administration of houses, hospitals, factories, transport system, nuclear power plants to AI – the “internet of things” – can result in catastrophes if the software gets damaged or hacked. Creative AI will not only endanger many jobs but also aids the plans of various monopoly capitalists to create virtual realities and to draw human beings into it as much as possible. In summary, AI is an instrument of *capitalist techno-totalitarianism*.

6. Finally, there are dangers which are not certain, given the underdeveloped stage of AI, but which should make us cautious given their far-reaching implications. It is a telling – and alarming – sign that a growing number of AI scientists are publicly warning about the potential dangers of this technology (among them are Geoffrey Hinton, the so-called ‘Godfather of AI’; Eliezer Yudkowsky, who

is regarded as a founder of Artificial General Intelligence; Michael Osborne, a professor of machine learning at the University of Oxford; as well as the late Stephen Hawking). It should make one suspicious about AI if even leading developers of this technology with intimidate knowledge of its potential are warning the public! The whole purpose of AI research is to create machines which can think and decide like human beings, i.e. that they create a kind of “consciousness”. It is disputed among experts if and to which degree this is possible. However, it is a dangerous concept in itself. Even if the creation of AI developing “consciousness” would be in the interest of humanity (a highly disputable assertion!), we are not living in the right time to aim for this. It is extremely dangerous to try for singularity in the framework of the capitalist class society. Already in its very primitive forms, AI is reproducing sexism, racism, and all other forms of oppression as it mirrors the society, we live in. Hence, such technology, developed in capitalist class society, would be a powerful instrument in the hands of oppressors and exploiters who have already driven the world to the edge of its complete destruction. Why on earth should one let those criminals play with even more powerful weapons?!

AI and the decay of capitalism

7. Many people (including self-proclaimed Marxists) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of AI primarily from a technical point of view and treat it as a kind of neutral technology. This is an extremely one-sided approach which can not but result in an analytical cul-de-sac. In fact, it is impossible to understand the social relevance of AI without situating it within the context of the

socio-economic formation in which it evolves, i.e. within the capitalist class society trapped in the final epoch of its decay. The development of AI is a result of the ruling class desperate attempts to find a way out from its decline. At the same time, it reflects the degeneration of the system of class exploitation and will intensify its inner contradictions. In a certain way, AI embodies the fundamental principle of capitalism – the supremacy of dead labour over living labour.

8. The dream of bourgeois ideologists that AI could facilitate a new period of economic upswing of global capitalism is pure phantasy. Theoretically, the introduction of new technologies could only result in such a boom period if it would go hand in hand with the creation of the necessary political and economic conditions for an intensified period of capital accumulation (as it was the case after the defeat of the 1848 revolution or after World War II and the consequential re-division of the world). In itself, new technologies do not result in an economic boom of capitalism. As the RCIT has pointed out in past studies – and, more recently, even bourgeois economists have been forced to admit this –, the tremendous technical innovations of the past three decades (computer, industrial robots, internet, etc.) have not resulted in renewed economic growth but rather in stagnation and decline of labour productivity.

9. This is even more the case because AI has the purpose to replace as much labour force as possible (and, ideally, make it completely redundant). In itself, AI is dead labour. Hence, it does not create capitalist value – in contrast to living labour (it does only transmit already existing value which is embodied in AI by its previous development by labour force). In other words, AI will massively accelerate the tendency of capitalism towards its collapse as it

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.

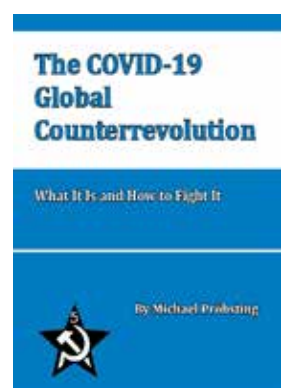
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

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.



radically changes the organic composition of capital (increase of constant capital at the cost of variable capital). It thereby reduces the creation of capitalist value and, hence, the fundament for profit – the famous “*Historic Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation*” which Marx explained in the next-to-last chapter of *Capital* Vol. I. While AI will not facilitate a new period of economic growth, it will inevitably accelerate the process of monopolisation, i.e. the destruction of small capital by large capital and the further domination of the economy by a few powerful capitalist monopolies.

10. AI represents respectively facilitates an extreme form of capitalist alienation. It massively increases the already existing tendency of capitalism to alienate human beings from each other as well as from nature. It allows for isolation of humans both in workplaces as well as in their social life (home office, Metaverse, etc.) It increases the passivity of humans since they can seek refuge in virtual reality, i.e. combining the status of a virtual super-warrior with physical laziness completely disconnected from society and nature. Furthermore, AI takes social skills like communication away from humans. It is capitalist alienation ad infinitum. In short, AI accelerates the already existing tendency of capitalism for *de-socialisation of humans and dehumanization of society* (“*Entgesellschaftlichung der Menschen und Entmenschlichung der Gesellschaft*”).

11. Does AI represent a development of productive forces? Yes, to a certain degree insofar as it helps to advance the production of goods. However, in the historic period of capitalist decay there exists a tendency of transformation of productive forces into destructive forces. As a result, we see widening spheres of civilization threats in the past 1-2 decades. The destruction of the climate with rapid strides due to “very efficient” means of production, the cul-de-sac of nuclear power – these are just some examples of this tendency inherent to decaying capitalism. Its extreme destructive potential in warfare, surveillance, the ruin of industries, the social isolation of human beings, etc. – all this means that AI represents much more destructive than productive forces.

12. Drawing on Marx’s fundamental critique of commodity fetishism in chapter 1 of *Capital* Vol. I, revolutionary communists warn against any fetishism of productive forces under the rule of capitalism. While capitalism has been – and continues to be – capable of driving forward technical advances, it develops an increasing tendency to nurture technologies which have little or none benefit for the society but rather undermine or endanger the existence of humanity. Technologies which make industrial

production more effective or transport faster but, at the same time, deplete the ozone layer; nuclear power plants which are a permanent risk for the population and which produce highly dangerous waste; genetic modified crops which undermine sustainable agriculture and which have devastating consequences for bio-diversity and health; and now Artificial Intelligence – all these are examples for the inherent tendency of decaying capitalism to create destructive forces. The task of Marxists is not to blindly cheer the development of new technologies under capitalism but to differentiate between those which are useful for the humanity’s future and those which are rather destructive or have unknown consequences and, therefore, must be opposed.

Marxist approach and tactics

13. Marxists have no reason to welcome the development of AI. On the contrary, the RCIT opposes it as it is, first and foremost, a dangerous instrument in the hands of our enemy – a Leviathan monster serving the imperialist monopolies and powers. This becomes clear if we summarise the fundamental driving forces for the development of AI by the monopoly capitalists. These are a) the desire of capitalists to raise productivity by replacing living labour with dead labour; b) the desire of the ruling class, living in a historic period of capitalist decay, to increase its control of a crisis-ridden society full of explosive contradictions; c) the wish of a sector of the monopoly bourgeoisie to avoid a collapse of civilization by eliminating a part of humanity respectively by creating new forms of “social” life with the help of AI which would require the existence of a much smaller proportion of human beings. Such new forms of “social” life might exist on the earth or on another planet.

14. For Marxists, the problem with AI is not that it “rationalizes” the process of production or communication, etc. The problem is rather: a) that the ruling class utilizes AI to destroy large segments of jobs, to dramatically expand surveillance, to make warfare much more “effective” etc.; b) that the ruling class is determined to hand over crucial discretionary competences to AI – from autonomous vehicles to autonomous weapon systems, from the administration of the world of work to the administration of the social system; c) that the ruling class wants to use AI for the transformation of social life – resulting in a further social isolation of human beings and their “dehumanization”, taking away from them social and cognitive skills.



Publications of the RCIT

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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

15. What should be the tactic of socialists regarding AI? To put it short, the RCIT advocates a tactic which can be summarised in the formula: *“oppose and obstruct”*. We oppose the development of AI, its implementation in workplaces and social media or further research. We call for a stop of the application of new AI technologies. We support its sabotage where it is already applied. Of course, we are realists, and we know that as long as the ruling class is in power, it will use AI to the widest-possible degree (even if it involves massive risks for itself when it gets out of control). However, socialists must draw a line of intransigent opposition against the decisions of the ruling class and their reactionary and hazardous policy. The Marxists’ tactic of *“oppose and obstruct”* can not exist in isolation but must be part of the policy of class struggle in defence of the interests of the workers and oppressed. It is part of our program for international socialist revolution.

16. Given the massive and devastating social consequences of AI, one can expect widespread outrage and resentment by large sectors of the working class and the popular masses. It is likely that there will be a wave of “Luddism”, i.e. the desire to stop and destroy complex AI. No doubt, such popular opposition will be confused, mixing progressive ideas with petty-bourgeois utopianism (we saw similar developments in the context of mass protests in the period of the COVID Counterrevolution). While large sectors of the petty-bourgeois left will give a sniff at such “backward” masses, authentic Marxists have no reason to follow such muddleheads who are pulled by the nose ring by the ruling class. In fact, history has repeatedly seen mass movement which objectively have played a progressive role despite a subjectively backward ideological consciousness – from the uprisings of “barbarians” and slaves in the time of the Roman Empire or the Chinese “Middle Kingdom” to various religious heretic movements in the Middle Ages, indigenous people fight-

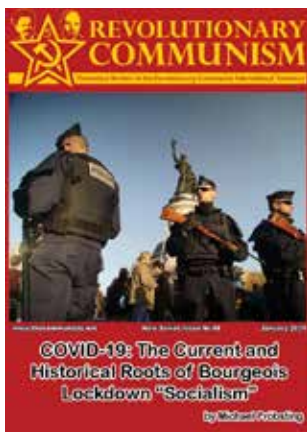
ing colonialism, and Islamist rebellions against imperialist invaders in modern days.

17. The task of socialists is a) to support such popular opposition against AI; b) to explain the link between AI and capitalism and that the main task is to fight against and to overthrow those who control AI – the imperialist monopolies and powers; c) to transform spontaneous outrage into class-conscious struggle against the ruling class.

18. One can expect that there will be also strong opposition against AI among the middle class since their jobs will be severely affected by this technology. Socialists are prepared to collaborate with such forces as long as their protest serves the class struggle. However, the focus of revolutionaries must be the organising of workers and oppressed.

19. Does this mean that AI has no place in a future socialist society? This will have to be discussed and decided once the organized working class has overthrown capitalism and taken power in their own hands. Surely, in those areas where AI can help humanity to build a free society, it might be useful as a subordinated technology. As a general principle, we can say that socialists support technology which makes human beings more sovereign, more part of the collective; at the same time, we oppose every technology which limit or even endanger the freedom and independence of human beings, and which make them more isolated. Hence, contrary to the illusions of the middle-class left, socialism is not capitalist consume but more and cheaper. No, socialism – in the Marxist understanding – is a completely different mode of production and consumption which allows humans to lead an active, social, sustainable and manifold life in a healthy relation to nature.

International Secretariat of the RCIT



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