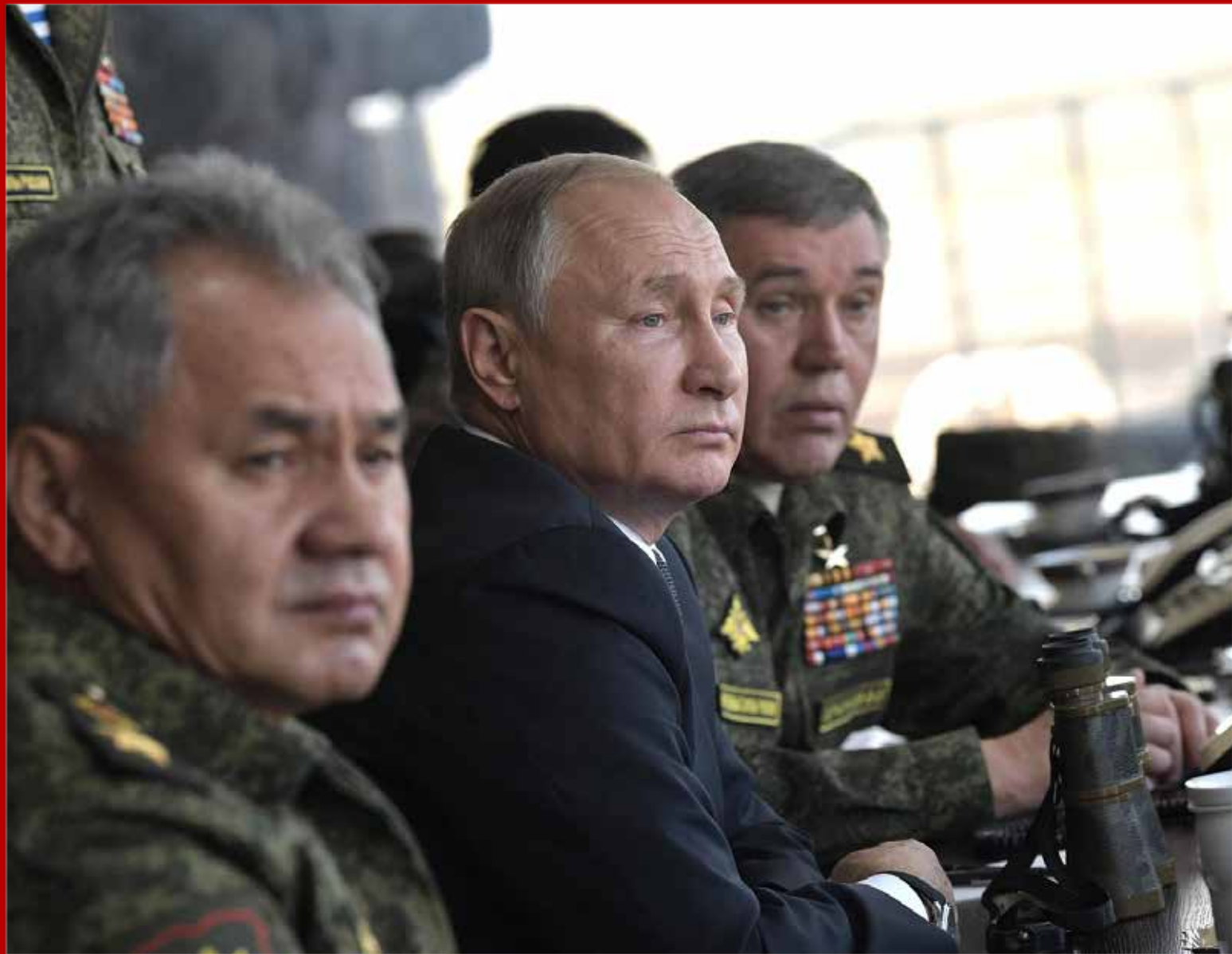




REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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August 2023

Russia: The Death Agony of the Putin Regime

Mexico: The "Bottle Caps" * Perspectives of the Ukraine War
NATO Integration is Imperialist Trap for Ukrainian People

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.93, August 2023

- Mexico: The “Bottle Caps” and the Perspective of the 4T after AMLO p.3
- NATO Integration: An Imperialist Trap for the Ukrainian People!
For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism! p.5
- Ukraine War: What Are the Results of the NATO Vilnius Summit?
On the contradictory process of NATO-Ukraine rapprochement and, at the same time, diverging in-terests between Western powers and Kyiv p.11
- Russia: The Death Agony of the Putin Regime
and the Perspectives for the Class Struggle
On the tasks of socialists in the coming period of crisis of the Bonapartist regime and its imperialist war against the Ukrainian people p.14

Picture on the cover: Russia’s President Putin with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu (left) and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov (Source: www.kremlin.ru, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vostok-2018_military_manoeuvres_\(2018-09-13\)_23.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vostok-2018_military_manoeuvres_(2018-09-13)_23.jpg))

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Mexico: The “Bottle Caps” and the Perspective of the 4T after AMLO

By Jorge Arboleda, RCIT Mexico, 20 June 2023

In mid-2021, López Obrador decided to “uncover” those who considered his possible successors to be president of Mexico and who will be the ones to continue his so-called “fourth transformation.” They were Marcelo Ebrard, Claudia Sheinbaum and Adán Augusto López. Although AMLO said that they would not be the only ones who should be allowed to participate in the race to be candidates for president by Morena, he has mentioned that these three are the only ones who have his full support. These candidates were ironically called “*corcholatas*” (bottle caps). (1) Since Morena is the most popular party in Mexico today, after the great rout of the PRD, PRI and PAN who lost thousands of affiliates to join Morena after AMLO’s wave of popularity in 2018, it is logical to think that the next candidate of Morena will be almost imminently, the next or next president.

On June 6 of this year, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard announced his resignation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to start his fight for the candidacy for the presidency, strategically taking control of what the other aspiring candidates must do from these dates. With this, a new chapter in the history of Obradorismo opens.

Due to the fact that Morena was never a real political movement and that it has only been an electoral apparatus to give total and unconditional support to the figure of

Andrés Manuel, the presidential succession has fallen into many gaps that have led it to almost completely adopt all the PRI traditions, since, to begin with, the candidate will not be chosen by an internal voting process and there will not even be any type of debate, but will be through a survey, which will be hired by the party’s presidency .

The Obradoristas are now dividing into several factions, whose purpose is no longer the unity to unconditionally support the figure of AMLO, but now to catapult their “cap” to the party’s candidacy, with which each of these factions makes use of the worst political tricks inherited from the PRI. The only difference in this aspect is that, although in the PRI period the successor candidate was chosen directly by the president, in an act known as “pointing” or “uncap”, on this occasion AMLO decided to choose 3 pre-candidates with an option for more applicants to register in the contest within the party. In this article we will make a summary analysis of the contenders for the candidacy for the presidency.

Marcelo Ebrard was until a few days ago the Secretary of Foreign Relations (SFR), and was the mayor of Mexico City in the period 2006-2012, immediately after the AMLO administration when he was mayor. Ebrard was a figure very close to Manuel Camacho Solís, a former collaborator of the neoliberal Carlos Salinas. There are rumors that men-

Books of the RCIT

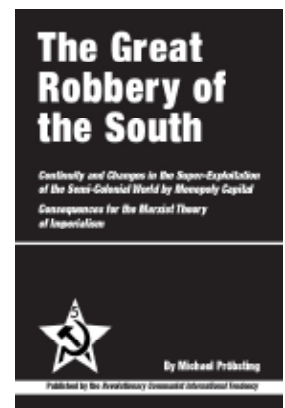
Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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



tion that the current president of the Morena party, Mario Delgado, is a supporter of Ebrard for the candidacy, since he was his finance and education secretary when he was mayor of Mexico City, so it is possible that the apparatus of the party plays a key role in your choice as a candidate. This has been seen since through the polls Delgado was able to impose a highly unpopular candidate to contend in the election for governor of the state of Coahuila, which he also lost. As foreign minister, Ebrard demonstrated total subservience to US imperialism, leading agreements such as the Free Trade Agreement (TMEC), anti-immigration initiatives such as "Stay in Mexico" and recurring visits from gringo officials and businessmen. His most recent scandal occurred after a fire in a migrant detention center in Ciudad Juárez in March of this year, where 40 Central American immigrants died and he rejected any statement or action in this regard, but also when he was mayor of Mexico City, was pointed out for having irregularities in the construction of line 12 of the subway, where 2 years ago there was a collapse in its elevated section that cost the lives of 25 people.

Claudia Sheinbaum has just resigned from her position mayor of Mexico City, where she had an administration with many disasters. At the beginning of her administration, she faced an environmental contingency to which was added a drought and fires in the hills that surround the city. When receiving criticism in this regard, her response was to say that previous governments did not leave an environmental action protocol for this type of case, which meant a "shot in the foot", since she was Secretary of the Environment of Mexico City between 2000-2006; this type of clumsiness would continue in her government for four and a half years. In May 2021, the aforementioned collapse of metro line 12 occurred, which only culminated in complete impunity for those responsible for the disaster, from the mayor who built it (her opponent Ebrard), her predecessor as mayor who never did any type of corrective maintenance, nor to its own administration, which ignored the complaints of people who were witnesses of signs of deterioration in the infrastructure and that were disseminated on social networks. Not to mention the construction companies, since the company in charge is owned by Carlos Slim, the richest man in the country and in Latin America. Another scandal has been the deficient public transport service in the city, to which Claudia has only responded with the absurdity that it was opposition sabotage, for which she mobilized 6,000 National Guard soldiers to "monitor" the subway service, but that was of no use, since accidents and fires in the public transportation system continue to happen due to lack of maintenance. Another scandal has been her initiative to

give Airbnb facilities to invest in the city, which has been criticized for accelerating gentrification, as well as a territorial reorganization program that goes against the interests of the peoples who live in rural areas of the city, which provoked a demonstration in Xochimilco to which Sheinbaum responded with repression using riot police.

Adán Augusto López has been the Secretary of the Interior since 2021. His administration has stood out for not really doing anything relevant other than supporting all of AMLO's initiatives and for separating responsibility for the fire at the migrant detention center in Ciudad Juárez from the SFR, despite the fact that the National Migration Institute is under his administration. After a massive hacking of the National Defense Secretariat's emails in 2022, it was revealed that the army was pointing to Adán Augusto as a collaborator of the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel when he was governor of Tabasco between 2019-2021 for having placed members of said cartel as part of his cabinet. Like Marcelo Ebrard, Adán made his political career in the PRI until 2001 when he joined the PRD and then Morena.

After these candidates there are other applicants, but they are not considered to have greater weight in Obradorismo, so we do not mention them in this article. In any case, the profile of all the aspirants to be candidates by Morena shares the same characteristics: being bureaucrats who have served the ruling class and whose aspiration is only to be lackeys of the national and imperialist bourgeoisie.

Morena and Obradorismo came as a way for our class enemies to consolidate their power through the co-optation of popular movements, unions and social organizations, under the false promises of a government at the service of the poor. The fractures within the party may represent an opportunity for the mass movement in Mexico to recover the ground that was taken from us based on deceit and an anti-worker bureaucratic apparatus. But for this to happen, the socialists must carry out a constant work of organization and discussion so that these struggles do not become the strengthening of some other bourgeois bureaucratic apparatus, such as the PAN, the PRI or some other possible party of the bourgeoisie.

Footnotes

1) The caps on bottled beverages are known in Mexico as "corcholatas", and because PRI presidential candidates were historically known as "capped", because it was a secret until close to the elections, the action of choosing the successor was called "uncap", and as a joke there were those who called the successor chosen as "bottle caps", for having been "uncapped". The reference is way too complicated, but is part of the Mexican political folklore.

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NATO Integration: An Imperialist Trap for the Ukrainian People!

For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19 June 2023

1. A recent meeting of NATO Defence Ministers agreed on fundamental proposals which shall be adopted at the NATO summit to be held 11/12 July in Vilnius. As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reported, the meeting discussed a plan to integrate the Ukraine in the main military alliance of Western imperialism. Basically, this plan consists of three points.

a) "One is to move Ukraine closer to NATO in practical terms. That's the Comprehensive Assistance Package ... to help them move from Soviet-era standards, doctrines, equipment, to NATO standards, doctrine and equipment, and to be fully interoperable with NATO. That takes time."

b) "Then the other path is the political ... to establish the NATO-Ukraine Council. (...) This will be a body of 31 Allies and Ukraine equal, sitting around the table with the same rights and the same possibilities to consult, and also make decisions together if we find that the right thing to do. (...) [It] will bring Ukraine closer to NATO in political terms."

c) Concerning the issue of Ukraine's NATO membership, Stoltenberg explained: "all Allies agree that Ukraine will become a member of NATO. We're not going to discuss an invitation at the Vilnius Summit, but how we can move Ukraine closer to NATO." (Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence in Brussels, 16 June 2023, www.nato.int)

In addition, various NATO states are creating so-called "coalitions" with the Ukraine in order to arm and train its armed forces.

2. While there is a clear desire to integrate and sub-

ordinate the Ukraine to NATO, major Western power – most importantly the U.S. and Germany – are strongly opposed to the Ukraine's membership in the alliance before the war has ended. The reason for this is clearly that Western imperialist powers want to avoid a direct military confrontation with Russia (for now) since this would inevitably provoke World War III. U.S. President Biden made this clear when he emphasizes that the Ukraine shall not join NATO for the foreseeable future. "They've got to meet the same standards. So we're not going to make it easy." (17 June 2023)

3. There is no doubt that the Zelensky government is very eager to join NATO as soon as possible. This is why Kyiv applied for NATO membership in September 2022. Minister of Defense of Ukraine Oleksiy Reznikov welcomed the decisions of the above-mentioned NATO meeting by claiming that Ukraine is already a "de facto member of NATO": "This is practically what I always say: we are not yet a NATO country de jure, but we are already becoming one de facto. (...) Ukraine is the only country in the world that has practical experience of resistance and victory using NATO-standard technologies and weapons. Therefore, it is in our common interest to unite with Ukraine in this collective security architecture. (...) Collective security gives an advantage. That is why I believe that the Ukrainian army of the future will be part of the civilized world, the European and Euro-Atlantic community." (Ukrinform: Резніков про Раду Україна-НАТО: Україна де-факто стає членом Альянсу, 16.6.2023)



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

The dual character of the Ukraine War

4. The RCIT has emphasized since the beginning of the Ukraine War that this conflict has a *dual character*. On one hand, it represents a reactionary war of oppression by the Putin regime against the Ukrainian people. On the other hand, it has been combined with the accelerating inter-imperialist rivalry between NATO and Russia. Hence, we have advocated a *dual tactic* where we combine support for Ukraine's war of national defence (without lending political support to the Zelensky government) with revolutionary defeatist opposition against both imperialist camps. We have 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!*

5. Furthermore, the RCIT noted in a recently published document NATO has expanded its influence in the Ukraine with the help of the reactionary Zelensky government. *"The past 12 months have validated our analysis of the dual character of the conflict, and we therefore reiterate our dual tactic. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to ignore certain changes which have taken place respectively which could take place in the next few months for the reasons mentioned above. As we did already point out since the beginning of the war, the Zelensky government is thoroughly bourgeois and pro-NATO. After 12 months of war in which the Ukraine has become more and more dependent on Western military and economic assistance, the Bankova's pro-NATO orientation could not but increase. This does not mean that the Ukraine has already become a "proxy" of Western imperialism as all kind of opportunists claim who are just looking for an excuse to refuse defending a semi-colonial country against an imperialist aggressor. However, while quantity has not transformed into quality, we are certainly closer to such a point than we were in March 2022."*

6. We therefore warned about the implications of the decisions at the upcoming NATO summit in Vilnius. *"Washington, London, Berlin and Paris are considering a special treaty between NATO and the Ukraine which has been compared to the one between the U.S. and Israel. Since the concrete nature of such a treaty is not, and can not, be known by now (if it ever comes into existence), it is not possible at this juncture to judge if it would transform the relationship and make Ukraine a proxy of the Western power or not. If it would really establish a relationship similar to the one which has existed between the U.S. and Israel for several decades, it would indeed force us to view the Ukraine as a proxy of Western imperialism."* (RCIT: Towards a Turning Point in the Ukraine War? 11 March 2023)

Contradictory factors

7. What is the meaning of the plans to be adopted at the NATO summit in Vilnius? Clearly, these are important steps towards Ukraine's political and military integration in NATO which represent a preliminary culmination point of a process which is already going on for some time (NATO training of 30,000 soldiers, Starlink satellite services for the Ukraine, sharing of intelligence, NATO's former general secretary Rasmussen's role as advisor of Zelensky, etc.). It is evident that NATO wants to subordinate the Ukraine to its chain of command and that the Zelensky government is more than willing to become a proxy of

Western imperialism.

8. However, the objective character of a war is not only determined by the wishes of one or the other government but also, and primarily, by the *class character of all parties involved and by the totality of their interests as they evolve in the course of the war*. The war as such represents, first and foremost, a conflict between imperialist Russia against the Ukraine which is a capitalist semi-colony. The Ukraine receives political and military support by U.S. and European imperialism and increasingly becomes a proxy of NATO. However, the process of NATO integration, i.e. the complete subordination of Ukraine to Washington and Brussels, is hampered basically by three factors:

a) The unwavering patriotic determination of the Ukrainian people to defend their country which puts important pressure on the Zelensky government not to give in to any demands from their Western allies for a pacification of the war and to start negotiations with Putin with all the concessions involved.

b) Russia has been more resilient than Western powers hoped for after the first ten months of the war. Its economy is relatively stable (at least not less stable than that of the Eurozone), it seems to have recovered some of its military strength and globally, it still can count on a number of allies (most importantly Chinese imperialism) and friendly states in the Global South.

c) Related to this is the fear of dominant sections of the Western ruling class to stumble into a nuclear war with Russia. Such fear has created divisions between NATO states as well as within governments about the questions to which degree they shall force Kyiv to agree to start negotiations with the Kremlin rather sooner than later and to which degree they should advance the process of Ukraine's NATO integration. It is clear that Western powers are neither politically nor militarily prepared for a decisive showdown with Russia. Hence, NATO governments are willing to risk the lives of Ukrainian soldiers but not of their own people.

9. The combination of these three factors have allowed the Ukraine to retain a certain degree of independence in the course of the war despite its strong reliance on NATO and its military aid. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to ignore the fact that, despite the above-mentioned obstacles, the Ukraine has become more and more subordinated to NATO in the course of the past 16 months. As a general "rule" we can say that the longer the war lasts, the closer the Ukraine's relationship with NATO becomes, the longer the Ukrainian working class is not an independent actor but led by figures like Zelensky and Reznikov, the more the Ukraine becomes a proxy of Western imperialism.

10. The main problem for the liberation struggle of the Ukrainian working class and popular masses is the fact that they do not have an independent representation. The bourgeois Zelensky government represents sectors of the oligarchs and the state apparatus which see their future as stooges of NATO and EU imperialism. What is lacking are independent organs ("*rada*") of the workers and soldiers and an independent workers party. Hence, the danger that NATO will succeed to subordinate the Ukraine is becoming bigger and bigger.

11. Will the Vilnius summit represent a turning point in the process of Ukraine's subordination to NATO's com-

mand, i.e. will quantity transform into quality? It is too early to say. In fact, one can view such developments not so much by formal decisions at conferences but rather by great political and military events. In our view, the process of Ukraine's NATO integration has entered an interim phase where both outcomes are possible: Ukraine could become a NATO proxy soon or this process could be halted and it could regain some independence. It is difficult to say how long such an interim phase will last since this depends on many factors in the Ukraine, Russia and NATO states. This is even more the case since global catastrophic events (e.g. a war between the U.S. and China, another slump of the capitalist world economy, political and socially destabilising events resulting from climate change or another pandemic) could have important repercussions on the plans of the Great Powers and, indirectly, influence the course of the Ukraine War.

Is there no alternative to NATO integration?

12. The RCIT warns that the process of NATO integration is an imperialist trap which has dangerous consequences for the Ukrainian people. It will subordinate the Ukrainian people to the interests of Washington and Brussels. When these Great Powers look for a deal with Putin, they will not hesitate to sacrifice the national interests of the Ukraine. Likewise, they want to plunder the economic and natural resources of the Ukraine – a process which had devastating consequences for the semi-colonial countries in the past decades.

13. If Ukraine becomes a proxy of NATO, it will strengthen the ultra-chauvinist forces in Russia which characterise the war as a conflict between Russia and NATO and, therefore, call for total mobilization and total war against the Ukraine. In addition, such a development could improve the low morale amongst Russian soldiers and make them open for chauvinist "patriotism" since they would now "defend their motherland against NATO". Furthermore, such a process of NATO integration would weaken international solidarity with the Ukraine since many peoples who have suffered from Western imperialism in the past decades – particularly in the Global South – will view Kyiv as a stooge of Washington.

14. Supporters of Zelensky will claim that the Ukraine must integrate into NATO in order to defeat Russia and to get sufficient military protection. But this is not true. Recent history has shown that oppressed people can defeat Great Powers without backing by other imperialists. Think about Chechnya 1994-96 against Russia as well as Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S. in the past two decades. It is an old Marxist wisdom that the fate of war is primarily determined by political and not by military factors. The latest version of Western military technology is much less powerful in the Ukraine's liberation struggle than the undermining of Russian soldiers' morale and the evolvment of inner contradictions in Russia's ruling class as well as the society. Fraternalization of Russian soldiers with their Ukrainian brothers and sisters is much more effective than one million rounds of ammunition. Likewise, it is much easier to call the Ukrainian masses to make more sacrifices if they know it is for their own national and class interests and not for those of foreign imperialists and oligarchs.

15. Furthermore, even if the Ukraine does not inte-

grate to NATO and EU, Western states would provide it with weapons because they have an interest in weakening Russia and because they fear to risk a direct war with Russia themselves. In other words, they would send military aid in any case because they need the Ukraine resisting Russia's invasion. In addition, Western states are not the only ones on this planet which are eager to sell weapons.

Tasks of socialists

16. The RCIT and all authentic socialists continue to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion. *Defeat the Russian occupation – for an independent Ukraine of the workers and popular masses!* The Ukrainian masses should only trust in their own power and their own leaders – not in the leadership of Zelensky and Reznikov! For a *popular war* to drive out the occupiers! Likewise, it is urgent to build *international popular solidarity with the Ukrainian national resistance – independent of any imperialist influence!*

17. Likewise, we strongly denounce the Ukraine's integration into NATO. This is an imperialist trap for the Ukrainian people with dangerous consequences. The same is true for Ukraine's integration into EU. Hence, socialists in the Ukraine as well as internationally must call for an immediate termination of the Ukraine's NATO integration. *Down with the NATO-Ukraine Council! Military aid to the Ukraine without strings!*

18. Socialists call for the creation of *independent popular councils and militias* in the Ukraine so that the war of defence against Russian imperialism can become truly victorious. Only the working class and the soldiers should determine the future course of the liberation struggle – not the NATO's stooges in the Zelensky government. Such organs could also play a decisive role in creating a *workers government* which transforms the Ukraine from a capitalist semi-colony into a *socialist workers republic*.

19. Instead of looking to Western imperialists, the Ukraine should orientate towards building links with other peoples who also suffer from imperialist oppression. In addition to the Chechens, there are many other national minorities in Russia which detest the Kremains' iron fist. Likewise, the Russian working class has no interest in supporting the war or the aging Putin regime. Furthermore, the Ukrainian people have a natural ally in the Global South – in the Muslim world, in Latin America, Sub-Sahara Africa and Asia – where the masses have fought repeatedly against imperialist domination since many decades. Likewise, they should link to the workers and youth in Western Europe which have staged a number of strikes and mass demonstrations in recent past (most importantly in France).

20. The struggle of the Ukrainian people will be sold out to imperialist interests if the current trend to put Ukraine under control of NATO continues. This process must be stopped! Not only because it is in the interest of the people in Ukraine but also because their freedom struggle against Russian imperialism can become a beacon of the global liberation struggle of the workers and oppressed. For this, it must be independent of the interests of any Great Power! The RCIT calls socialists in the Ukraine, in Russia and globally to unite on an internationalist and anti-imperialist program. *For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

Ukraine War: Secret Negotiations between U.S. and Russia Have Started

**Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with former U.S. diplomats
to discuss about the pacification of the conflict**

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 8 July 2023

NBC, one of the largest American broadcast television networks, has published a report about secret negotiations between the U.S. and Russia. According to the media network, the Great Powers have already started to discuss about ways to pacify the Ukraine War.¹

“A group of former senior U.S. national security officials have held secret talks with prominent Russians believed to be close to the Kremlin — and, in at least one case, with the country’s top diplomat — with the aim of laying the groundwork for potential negotiations to end the war in Ukraine, half a dozen people briefed on the discussions told NBC News. In a high-level example of the back-channel diplomacy taking place behind the scenes, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with members of the group for several hours in April in New York, four former officials and two current officials told NBC News. On the agenda of the April meeting were some of the thorniest issues in the war in Ukraine, like the fate of Russian-held territory that Ukraine may never be able to liberate, and the search for an elusive diplomatic off-ramp that could be tolerable to both sides.”

According to NBC, the U.S. negotiation team included Richard Haass, a former high-ranking diplomat and the outgoing president of the Council on Foreign Relations (a

leading Think Tank which publishes *Foreign Affairs* and is close to the State Department). Other participants were Europe expert Charles Kupchan and Russia expert Thomas Graham, both former White House and State Department officials who are Council on Foreign Relations fellows.

The Russian team included, apart from Lavrov, “academics, leaders from major think tanks or research institutes and others in the Russian foreign policy sphere perceived as having President Vladimir Putin’s ear or being in regular touch with Kremlin decision-makers.”

Of course, these are not official negotiations. Haass claims that “such meetings are conversations, not negotiations” where participants are “speaking candidly and testing new ideas or proposals.” Likewise, the Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed that Lavrov had met in April with Council on Foreign Relations members “but said that no peace plan for Ukraine had been on the agenda, asserting that they had discussed a broader range of international issues.”²

But this is the usual window dressing often used in the world of diplomacy. As NBC confirmed, these talks have taken place “with the knowledge of the Biden administration” and “after the Lavrov meeting in April, U.S. participants briefed the White House about what was discussed.” If these

Books of the RCIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

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

By Michael Pröbsting



Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

were not secret negotiations, why on earth would the Russian Foreign Minister participate? Because Lavrov, a long-serving and highly-experienced diplomat, likes to listen to self-important Americans?!

No, there is no doubt: secret negotiations between the U.S. and Russia have started – at least since April this year.

The negotiation plan of Haass (and the White House)

It is telling that the U.S. negotiation team is led by Richard Haass. The latter wrote, together with Charles Kupchan (another participant in the team), an essay in *Foreign Affairs* titled “*The West Needs a New Strategy in Ukraine.*”³ It is also hardly accidental that this essay was published at about the same time as the meeting with Lavrov took place.

In their article, the two former U.S. officials outline in detail their plan for negotiations with Russia for ending the Ukraine War. They start from the assumption that the conflict is headed for stalemate. “*Yet for all the good that greater Western military help would do, it is unlikely to change the fundamental reality that this war is headed for stalemate. It is of course possible that Ukraine’s coming offensive proves stunningly successful and allows the country to reclaim all occupied territory, including Crimea, resulting in a complete Russian defeat. But such an outcome is improbable. Even if the West steps up its military assistance, Ukraine is poised to fall well short of vanquishing Russian forces. It is running out of soldiers and ammunition, and its economy continues to deteriorate. Russian troops are dug in, and fresh recruits are heading to the front.*”

Hence, Haass and Kupchan suggest that “*given the likely trajectory of the war, the United States and its partners need to begin formulating a diplomatic endgame now. (...) Under this approach, Ukraine’s Western supporters would propose a cease-fire as Ukraine’s coming offensive reaches its limits. Ideally, both Ukraine and Russia would pull back their troops and heavy weapons from the new line of contact, effectively creating a demilitarized zone. A neutral organization—either the UN or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—would send in observers to monitor and enforce the cease-fire and pullback. The West should approach other influential countries, including China and India, to support the cease-fire proposal. (...) Assuming a cease-fire holds, peace talks should follow. Such talks should occur along two parallel tracks. On one track would be direct talks between Ukraine and Russia, facilitated by international mediators, on the terms of peace. On the second track, NATO allies would start a strategic dialogue with Russia on arms control and the broader European security architecture. Putin’s effort to undo the post-Cold War security order has backfired and ended up strengthening NATO. But that reality only increases the need for NATO and Russia to begin a constructive dialogue to prevent a new arms race, rebuild military-to-military contacts, and address other issues of common concern, including nuclear proliferation.*”

The unofficial U.S. negotiators state in their essay that even if the negotiations do not result in an official peace treaty, it would be still beneficial for the U.S. if a ceasefire and a freezing of the front lines could be achieved. “*Another plausible outcome is that Russia would agree to a cease-fire in order to pocket its remaining territorial gains but in fact has no intention of negotiating in good faith to secure a lasting peace settlement. Presumably, Ukraine would enter such negotiations by demanding its top priorities: the restoration of its 1991 bor-*

ders, substantial reparations, and accountability for war crimes. But because Putin would surely reject these demands out of hand, a prolonged diplomatic stalemate would then emerge, effectively producing a new frozen conflict. Ideally, the cease-fire would hold, leading to a status quo like the one that prevails on the Korean Peninsula, which has remained largely stable without a formal peace pact for 70 years. Cyprus has similarly been divided but stable for decades. This is not an ideal outcome, but it is preferable to a high-intensity war that continues for years.”

Naturally, Haass and Kupchan are fully aware that such a plan would be highly detrimental to the national interests of the Ukraine. But since the Eastern European country is only a pawn in the global plans of U.S. imperialism, the American ex-diplomats don’t worry too much about that. “*Even with these inducements, Ukraine might still refuse the call for a cease-fire. (...) But if Kyiv did balk, the political reality is that support for Ukraine could not be sustained in the United States and Europe, especially if Russia were to accept the cease-fire. Ukraine would have little choice but to accede ...*”

Confirmation of the Marxists’ analysis

The secret negotiations between the U.S. and Russia confirm the RCIT’s analysis of the interests of Western powers and, in particular, of the U.S. in the Ukraine War. We did already warn in November 2022 “*that the Ukrainian liberation struggle is threatened by a Great Power deal aimed at the pacification of the war. Such a deal would mean, at least temporary, the consolidation of the Russian occupation of significant parts of the Ukraine’s territory. In other words, the Ukrainian people face the danger of a sell-out by Western imperialism. Washington and Brussels might push for such a pacification of the war before it destabilises the imperialist world order too much and provokes mass unrests or even revolutionary crises in Russia, Europe or in other parts of the world.*”⁴

In the RCIT’s theses “*Towards a Turning Point in the Ukraine War?*”, published in March this year, we elaborated on the U.S. plans for a pacification of the war in more detail. We also explained that such plans would go hand-in-hand with the project to formalize NATO’s relations with Kyiv and to fully subordinate the Ukraine.⁵

The news about ongoing secret negotiations between the U.S. and Russia make our warning even more urgent. We reiterate that the Ukrainian people must resist any subordination to the plans of U.S. imperialism. Such subordination would not only serve primarily the interests of Washington and Brussels, but it would also disable the Ukrainian people to oppose a Great Power deal which would leave a substantial part of Ukrainian territory in the hands of the Russian occupiers. Former Ukrainian Presidential advisor, Oleksii Arestovych, does not go astray by “*claiming that Ukrainians are shedding their blood for the sake of future western negotiations with Russia.*”⁶

We reiterate that the Ukrainian people must resist all plans of Washington to make the country a fully semi-colony of Western powers and to pacify the war in the interest of Russian imperialism.⁷ In order to expel the invaders and to gain full national self-determination, the Ukraine must be independent of the interests of any Great Power! This will be possible only if the workers and popular masses replace the pro-NATO Zelensky regime by a *workers and popular government!*⁸

The RCIT calls socialists in the Ukraine, in Russia and

globally to unite on an internationalist and anti-imperialist program. *For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

Footnotes

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8 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 180 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/>

Website of "Socialist Tendency" (RCIT Section in Russia): www.socialisttendency.com

The Ukraine War and the Inter-Imperialist Rivalry

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Ukraine War: What Are the Results of the NATO Vilnius Summit?

On the contradictory process of NATO-Ukraine rapprochement and, at the same time, diverging in-terests between Western powers and Kyiv

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 13 July 2023

The 2023 NATO Summit, taking place from 11–12 July, in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, was certainly an important event – both for the alliance itself as well as for the future prospects of the Ukraine War.

Let us begin with a summary of its most important decisions as far as it relates to the war. After that, we will discuss what has been behind these decisions, which political interests do these reflect and what could be their consequences for the next period.

First, the NATO summit made a general statement in its official communiqué that “Ukraine’s future is in NATO.” The allies reaffirmed the commitment “we made at the 2008 Summit in Bucharest that Ukraine will become a member of NATO” and stated that the Ukraine “has moved beyond the need for the Membership Action Plan.” The latter means that in case of an invitation, the Ukraine could join faster than it is usually the case.¹

However, NATO – under the pressure of the U.S. and Germany – refused to make any binding commitment when, or if at all, they would invite the Ukraine to become a member. It simply stated that it will discuss this issue if it considers it appropriate. (“We will be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance when Allies agree and conditions are met.”)

Instead, the allies decided to establish a NATO-Ukraine Council. This should be a “joint body where Allies and Ukraine sit as equal members to advance political dialogue, engagement, cooperation, and Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. It will provide for joint consultations, decision-making, and activities, and will also serve as a crisis consultation mechanism between NATO and Ukraine.”

Finally, the allies committed themselves to continue their military support for the Ukraine by expanding the “Comprehensive Assistance Package into a multi-year programme for Ukraine. The assistance provided will help rebuild the Ukrainian security and defence sector and transition Ukraine towards full interoperability with NATO.”

Furthermore, the G7 powers – the United States, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada – issued a declaration at the sidelines of the Vilnius summit. Therein, they announced that “we are launching negotiations with Ukraine to formalize – through bilateral security commitments and arrangements aligned with this multilateral framework, in accordance with our respective legal and constitutional requirements – our enduring support to Ukraine.”²

Such support would include economic and financial aid for reconstruction and, most importantly, military aid (“security assistance and modern military equipment, across land, air, and sea domains; support to further develop Ukraine’s defense industrial base; training and training exercises for Ukrainian forces; intelligence sharing and cooperation; support for cyber defense, security, and resilience initiatives.”)

Likewise, the G7 declaration promised that “in the event of future Russian armed attack, we intend to immediately consult with Ukraine to determine appropriate next steps.” Such steps could include military aid, sanctions against Russia, etc.

Unsurprisingly, the Western imperialist powers expect full subordination of the Ukraine in return. “For its part, Ukraine is committed to: a) Contributing positively to partner security (...); b) continuing implementation of the law enforcement, judiciary, anti-corruption, corporate governance, economic, security sector, and state management reforms that underscore its commitments to democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and media freedoms, and put its economy on a sustainable path; c) Advancing defense reforms and modernization including by strengthening democratic civilian control of the military and improving efficiency and transparency across Ukraine’s defense institutions and industry.”

In addition to these declarations, individual NATO states promised to send the Ukraine more weapons. The German government pledged another \$771m in military assistance (including two Patriot missile system launchers, another 40 Marder infantry fighting vehicles and 25 Leopard 1 tanks). France will supply long-range SCALP cruise missiles. And Denmark and the Netherlands said an 11-nation coalition will start training Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16 fighter jets next month with a new training centre to be set up in Romania.³

What is the meaning of the NATO decisions in Vilnius?

The NATO decisions at the Vilnius summit represent, first of all, an important step towards institutionalization of the relationship between the alliance and the Ukraine – more concretely, of the Ukraine’s subordination, as a semi-colonial country, to the military alliance of the Western imperialist powers. Of course, this process of imperialist subordination did already start long time ago, but Vilnius substantially deepened it.

Having said this, it is important to look at the details of these decisions. Contrary to such bombastic statements that “Allies and Ukraine sit as equal members at the NATO-Ukraine Council”, the reality is, of course, that NATO dominates in this relationship and that it can, at any given moment, retreat from its commitments. The G7 declaration explicitly includes such loopholes as it commits the Ukraine to all kind of domestic reforms which effectively mean that Western powers would have a more direct control of the country’s economy and army. In addition, the declaration commits Kyiv “to contribute positively to partner security” – which can mean everything as “partner security” could also imply that NATO wants to have peaceful relations with Russia in the future. And if this requires that the Ukraine makes territorial concessions – de facto or de jure – so be it. So, if the G7 or NATO consider that their conditions have not been met by the Ukraine, they can withdraw from their commitment.

Furthermore, the declarations do not contain any concrete definition when NATO would be prepared to make the Ukraine a member state. Various politicians said that this issue could be discussed once the war has ended. But there is no definition what this means exactly. “Defining an

end to hostilities is no easy task. Officials have declined to define the goal, which could suggest a negotiated cease-fire or Ukraine reclaiming all occupied territory. Either way, Putin would essentially have veto power over Ukraine's NATO membership by prolonging the conflict."⁴

To give an example: Technically speaking, there is still no peace between North and South Korea 70 years after the end of the war, only a ceasefire. If a similar situation occurs between the Ukraine and Russia, NATO could postpone the issue of membership indefinitely.

However, this is not the only important outcome of Vilnius. The negotiations and public comments before and during the NATO summit revealed for the first time a public manifestation of conflicting views and different interests not only among NATO member states but also – and most importantly – between the U.S. (and other Western powers), on one side, and the Ukraine, on the other side.

The refusal of the Biden Administration, the German Scholz government and others to make any commitment to the Ukraine in terms of NATO membership provoked annoyance from the Zelensky government. The Ukrainian President expressed, in unusual undiplomatic language, his outrage about being kept outside the servants' entrance of the imperialist alliance. *"It's unprecedented and absurd when a timeframe is not set, neither for the invitation nor for Ukraine's membership."*⁵

Likewise, the imperialist masters did not hide their resentment about the Ukrainians requests for military aid. *"Why do they always want more weapons instead of dying in silence?"* – this must be the hidden sentiment of Western rulers. British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace told journalists about his *"bubbling frustration over Zelenskyy's demands, adding that "people want to see gratitude" for Western military support. Wallace also said he's heard "grumbles" from some U.S. lawmakers that "we're not Amazon. (...) "I mean, that's true," Wallace said, according to multiple British media outlets. He recalled telling the Ukrainians the same thing when he visited the country last year and was presented with a list of weapon requests. "I'm not Amazon.""*⁶

Zelensky used another splendid and ambiguous formulation when he thanked Biden, saying that *"you spend this money for our lives"*, i.e. pointing to the very different forms of sacrifices of the two sides.

The differences reflect conflicting interests

It is not accidental that these tensions are becoming public now. They reflect a widening gap between the U.S. – the hegemonic Western power – and the Ukraine. The Ukraine – and more or less the whole population – is determined to fight till victory, i.e. until they have completely expelled the Russian invaders and liberated their country. As long as Western powers are determined to weaken their Russian rival, the interests of the two parties intersected.

However, as we explained in several documents in the past few months, Washington and its allies are increasingly looking to bring the war to an end and to make a deal with Putin. First, they have no interest to escalate the war and to stumble into World War III. In addition, it becomes increasingly difficult for NATO states to finance their military aid for the Ukraine – even more so as their stocks of war materials get depleted. Add to this the destabilising effects of the war for the capitalist world economy as well

as increasing popular dissatisfaction. The latter is particularly relevant given the fact that there will be the U.S. Presidential elections next year.

Furthermore, the recent events in Russia with Prigozhin's coup attempt on 24 June made alarm bells ring in Western capitals. It demonstrated to the U.S. and the EU that a humiliating defeat of Russia in the war could result in a collapse of the Putin regime and the beginning of a civil war.⁷ Given the fact that this country is home to thousands of nuclear missiles, the ruling class in Western imperialist countries is highly worried and considers a "sane" Putin regime (compared to let us say Prigozhin) as a "lesser evil".⁸

In addition, the U.S. wants "free hands" to use the Ukraine's membership in NATO as bargaining chips in negotiations with Russia.

As a result of all these considerations, the U.S. did already start secret "unofficial" negotiations with Russia. A first meeting took place in April in New York between a delegation of former U.S. diplomats (acting with the consent of the White House) and a Russian team led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.⁹

Hence, the U.S. (and their allies) have no interest in binding their hands and to commit themselves to long-term financial and military aid for the Ukraine under any circumstances. This is even more the case as Western governments fear that they can not put the Ukraine under full control so that it might wage war against Russia even if it is against the foreign policy interests of Washington and Brussels. As we did already explain somewhere else, Henry Kissinger – the "wise old man" of U.S. imperialism – has warned about such danger.¹⁰

Kimberly Marten, an U.S. expert on the history of Russia-NATO relations, expressed the same worries of leading Western circles in a comment on the Vilnius summit. *"Ukraine has been incredibly brave, accomplished so much, and done so much to show that it is a good partner with Western countries. Zelensky has been the face of this. But we don't know what will happen when Zelensky is not president anymore." (...) If Ukraine ends up losing a significant amount of territory to Russia, for example, one potential outcome could be the growth of domestic political extremism, according to Marten. "If the new [Ukrainian] leadership then had revanchist goals of saying Ukraine must get back all of its territory, it would be very uncomfortable for NATO to have this security guarantee made to Ukraine." (...) "Once you are in NATO, NATO can't kick you out." (...) "It will be important to make sure that whoever comes into [power] after Zelensky and after the war is over is not someone who can take advantage of NATO membership to take highly aggressive, highly risky actions that might end up drawing NATO into a direct war with Russia.""*¹¹

In summary, the events in Vilnius have publicly demonstrated the gap between the Ukraine's strategy of war until victory against the Russian invaders and the strategy of the Biden Administration which can be called *"militarist negotiations policy"*, i.e. temporarily supporting the Ukraine with arms in order to force Putin making concessions at the negotiation table.

A clash of interests: Ukraine's national self-determination versus Western Great Power policy

The latest developments at the NATO summit in Vilni-

us confirm the analysis which the RCIT has provided in recent months. Western powers are interested in utilizing the Ukraine's national liberation war for their own interests. But they are subordinating such support to their strategic interests as imperialist Great Powers. And, as we did show, their interests make them push for a pacification of the war rather sooner than later. Of course, they are willing to provide limited military support for the Ukraine in order to put Russia in a weakened position at the negotiations.

Likewise, they are willing to transform the Ukraine into a "porcupine" armed to the teeth – under one condition: that Kyiv becomes a reliable and subservient lackey of NATO. This has not been achieved until now.¹² However, there is no doubt that Washington and Brussels are putting major pressure on the Ukraine to become an imperialist servant. And, in fact, this process has already advanced a lot!

We are aware that many Ukrainian patriots have massive illusions in NATO. Such hopes are totally misplaced. If the U.S. and Western Europe succeed to completely control the political and military leadership of the Ukraine, they will be able to force Kyiv to subordinate to the foreign policy plans of Western powers. If Washington and Brussels want to shoot, the Ukrainian army can march against Russian forces. If Washington and Brussels want to negotiate with Putin, Kyiv must shut up and comply. And if Washington and Brussels want the Ukraine to make territorial concessions to Moscow, it will be also forced to accept the wishes of the Western masters.

This would be the reality of being an imperialist servant! This is why socialists – in the Ukraine and internationally – must strongly oppose the Ukraine's pro-NATO policy. In the interests of national self-determination, in the interests of national liberation from Russian occupiers, the Ukraine must break with Western imperialism! *No to NATO and EU membership, no to the NATO-Ukraine Council!*

Hence, socialists must sharply denounce the Zelensky government which is willing to become a lackey of Western power! It is promising Washington and Brussels each and everything. Zelensky did not tire to demonstrate its subordination. *"When we applied for membership of NATO, we spoke frankly: de facto, Ukraine is already in the alliance. Our weapons are the weapons of the alliance. Our values are what the alliance believes in ... Vilnius must confirm all this."*

¹³ And at another occasion he proclaimed: *"NATO needs us just as we need NATO."*¹⁴

We reiterate our support for the Ukraine's just war of national defence against Putin's invasion. At the same time, socialists must oppose the country's subordination to Western powers. In order to expel the invaders and to gain full national self-determination, the Ukraine must be independent of the interests of any Great Power! This will be possible only if the workers and popular masses replace the pro-NATO Zelensky regime by a *workers and popular government!*¹⁵

The RCIT calls socialists in the Ukraine, in Russia and globally to unite on an internationalist and anti-imperialist program. *For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!"*

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Russia: The Death Agony of the Putin Regime and the Perspectives for the Class Struggle

On the tasks of socialists in the coming period of crisis of the Bonapartist regime and its imperialist war against the Ukrainian people

*Theses by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT),
jointly issued by the International Bureau and Socialist Tendency (Russia), 6 July 2023*

Introduction

1. The attempted coup by Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin has shaken the Putin regime to its very foundations and opened a new period. Within 36 hours, the fundamental weaknesses of the Bonapartist regime, already in power since 1999, had been brutally exposed in front of everyone when it was challenged by a disgruntled militia leader and a few thousand mercenaries. In fact, the failed coup opened a new period in Russian politics – the period of the death agony of the Putin regime.

2. Albeit we can not say if this period will take months or years, it is evident that the days of the Putin regime are numbered. This is because the events of 24 June demonstrated:

a) The inner divisions of the regime. Sectors of the military, the state bureaucracy and the oligarchs differ with each other about the reasonableness of the war, its goals and its methods.

b) While large sectors of the elite refused to support the coup, they also did not rally in favour of Putin. Only a few voices called for defence of the regime before the coup was over in the evening of that day. Many officials and oligarchs were rather busy leaving the capital with their executive jets. More importantly, only small sectors of the military and the state bureaucracy offered any active resistance to the coup. Not a single shot was fired when Prigozhin's militia entered Rostov and took the military headquarters – the most important of the Russian armed forces in the Ukraine war. Even the notorious mercenaries of Kadyrov – only brave when they face unarmed Chechen civilians – preferred to “defend Moscow” not before the Wagner columns had turned around to move back to their military bases.

c) Finally, while sectors of the population in Rostov demonstrated its support for the Wagnerites, there was no popular support for Putin – neither in Rostov nor Moscow, St. Petersburg or in any other city!

3. We reiterate the position which the RCIT and *Socialist Tendency* (RCIT Section in Russia) took already in the first hours of the Prigozhin coup. We characterised it as a conflict of different sectors within the Bonapartist regime. We therefore denounced it as a “*reactionary rebellion against a reactionary regime*” and as a “*quarrel between thieves*.” Consequently, we stated: “*The workers and oppressed have nothing to win by supporting one of these war criminals – both are worse!*”

The peculiar nature of the Putin regime

4. While the crisis of the Putin regime has been triggered by the failed Prigozhin coup, its deeper causes are located in the specific nature of the Bonapartist type of rule of Russian capitalism which is the basis for being an imperialist Great Power.

5. To summarise the RCIT's analysis of the Putin regime, which we have analysed in several detailed

studies, we can identify the following features.

a) *Politically*, it is a Bonapartist regime centred on Putin and the Kremlin's apparatus. It combines an authoritarian capitalist regime – based on a swollen military, security and administrative state apparatus – with limited forms of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism.

b) *Economically*, it is based on the combination of a sizeable state-capitalist sector – in particular in the financial and the energy and raw material sector – with a small group of oligarchs.

c) *Ideologically*, it rests on Great Russian chauvinism (“*Ruskij Mir*”), the promise to regain Russia's Great Power status, combined with social conservatism (promotion of the Orthodox Church, anti-LGBT+ propaganda, etc.).

d) Putin's *foreign policy* is characterised by a deepening strategic alliance with Chinese imperialism which goes hand in hand with an accelerating rivalry with Western Great Powers. Furthermore, the Kremlin conducts an aggressive militaristic policy abroad (e.g. the Second Chechnya War 1999-2009, its military interventions in Georgia 2008, in Syria since 2015 and in North and Central Africa since a few years).

6. Our analysis of the social physiognomy of the Putin regime in the past decades can be summarised as follows.

a) It is centred on a *huge and over-centralized federal state apparatus in the Kremlin*. Such a huge state apparatus is not only caused by the peculiar features of Russia as the geographically largest country in the world. It is also caused by the nature of Russian capitalism which has been restored only in the early 1990s and which is, therefore, based on a relatively weak, because late, domestic bourgeoisie.

b) The Kremlin is in control of an equally *overblown regional and local bureaucracy* which is loyal to the Kremlin (without, of course, forgetting to meet their own material interests).

c) The economic class, on which this state bureaucracy rests, is the *Russian monopoly bourgeoisie* – the so-called *oligarchs*. While it is weaker than their Western rivals (for the above-mentioned reasons), it is still a strong class as it controls – together with the state-capitalist sector – the domestic economy and undertakes significant foreign investment activities (from which it gains imperialist super-profits). Basically, the oligarchs are relatively free to follow their business interests – as long as they remain loyal to the Kremlin resp. show no signs of opposition. In short, the regime imposed on the oligarchs the following deal: “*Stay out of our business and we stay out of your business.*”

d) The Putin regime is characterised by the fact that the Kremlin presides over a fragmented elite – various oligarchs, factions and interest groups in the state bureaucracy and military. These represent small “*principalities*” which are allowed to appropriate wealth and compete with each other as long as they don't rock the boat and accept Putin as the superior Bonaparte.

e) The population, with important exceptions, has been largely kept “*out of politics*” for many years. The basis

for this has been i) the traumatic experience of capitalist restoration in the 1990s with its devastating consequences for social living conditions and ii) the “strong fist” of the authoritarian regime. At the same time, the regime did not interfere too much with the personal life of people. Hence, the regime imposed on the people the same deal: “Stay out of our business and we stay out of your business.”

f) As a result of these specific factors, Putin never bothered to build a strong mass party (in contrast, for example, to the Chinese CPC with its 100 million members). The regime’s party – “United Russia” – is basically an electoral machine and a bureaucratic network for career promotion but rarely engages in mass mobilisations or local activism in neighbourhoods and villages. The Kremlin does not consider this as necessary since its rule is based on apolitical toleration by the population but not on active support.

7. The specific system of the Putin regime worked for an extended period as long as the regime could secure relative stability based on economic growth. This does not mean that the regime did not face important challenges. Most importantly, these were i) the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people which was brutally smashed by a genocidal war in 1999-2009 and ii) the democratic mass movement after the fraudulent 2011 Russian legislative election.

8. The Russian Bonapartist regime differs from its bigger brother – China’s Stalinist-restorationist regime. Beijing has a centralized and well-rooted mass party with 100 million members as well as much stronger state-capitalist sector which can drive the economy much more effective than the Kremlin. Naturally, these differences have their material basis in the very different roads to capitalist restoration. In Russia, the Stalinist regime simply collapsed and the state with it. The creation of a new ruling class in the 1990s was a painful and chaotic process characterised by neoliberal privatisation, economic destruction and criminal mafia warfare. In China, the CPC successfully introduced the capitalist laws of motion – after smashing the workers and youth uprising at the Tienanmen Square in June 1989 – in the economy and helped creating a powerful new bourgeoisie without destroying the political state apparatus.

The causes of the crisis of the Bonapartist regime

9. The conditions on which the Putin regime rests began to change with the beginning of a new era in world politics in the second half of 2019. A global wave of popular uprisings and the onset of the Great Depression of the inter-imperialist Great Power rivalry and the COVID Counterrevolution 2020-22. These developments had a massive impact on the Russian population as it undermined economic stability and provoked draconian interference in personal lives of people. As a result, Putin’s “United Russia” lost popular support and could retain a narrow absolute majority at the legislative election in September 2021 only by means of massive electoral fraud.

10. Such loss of popular support and, at the same time, an acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry pushed the Kremlin to counteract. Hence, Putin intensified his Great Russian chauvinist policy both in regard to domestic propaganda as well as in the arena of foreign policy. Counting on his experience of the Second Chechen War, the Kremlin leader hoped to boast the regime’s prestige – domestically as well as globally – by a “short victorious war”. The result of such deliberations was Putin’s invasion of the Ukraine on 24 February 2022. But similar to Tsar Nicholas II with his war against Japan in 1904-05, the regime completely miscalculated. Contrary to the Kremlin’s expectations, the Ukrainian people rose up against the invasion with patriotic determination and dealt humiliating defeats to the Russian aggressors. Likewise, the army’s military operational competence and, in particular, the fighting moral of the Russian soldiers turned out to be abysmal.

11. In short, these objective factors culminated in the fateful Ukraine War. The Russian army’s failures as a result of, primarily, the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people, is the direct cause of the regime’s political crisis. This humiliation has provoked massive dissatisfaction with the regime by nearly all sectors of the population. The liberal and progressive anti-war sectors despise the war as a reactionary aggression. The chauvinist pro-war sectors criticize the regime for its inability to conquer the Ukraine. And the apolitical sectors of the population are



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

not against the war in principle but don't want to see their sons and husbands dying or coming back disabled. Add to these the social and economic consequences of such a very costly war for the working class and even the middle layers.

12. All these developments have provoked cracks within the political and military state apparatus as well as in the society. This finds its expression in anti-war protests which were brutally suppressed by the police, local protests against the mobilization (particularly in regions with nationally oppressed peoples), the creation of an ultra-reactionary milieu of chauvinist warmongers (Prigozhin's Wagner PMC, the volunteers' battalions, the milbloggers, Strelkov's "*Club of Angry Patriots*", etc.) and, in the midst of all these, the incompetent state bureaucracy and Shoigu's Ministry of Defence. The recent attempted coup by Prigozhin has been the most explosive expression (until now) of this dynamic. No doubt, more political and social explosions will follow.

The cul-de-sac of Putin's attempts to reconsolidate his regime and its consequences for the Ukraine War

13. Putin faces a dilemma which is nearly impossible to resolve (except via a total military victory against the Ukraine which, however, looks very unlikely). He must focus on restabilising and consolidating the Kremlin's domination over the political, military and business elite. This makes a series of purges of hostile or unreliable elements necessary. At the same time, he must not rock the boat too much, i.e. he must not provoke too much opposition from wavering sectors among the elite and he must not undermine the ability of the state and the army command to continue the war in Russia's favour.

14. In addition, it is very likely that different factions of the regime will start thinking about a successor of 70-year-old Putin. They will do so even more in face of the upcoming Presidential elections which are scheduled to be held in March 2024. Even if these factions might not challenge Putin himself, they will look to put their respective figures in a good position for the succession. Such increasing rivalry will provoke even more conflicts within the ruling elite and will exacerbate Putin's efforts to reconsolidate his regime.

15. Putin's efforts to reconsolidate his regime are closely connected with the fate of the robber war which he has waged against the Ukrainian people since February 2022. On one hand, it would be very risky for the Kremlin to impose another wave of mobilisation of young conscripts for the army. Sending even more sons and husbands to an unpopular and high-casualty war is much too risky for an already shattered regime. It could provoke a much more explosive wave of protests than it happened during the last mobilisation in September 2022. Since the war is exacerbating the inner contradictions of the regime and the decomposition of the army, Putin is pressurised to bring the war to an end as soon as possible. However, at the same time, he can't afford to lose the war.

16. As a general law we can say that the longer the war lasts, the higher Russia's casualties are, the more the political and social contradictions of the Putin regime and in the Russian society will accumulate, the more we will see revolutionary as well as counterrevolutionary explosions. We can therefore say that in the current conjuncture, Russia has become the weakest link of the imperialist chain, i.e. it is that Great Power which is closest to revolutionary developments. If the Russian army collapses and suffers humiliating defeats by the Ukrainian people, i.e. if it loses the war, a collapse of the Putin regime and the opening of

a revolutionary situation is very likely.

17. In order to achieve a relative successful outcome of the war, the Kremlin might look for a short-term escalation of the war – similar to the temporary troop surge of U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2010-12. However, this would necessitate a massive mobilisation and this would be very risky for the regime for the above-mentioned reasons. The Kremlin could escalate the war via the use of tactical nuclear weapons or via provoking a nuclear catastrophe at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. It is hardly necessary to say that such measures are extremely risky too.

18. Putin's only hope is that the governments of the U.S., Germany and France are also increasingly worried about a "never-ending war" in the Ukraine. As the RCIT did show in various documents, there exists such a trend among the ruling elite of Western powers which looks for a *pacification of the war* rather sooner than later, i.e. which wants to impose a ceasefire and the start of negotiations. The driving factors of this trend, which becomes more and more influential, are the following:

a) The negative consequences of the war for the Western powers are increasing (risks of unintended escalation into a direct confrontation with the nuclear power Russia, high costs for military aid, limited stocks of war material, destabilising effects for world economy, popular dissatisfaction, etc.)

b) While Western governments want to see the regime of the Russian rival weakened, they are worried that it might collapse – something which could open a period of popular uprisings and civil wars. This would have very destabilising effects for the whole Eurasian region, even more so as Russia is home of thousands of nuclear missiles.

c.) It is not clear yet, if and what kind of future role imperialist China might play for developments in Russia. It appeared that China was cautious in publicly backing Putin's regime in its internal conflict with Wagner. At the same time, any new regime that might follow Putin could make China's small friend Russia less reliable. One should not dismiss the possibility that China steps up to play a crucial role in peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, especially after the Prigozhin mutiny. In such a scenario, Western imperialism has two alternatives: either withdraw from the diplomatic parquet to give China the lead (very much unlikely) or to utilize the peace negotiations like a chess board in their strategic conflict with China. Either way, it will be very telling about the true strength and stability of each imperialist force.

19. Nevertheless, even if an unholy alliance of NATO and Russia could impose such a pacification of the war in the next months (most likely against the will of the Ukrainian people) and temporarily stop the Ukrainian struggle for national liberation, the situation for the Putin regime would remain highly precarious. Many people would ask what did the country win by Putin's unprovoked invasion of the Ukraine, why did tens of thousands of young men have to die, and is Russia really now a greater power than before 24 February?! Furthermore, the war allows the Kremlin to legitimise massive pressure on the society not to publicly air criticism – otherwise people would "*stab the motherland in the back*". Once the war is over, the regime would lose such apology.

20. Furthermore, we should note that an early pacification of the war would make it impossible for the Ukrainian people to reap the fruit of their war sacrifices and, therefore, could provoke a massive backlash within the Ukrainian society. It could evoke a wave of revolutionary patriotism directed not only against Moscow but also against the Western powers and against

the complacent Zelensky government. Likewise, such a pacification would also arouse indignation in American and European societies – both by reactionary as well as progressive forces as their governments would evidently betray their official promises which did constitute the basis of their anti-Russian foreign policy since February 2022. While the Western imperialists may hope and plan for a peace solution like the Dayton agreement at the end of the heroic war of defence by the Bosnian people (1992-95), Russian imperialism – even if it would be massively weakened – can not be compared to semi-colonial Serbia. Any peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia will remain extremely instable by the very nature of both countries. This would demand an amount of resources that the Western imperialists are neither willing nor able to invest.

Future perspectives

21. The key factors for future prospects of Russia's political life in general and the class struggle in particular can be summarised as follows. A weakened regime in crisis is faced with deepening conflicts between different factions; it is struggling to survive in a situation which is marked by an increasingly unpopular and high-costly war which it is unlikely to win. The regime's efforts to consolidate its domination will inevitably strongly alienate one or the other (or all) sector of the ruling elite as well as the population.

22. Such conditions, on one hand, drive the Putin regime to expand its purges and to increase state repression against opposition in the society. But this is the roaring of a wounded animal. Hence, such developments also open space for the popular masses and for socialist forces. In a period of loss of popular confidence in the regime and its ability to offer a perspective for society, the working class and the oppressed nations will gain confidence to fight. An army whose soldiers have already a low morale to risk their lives for a senseless war is ridden with explosive contradictions which can easily result in armed mutinies of soldiers. A weakened Putin equals a weakened Kadyrov and this could result in a resurgence of the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people as well as of other Caucasian peoples. Other national minorities will also feel more confident to raise their head. In addition, the crisis of the regime will offer space for workers struggle in enterprises and for the formation of new trade unions.

23. In such a period, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist ideas can fall on fertile ground. The death agony of the Putin regime inevitably provokes a crisis of its hegemony of public opinion. This means, among others, that the public narrative of "Ruskij Mir" will suffer a heavy hit – at least among the more progressive sectors of the workers and youth. While one sector of the masses will turn towards ultra-reactionary chauvinism, other will hold such reactionary ideologies in abhorrence and look for alternatives. A crisis of the regime means that a "defeatist mood", i.e. an openness for anti-chauvinist and anti-imperialist positions, will be stronger than ever before – at least since several decades. For a growing sector of the population, the "fatherland" increasingly becomes the "fatherland of Putin", the "fatherland of the rapist of the Ukrainian people", the "fatherland" of those who have power and promise a lot but deliver nothing. Why should the workers identify with such a reactionary "fatherland"?!

24. At the same time, one must equally take into account that the current crisis of the Putin regime and its reactionary war will also strengthen ultra-chauvinist and

counterrevolutionary forces. The milieu of "angry patriots" could give birth to a powerful (semi-)fascist movement which openly advocates the creation of a dictatorship and an all-out war against the Ukraine, against NATO and all other enemies of "Ruskij Mir". Such a (semi-)fascist movement would pose a direct threat to the working class and the oppressed nations and must be fought by any means necessary.

Stalinism, centrism and crisis of revolutionary leadership

25. The period of death agony of the Putin regime will offer great opportunities for the working class and the oppressed. However, the workers vanguard is only in a position to lead the popular masses to victory if it succeeds in time to build a *revolutionary party* – a party which is based on *program of socialist revolution*, which is part of a *revolutionary international* and which is *well-rooted in among the proletariat and the oppressed peoples*. The creation of such a party is the key task for authentic Marxists in Russia.

26. There is no reason to underestimate the difficulty of this task since the working class faces a profound crisis of revolutionary leadership. While Russia is certainly one of the countries with the highest number of people in the world who self-identify as "communists", it is also evident that such "communism" usually means vulgar Stalinism, often combined with conservative Great Russian chauvinism. Zyuganovs Stalinist-chauvinist KPRF – one of the largest parties of the country – is the most important force of this social-imperialist camp which has unconditionally supported Putin's invasion of the Ukraine since the very beginning. In addition, there exist smaller Stalinist parties – like the RKR or the OKP – which preach less flagrant "Ruskij Mir" poison but still act as loyal defender of the imperialist fatherland. To the left of these are some Anarchist organisations to which belong heroic fighters against the Putin regime and its criminal war against the Ukrainian people (e.g. BOAK). However, their lack of working-class orientation, program and strategy means that these efforts do not contribute to the task of preparing the socialist revolution.

27. Finally, there exist various smaller Trotskyist organisations. Some of these, like the RRP or the IMT section (currently named OKI) combine a general Marxist outlook with opportunist adaption to the Stalinist KPRF and a failure to take the side of the Ukrainian people in its legitimate war of national defence against Russian imperialism. Groups like the RSD, affiliated with the Mandelist "Fourth International", take a correct position of support for the Ukrainian people but, unfortunately, combine such a stance with opportunistic adaptation to liberalism and tacit support for Western imperialism (as the supposed "lesser evil").

28. Others, like the comrades of CA, take a correct internationalist and anti-imperialist position but refuse, at least until now, to draw the necessary organisational consequences from such a position. Their international mother organisation – the ISA – is steeped in the Grantite method of imperialist economism and, consequently, has adapted to social-pacifism and a shameful abstentionist policy of neutrality in the Ukraine War since its very beginning.

29. As Russia is heading towards a period of explosive convulsions, it is inevitable that the crisis of the Putin regime will also provoke a crisis of the (Semi-) Putinista "left". The resulting process of internal crisis, splits and regroupment will offer important opportunities for revolutionaries. The goal must be to merciless attack

those forces which capitulate to social-imperialism and “*Ruskij Mir*” chauvinism and to help those elements which are moving to the left with comradely critique of their mistakes. The tasks of Bolshevik-Communists are to advance the unification of authentic revolutionary militants, irrespective from which peculiar tradition they come, on the basis of agreement on a concrete program of revolutionary action for the coming period.

Party and program

30. To successfully intervene in the period of death agony of the Putin regime, Marxists need to base their work on a program of revolutionary action. The strategic goal of such a program must be the organisation of the working class and the oppressed for the overthrow of the Bonapartist regime via a socialist revolution. Only the organisation of the masses in councils of action (“*soviets*”) and their armament in *popular militias* will allow the proletariat to take power and to create a *workers government* based on such organs. Only such a new proletarian regime will allow the *expropriation of the oligarchs, the nationalisation of key sectors of the industrial, financial, and service sector under workers control, the freedom of all oppressed nationalities to decide themselves about their fate, etc.*

31. Such a transitional program – in the methodological tradition of Trotsky’s foundation program for the Fourth International in 1938 – needs to be combined with a series of demands which relate to the most urgent tasks of the coming period. Hence, democratic and anti-imperialist questions as well as economic issues will have a priority in the revolutionary program.

32. The *most urgent issue is Putin’s reactionary war against the Ukrainian people*. Socialists in Russia must intransigently oppose this war and work towards the defeat of Russian imperialism. Their approach must be based on the method of Lenin and the Bolsheviks when they advocated support for the Persian, Finnish, Polish and Ukrainian people in their struggle against Tsarist Russia – the program of “*revolutionary defeatism*” associated with slogans like “*the main enemy is at home*” and “*transform the imperialist war into civil war*”.

33. Hence, socialists need to work towards the victory of the Ukrainian people in their struggle against Putin’s invasion. They must do so not only for the cause of national freedom of the Ukrainians but also for the cause of the national liberation struggle of oppressed peoples in Russia as well as of the liberation struggle of the working class in Russia. *The weaker the Russian regime, the better for its subjects!* Naturally, such a revolutionary defeatist position must be free of any accommodation to Western imperialism. In any conflict between the Great Powers, revolutionaries oppose both camps since both are worse! The key slogans of the RCIT and *Socialist Tendency* are: *For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

34. Related to this is the struggle for national self-determination of the oppressed peoples in the Russian Empire. This is particularly relevant for the Chechen people who have a proud record of heroic struggle against Russian imperialism despite facing two genocidal wars in the past three decades (in addition to the traumatic experience of their deportation to Central Asia by Stalin and their brutal subjugation by Tsarism after the defeat of the heroic resistance struggle led by Imam Shamil in the 19th century). Socialists advocate *support for the Chechens’ struggle for independence (“Ichkeria”)*. Likewise, we support *national self-determination for all other oppressed nationalities*

in the Russian Empire. At the same time, we warn against any illusions in independence on a capitalist basis as this would result in other, indirect, forms of dependence from imperialist powers. Hence, we advocate a solution of the national question on the basis of a *voluntary socialist federation of workers and peasant republics*.

35. Likewise, we demand full equality for migrants who are experiencing super-exploitation as cheap labour force as well as national discrimination as foreign-born citizens. *For equal wages* (which means adaption of migrant wages to those for Russian workers), *for full citizen rights irrespective of their passport as well as for recognition of their native language in public administration and education!*

36. The RCIT and *Socialist Tendency* call for the dissolution of all institutions which are designed to expand the political and economic position of Russian imperialism. *Down with the Eurasian Economic Union, the CSTO or the SCO!*

37. Socialists in Russia must advocate such a consistent anti-chauvinist program not only in order to build bonds of solidarity with other nationalities. It is also crucial in order to help Russian workers to overcome all forms of chauvinist prejudices so that they no longer belong to the “*Ruskij Mir*” but to the “*motherland*” of the international working class!

38. Given the long-standing authoritarian character of the Putin regime, it is clear that democratic, anti-Bonapartist demands will play an important role in the coming period of the liberation struggle. Such demands include the *unrestricted right of assembly, the right to form parties and trade unions, freedom of the press, etc.* Likewise, we call for *abolition of all anti-LGBT+ laws as well as of those which decriminalize certain forms of domestic violence against women in marriages*. Furthermore, we demand the *immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners*, including those who were imprisoned because of their opposition to war, of critical journalists but also of bourgeois figures like Alexei Navalny (with whom we naturally have no political agreement).

39. Furthermore, the demand for *democratic rights for soldiers* can gain in importance because of the central role of the war and because of the fact that hundreds of thousands of conscripts are armed – something which could be very significant in the midst of a revolutionary crisis! Naturally, such demands have to be combined with an anti-imperialist position against Russia’s occupation of parts of the Ukraine.

40. The strong Bonapartist character of the regime give significance to revolutionary-democratic demands even if they remain within the realm of bourgeois democracy. Among such demands is the *abolition of the presidential office* and the demand to *shorten the period of parliamentary terms to two years*. Deputies should be elected as members of local assemblies, be recallable at any time by their constituents, and receive as pay for their role the salary of a skilled worker.

41. A slogan which could gain importance in a period of crisis of the Bonapartist regime is the *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*. Such an assembly should exclusively discuss the future constitution of the country. In order to avoid that it becomes an instrument of ruling class, it should be convened and controlled not by any capitalist regime but by the fighting masses organized in councils of action and armed militias. Its deputies should be elected on the basis of local assemblies, constantly revocable by their constituents, and would receive the salary of a skilled worker.

42. Finally, it is likely that economic demands – like higher wages, job security, etc. – will play an important

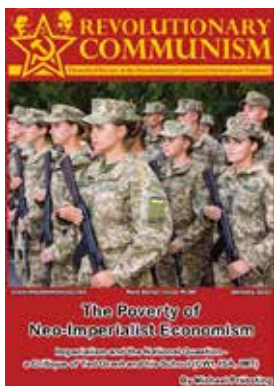
role in workers struggles in the coming period. This could be combined with the creation of new militant trade unions – like “Wildberry - True Employees” – respectively with a process of regrouping within existing bureaucratised trade unions.

43. We reiterate that such democratic and economic demands have to be combined with a program of socialist revolution. Only such a program can offer the way out of Russia’s misery; and only such a program can constitute the basis for revolutionary unification of authentic Marxists! Join the RCIT and Socialist Tendency in the struggle to build a new revolutionary party – nationally and internationally!

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We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 180 RCIT documents on the Putin regime, the Ukraine War and the current NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of->

[documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/). In particular we refer to: RCIT: Prigozhin’s Coup Attempt in Russia: A Quarrel between Thieves. Prigozhin, Shoigu and Putin – no support for any of these war criminals! Down with Russian imperialism and the Bonapartist regime! 24 June 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/prigozhin-s-coup-attempt-in-russia/>; Western Powers and the Prigozhin Coup in Russia. On the consequences of the attempted coup for U.S. and European imperialism and the Ukraine War, 26 June 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/western-powers-and-prigozhin-coup-in-russia/>; Once Again on the Worries of Western Powers after the Prigozhin Coup in Russia, 29 June 2023, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/western-powers-and-prigozhin-coup-in-russia/#anker_4; RCIT: Towards a Turning Point in the Ukraine War? The tasks of socialists in the light of possible lines of development of the war of national defence in combination with the inter-imperialist Great Power rivalry, 11 March 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/towards-a-turning-point-in-the-ukraine-war/>



Publications of the RCIT

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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

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