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Our History of Struggle against Imperialist Wars

The Historical Crisis of the Imperialist System

Theory of 'Lesser-Evil' Imperialism * Detlef Mühling (1952-2022)

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Picture on the cover: Joint contingent of activists of the RCIT section in Austria and Syrian migrants at a demonstration (Vienna, 19.3.2016)

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**www.thecommunists.net - rcit@thecommunists.net
Tel/SMS/WhatsApp/Telegram: +43-650-4068314**

The Historical Crisis of the Imperialist System

Yossi Schwartz, *ISL (RCIT Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine)*, 29.08.2022

When we speak on the crisis of capitalism, we should be clear that there is a periodical economic crisis and there is the general-historical crisis of the world capitalist system. The two crises are connected but are not the same.

Marx wrote that capitalism, driven by its three laws, accumulation of capital, concentration of capital and increasing misery of the working class and other popular classes would come to revolutionary crisis, paving the way for the transition to socialism. There are two basic ideas in Marx's analysis:

1. Capitalist crisis is an expression of the underlying basic contradiction of capitalist society; the social character of production and the private character of appropriation and consequently the tendency of boundless, rapid expansion and overproduction on the one hand, and the limitations of consumption on the other hand.

2. The internal contradictions involved in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, find expression in crises.

These two ideas are closely interconnected, they are not two alternative theories between which we have to choose, they are two aspects of one clear-cut economic theory. A theory of crisis, to be satisfactory, has to explain the trade cycle, the regular periodical alternation of booms and slumps, both the fact that for some time a relative equilibrium, a certain proportion between the various branches of production, between supply and demand, is established and the fact that this equilibrium cannot be maintained and breaks down suddenly and violently. Therefore, neither under-consumption nor the anarchy of production in itself can be regarded as an explanation of the crisis. Under-consumption and the anarchy of production are chronic facts in capitalist society while crises recur peri-

odically. Thus, the economic crisis is the outcome of overproduction.

Capitalism is distinguished from all previous systems of production by the continuous, rapid growth in the productivity of labor which is reflected in the steady growth of the organic composition of capital, in the growing mass of "dead labor" put into motion by living labor.

The recurrence of economic crises every few years is an undisputed fact of capitalism, yet bourgeois economists explain each successive crisis as a singular event, usually attributed to the subjective feeling of insecurity by the population and/or of government wrong regulation of the economy, but not to the capitalist system. They accepted the dogma, first pronounced by J.B. Say and then adopted by Ricardo, that total demand always equals total supply, that production creates incomes equal to the values produced.

Marx replied to these priests of capital that the dual character of a commodity as use-value and value appearing in exchange, involves the possibility of crisis. The fact that commodities are useful, needed to satisfy human wants, does not guarantee that they are saleable at prices corresponding to their values and realizing the surplus value which alone makes production worthwhile from the point of view of a capitalist.

For Marxists, the tendency to crisis is inherent in capitalist accumulation, an expression of the fundamental contradictions of capitalism. Result of the law of the falling rate of profit and to the lack of planning leading to overproduction and thus to a crisis. In Chapter XIV of the 3rd Volume of Capital. Marx held that there is a general tendency for the rate of profit to fall because of the greater quantity of constant capital in production (plant, machinery, raw

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: The Zionist Wars

A History of the Zionist Movement and Imperialist Wars

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



material, etc.) and the relative quantity of variable capital, i.e., that part spent on wages.

For the explanation of the crisis, it is obviously not essential that the rate of profit should actually fall from cycle to cycle; Marx was not dogmatic about this thesis. He wrote: *"The law therefore shows itself only as a tendency, whose effects become clearly marked only under certain conditions and in the course of long periods"* [1] He also said: *"And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand, by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented"* [2]

These days this tendency of the falling rate of profit is fully in operation and unlike the crisis of 2007-8 it operates in China as well.

When the capitalist system was operating on competition among small firms the periodical economic crisis removed the inefficient companies that wasted labor power. Even then an economic crisis occurred when capitalists were unable to sell their commodities without incurring substantial losses of profit.

These days the outlook has darkened significantly since April," said Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, IMF Economic Counsellor and Director of Research. *"The world may soon be teetering on the edge of a global recession, only two years after the last one"* [3]

The aim of capitalist production is not consumption as Adam Smith argued but the accumulation of capital through the production and appropriation of surplus value. The sale of commodities represents the reconversion of the capitalist's expanded capital into the form of money with which to renew the process of capital accumulation. The process of accumulation of capital has led some countries to the level of imperialism. Imperialism is characterized as Lenin wrote in *"imperialism the highest stage of capitalism"* the deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, i.e., *"monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and which exists in the general environment of capitalism."* It is a stage of financial monopolies.

Lenin observed in this book that capitalist nations had avoided this crisis by expanding the pool of workers they exploited. Capitalism, he argued, *"had escaped its three laws of motion through overseas imperialism. The acquisition of colonies had enabled the capitalist economies to dispose of their unconsumed goods, to acquire cheap resources, and to vent their surplus capital."*

The second essential feature of capitalism Lenin pointed out is that *"monopolies have stimulated the seizure of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the basic and most highly cartelized industries in capitalist society: the coal and iron industries. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelized and non-cartelized industry"*

Thirdly Lenin wrote in this book *"Monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest middle-man enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital"*

Fourthly, *"Monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous "old" motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export*

of capital, for spheres of influence, i.e., for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopoly profits and so on."

This is no more developing capitalism but a parasitic decaying capitalism.

Monopoly capitalism is an obstacle to the further growth of the means of production. *"Nevertheless, like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency of stagnation and decay. Since monopoly prices are established, even temporarily, the motive cause of technical and, consequently, of all other progress disappears to a certain extent and, further, the economic possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress"* [4]

"We now have to examine yet another significant aspect of imperialism to which most of the discussions on the subject usually attach insufficient importance. One of the shortcomings of the Marxist Hilferding is that on this point he has taken a step backward compared with the non-Marxist Hobson. I refer to parasitism, which is characteristic of imperialism" ... The income of the rentiers is five times greater than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the biggest "trading" country in the world! This is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism" [5]

There are periods even in the age of imperialism that the rate of profit rises. Joseph M. Gillman in his analysis during the economic boom after WWII when the imperialists built the destroyed means of production observed the events in America and reached the conclusion that while the rate of profit was falling it is now rising. He wrote: *"Whereas for the years, before about World War I the historical statistics seem fully to support these theories of Marx, after that war the series studied appear generally to behave in contradiction to the Marxist expectations"* [6]

According to the priests of capitalism, in a recession, we can expect a fall in the inflation rate due to lower demand and lower economic activity. Thus, according to them, the low rate of inflation in times of economic crisis is the result of the following factors: Firms have unsold goods. Therefore, they try discounting goods to get rid of their excess stock, Lower wage growth. As unemployment rises and there is more competition for job vacancies, it is harder for workers to bargain for higher wages. Unemployment reduces wage inflation, which has a prominent impact on headline inflation and results in lower commodity prices. A global recession reduces demand for commodities and therefore reduces the price of commodities – leading to lower cost-push inflation. The prices of houses tend to fall due to lower demand.

But what happens when the robbery of the semi-colonies is not sufficient to keep the high profit as it is happening these days? The capitalist will try to force the working class and the other popular classes to absorb the crisis by among other things inflation which will open much sharper class struggle. What we have is unemployment, high inflation, high prices of houses, a high rate of mortgage that shows that the so-called capitalist science of economy is a nonsense poor ideology.

Add to this the crisis of ecology, the plagues and the use of the Covid 19 for the capitalist counter revolutionary policy, the growing tension between the two imperialist camps the Western imperialists on one side and Russia and China on the other and what we have is the economic crisis within the general crisis of capitalism.

General crisis of capitalism is not a final crisis of capitalism as the Stalinist claimed between 1928 to the middle

1930s capitalism survived WWII and even had a boom after the war. A boom that buried for some years Marx theory of the historical crisis of capitalism. Now is the time to use this term once again.

We can learn some lessons from the decay and fall of the Roman empire and the feudal system.

The fall of the Roman Empire

In the first century AD Rome reached its highest stage. Then it declined and rotted for three centuries. Some bourgeois historians claim that Rome fell because of the barbarians (Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Huns, Franks, and Alans) in the words of Andre Piganiol: "*Roman civilization did not die a natural death. It was murdered*" [7] Others claim that it failed because of the corrupted and even insane rulers.

But these aspects rested on the decline of Rome's economy. The Roman ruling class reached the limit of getting new slaves, the peasants who joined the legions lost their lands to the rich Romans and did not feel any loyalty to Rome but only to their commanders. Another factor was the loss of arable land. The growth of the Roman Empire coincided with the environmental prosperity of the Mediterranean basin from the 3rd century BC until the middle of the 2nd century AD. This period of suitable environmental conditions is called the "Roman Climate Optimum", which led to population growth and economic prosperity. The environmental conditions started to deteriorate around 150 AD. The climate became cold and dry, which had adverse effects on agriculture. During the 3rd century, and until the 6th century, a combination of severe inflation, barbarian invasions, debasement of the currency, civil wars, and destruction of farms, crops and cities all forced administrators to get more taxes from people. That, in turn, put a lot of strain on people who couldn't produce crops due to those problems.

In addition, available workers grew scarce, so taxes had to be reduced, which resulted in economic problems. Depleted soil due to over-cultivation, inequality between the rich and the poor, detachment of local elites from public life, and economic recession as a result of overreliance on slave labor. In addition, the population suffered from the *Plague of Antonine* also known as the *Plague of Galen* (after the doctor who described it), decimated the Roman Empire. It was brought to Rome by armies returning from western Asia, causing fevers, skin sores, diarrhea and sore throats.

The End of the Feudal System

The Dark Ages were a time of chaos and lawlessness, as various warlords sought to fill the power vacuum left by the collapse of the Roman Empire. Barbarians roamed the countryside, pillaging as they pleased. Castles provided a powerful defense and a pillar of stability that the people could rally around. The price was their freedom. The plight of the peasant was to toil away in the dirt, only for the lord to take a portion of his produce and provide nothing in exchange except the promise of protection.

What Caused the Downfall of Feudalism?

For all its flaws, feudalism was the system that brought Europe out of the Dark Ages and into something approaching order. The rebellion of the nobility in the 13th century against the king led to the Magna Carta that limited the power of the king. Another important element was the crusade that brought to Europe new technologies and products from the Arab East. The growth of the bourgeoisie was riding on the back of the rebellious peasants, results of the feudal relationship of production that blocked the road to capitalism, and wars like the 100 years' war. In 1346, the ninth year of the Hundred Year's War between England and France, King Edward III's forces faced a much larger French army. However, the English had a new weapon: the longbow.

The bubonic plague known as the black death, tore through the continent, inflicting unprecedented death and suffering. Such a cataclysm was bound to shake European civilization to its very foundations. The plague inflicted a terrible toll on the populations of Asia and Europe. China's population was reduced by nearly half between 1200 and 1393, probably because of the plague and famine. Some historians estimate that 24 million Europeans died of the plague—about a third of the population. The deaths of so many people speeded changes in Europe's economic and social structure, which were already in stagnation and which contributed to the decline of feudalism. Trade and commerce slowed almost to a halt during the plague years.

As Europe began to recover, the economy needed to be rebuilt. But it wouldn't be rebuilt in the same way, with feudal lords holding most of the power. After the plague, there was a shift in power from nobles to the bourgeois. In addition, many peasants and some serfs abandoned feudal manors and moved to towns and cities, seeking better opportunities. This led to a weakening of the manor system and a loss of power for feudal lords. The general crisis of the feudal system led to the democratic bourgeois' revolutions.

The general-historical crisis of the capitalist system began in WWI that was an expression of the rebellion of the forces of production against the capitalist-imperialist relations of production. We are more than a century later in history and unless the working class and the popular classes will kill the imperialist system it will kill many of us.

Rosa Luxemburg coined the well-known phrase that humanity stands at the alternative: "*socialism or barbarism as happened in Rome*". But today, World War III is likely to kill humanity – unless we will kill the imperialist system.

Endnotes:

[1] Capital, Vol.III, Chap.14

[2] The communist manifesto

[3] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1123342>

[4] Lenin imperialism the highest stage of capitalism

[5] Ibid

[6] Joseph M. Gillman: The Falling Rate of Profit (Cameron Associates) New York, 1958

[7] *Histoire de Rome* (1934)

The Struggle of Revolutionaries in Imperialist Heartlands against Wars of their “Own” Ruling Class

Examples from the history of the RCIT and its predecessor organisation in the last four decades

An Essay (with Pictures & Videos) by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, 2 September 2022

Pictures & Videos for this Essay: https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-struggle-of-revolutionaries-in-imperialist-heartlands-against-wars-of-their-own-ruling-class/#anker_2

Introduction

We are living in an era which is marked by imperialist conflicts and wars – both against oppressed nations as well as between Great Powers. The most important examples of the former are Putin’s invasion of the Ukraine, the American occupation wars in Iraq and Afghanistan until recently or the ongoing Russian military intervention in Syria. The accelerating tensions and the danger of full-blown wars between NATO and Russia or between the U.S. and China are examples for the latter. ¹

As we can see in the current Ukraine War – and as it was repeatedly the case in the past century – these two types of wars can often be intermixed. Large sectors of the reformist and centrist left have been utterly confused by these developments. Many deny the imperialist character of some of these Great Powers (Russia ² and China ³), others do not recognize the consequences from such an analysis. Not a few groups limit themselves to repeat the well-known slogan against imperialist war – “*The Main Enemy is at Home!*” – and refrain from any clear position about the wars and conflicts outside of their country. ⁴ The result of all this is that their positions are marked by failure to defend oppressed nations against imperialist aggression (e.g. the Ukraine against Russia), by social-imperialist deviations or by pacifist propaganda. ⁵

At this place we will not repeat our analysis of the Ukraine War or the crisis on the Taiwan Strait. Neither do we intend to outline again our critique of the social-imperialist and opportunist left. For both, we refer our readers to the literature in the respective footnotes. Instead, we want to provide here an overview of the RCIT’s struggle (resp. its predecessor organisation) in the imperialist heartlands against the wars waged by its “own” ruling class in the past four decades.

We will show that, in contrast to the revisionist left, our comrades living in imperialist heartlands took a clear and principled stance of revolutionary defeatism against their “own” ruling class. They have stood for the defence of the semi-colonial country under attack and advocated the defeat of the imperialist aggressors. Naturally, our defence of the oppressed people did not include any political support for the (petty-)bourgeois leaderships at the top of these struggles.

Furthermore, the RCIT (resp. its predecessor organisation) has been able to oppose both their “own” ruling class *as well as* that of other Great Powers. Our struggle against imperialist aggression has never been motivated by bourgeois geopoliticism, i.e. vulgar Anti-Americanism

or Russophobia, but rather by the Marxist principles of anti-imperialism.

For reasons of convenience, we will limit ourselves in each case of our historic examples to briefly summarize our position (with references to more extensive elaborations) and to give a few examples of our practical intervention. We will also present exemplary visual documentation in the appendix to this essay (in case of wars before 2003, this is possible only to a limited degree for technical reasons). Again, for reasons of convenience, we have to limit ourselves to only one or two examples in each case.

The Malvinas War 1982: British Imperialism against Argentina

In the war between semi-colonial Argentina and British imperialism on the Malvinas islands in 1982, our predecessor organization – the then-revolutionary British group *Workers Power* – called for the defeat of British imperialism and the victory of Argentina. Our comrades stated in their paper on the front page: “*Britain’s war against Argentina demands only one response, “The main enemy is at home”. We recognise absolutely the right of Argentine to repossess the Malvinas. We condemn the imperialist adventure of Britain in the South Atlantic, we are unequivocally for its failure, that is, for the defeat of British imperialism.*” ⁶

Our comrades participated in anti-war protests and advocated such an unambiguous anti-imperialist line. In contrast, the British left-reformists and centrists – nearly without exception – completely failed this historic test and refused to defend Argentina against the British aggressor. The CWI – led by Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe – took a particularly shameful position. These capitulators to social-imperialism – from which Alan Woods’ IMT and the ISA would later split without breaking with the programmatic method – explicitly opposed even to raise demands like “*stop the war*” or “*withdrawal of the fleet!*” ⁷

The Iraq War 1991

Our movement took the same intransigent anti-imperialist position during the first Gulf War in 1991 when nearly all imperialist powers – with the consent of the Gorbachev regime of the Stalinist USSR – assembled to attack Iraq. From the very first moment, we called for the defence of Iraq and advocated the defeat of the unholy alliance of the imperialist Great Powers. At the same time, we lent no political support to the Saddam Hussein regime – a bourgeois military dictatorship.

We argued in our publications: *"A victory for Iraq would be a blow to imperialism. It would weaken their world rule and sabotage their plans for a new, oppressive world order. That is why it is the duty of working-class internationalists to do everything in their power to bring about the victory of Iraq in this war."*⁸

Armed with such an anti-imperialist program, we threw ourselves in the anti-war movement already in autumn 1990 when the U.S. and its allies began to assemble their forces in the Gulf region. When the first bombs fell, the cover of our British section's paper stated in big letters *"Defend Iraq – Defeat Imperialism!"*.⁹ Our Austrian section did the same. In both countries we played an active role in the anti-war movement. In Austria, we initiated a united front – with other socialists and progressive Arab nationalists – which became the left wing within the anti-war movement and organized its own rallies.

In contrast to the revolutionary Marxists, the Stalinists as well as many centrists in the Western heartlands failed to advocate the military victory of Iraq. Many limited themselves to demand the end of the war and to call for peace – instead of advocating the call for the defeat of the imperialist beast.¹⁰

The Afghanistan War 2001 and the ensuing period of Western occupation

Likewise, when the Western imperialists assembled their forces to invade Afghanistan in autumn 2001, we took from the very beginning an unambiguous position in defence of this semi-colonial country and for the defeat of the Great Powers. Naturally, we lent no political support for the reactionary Taliban forces. Like in the previous wars, we stated in our leaflets and on the cover of our papers *"Defend Afghanistan – Defeat Imperialism!"*¹¹

We argued in our publications: *"We have to be clear that in this war we want to see the imperialist coalition defeated, and that means supporting all Afghan military resistance against imperialism, including Taliban resistance."*

We participated in the anti-war movement in Western Europe. However, we were nearly alone in advocating the military defence of Taliban-led Afghanistan and faced a series of reactionary attacks by reformist and centrist forces which accommodated to the social-imperialist and Islamophobic pressure.

However, in Austria we succeed in building links with groups of young migrants – mostly from Turkey – and jointly intervened at anti-war demonstrations (to the annoyance of the Western opportunists). Clearly, our line of intransigent anti-imperialism appealed much more to these layers, related to the lowest strata of the working class, than to the Western left which is traditionally infested by arrogant imperialist prejudices of the academic middle class and the labor aristocracy.¹²

Later, after the U.S. and its allies occupied the country, we supported the growing guerrilla struggle and called for the expulsion of the Yankee invaders and their European allies.¹³

The Iraq War 2003 and the ensuing period of U.S.-led occupation

The U.S.-led war against Iraq in 2003 as well as the ensuing occupation played a major role in the work of the

RCIT's predecessor organization at that time. Again, our comrades in the European imperialist countries advocated the defeat of the Yankee aggressors and the military defence of Iraq.

The headline of our paper in Britain stated: *"Beat Back US/UK Attack – We Say Victory to Iraq!"*. Our Austrian comrades argued in their publications, shortly before the beginning of the war: *"The anti-war movement which needs to be built, must not take a neutral stance but has to take side. Taking side for the victims of imperialism, for the oppressed and exploited, taking side for those who stand in the way for the profit greedy U.S. corporations. This is why we call for the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist troops from the Middle East and for the immediate end of sanctions. If the war starts, we will take the side of the semi-colonial country. For the defeat of imperialism and for the victory of Iraq!"*¹⁴

We intervened in the anti-war movement on the basis of such tactics. Our practical work had a focus on youth work and in Austria we played a central role in organizing school student strikes against the war. When the U.S.-led invasion started on 20 March 2003 we helped to organize such a strike in Vienna which brought several thousand youth on the streets. We worked towards building an alliance with other left-wing forces as well as migrant groups which organized a series of rallies and demonstrations in the coming years.

Our most important activity in this regard was the initiating of mass protests against the visit of then U.S. President George W. Bush in Austria on 21 June 2006. On that day, we led a mass school student strike in Vienna in the morning with thousands of youths participating, and in the evening about 20,000 people demonstrated on the streets. (See pictures and video in the appendix)

Our consistent anti-imperialist line provoked a massive polarization within the anti-war movement in Austria since the reformist and most centrist forces opposed our line of defending Iraq. Within the broad united front which organised the protests against the visit of Bush, our left-wing alliance which took an anti-imperialist stance insisted that speakers at the broad united front demonstration must also include supporters of the defence of Iraq (including the author of these lines). This was unacceptable for the reformists and, consequently, the movement split in two parts. As a result, we had a joint demonstration on that day but with two separate rallies at the beginning and the end.

The Palestinian Liberation Struggle against the Zionist Apartheid State and the four Gaza Wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014 and 2021)

And on the same basis of Marxist anti-imperialism, we supported the Hezbollah-led resistance against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006 as well as the Hamas-led resistance in Gaza in the four wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014 and 2021). Despite our political criticism of petty-bourgeois Islamism, we stood for the unconditional defence of the Palestinian (as well as the Lebanese) people against the Zionist state.¹⁵

Our comrades in Occupied Palestine – the *International Socialist League* (ISL) which joined the RCIT in spring 2013 – have a long record of advocating a defeatist position against the Israeli state and for supporting the national lib-

eration struggle of the Palestinian people. Comrade Yossi Schwartz – a long-time leader of the ISL and a Jewish Anti-Zionist since more than five decades – was already three times in prison because of his anti-Zionist activities. Long before the ISL comrades met the RCIT, they took such an anti-imperialist stance and broke with forces which accommodated to Zionism (like e.g. the IMT of Alan Woods).¹⁶

In an article published at the beginning of the fourth Gaza War in May 2021, our comrade Yossi Schwartz called for: *“Victory to the Palestinian struggle! Military defeat for Israel! For the full renewal of the Arab revolution!”*¹⁷

Our comrades in the imperialist European Union – a long-time supporter of the Zionist Apartheid state – defended the same line of unconditional support for the Palestinian people. In Austria, we have collaborated over many years with Muslim and Arab migrant communities and jointly organized numerous demonstrations.¹⁸ Our work in Austria attracted quiet a lot of attention in the media.¹⁹ In the appendix we present a few links to videos from speeches of RCIT comrades at such mobilisations.

The close relation of the European imperialist states and Israel has resulted in repeated attempts of persecution of anti-Zionist activists. Among those have been several RCIT comrades, including the author of these lines.²⁰

Such extraordinary pressure from the imperialist state apparatus has resulted in an opportunistic capitulation of large sectors of the reformist and centrist left. While they usually oppose, more or less, the oppression of the Palestinian people in words, they refuse to side with Islamist Hamas which happens to be the strongest force among the Palestinians, and which has played the leading role in all Gaza Wars. As a result, these capitulators to Zionism do not call for the military defence of Gaza and even denounce consistent anti-Zionist like our Austrian section as “antisemitic”! There have been even cases where this scum (in particular the so-called “Anti-Germans”) tried to physically attack our movement. In one case, they attacked our May Day demonstration in Vienna in 2016.²¹ On other occasions, they tried to assault our Medina Gunić – a female leader of the RCIT – as well as other comrades! The same argument was used by the Stalinist “Communist” Party of Austria for expelling us from their annual fete.²²

Mali 2013: French imperialism intervenes

Based on its anti-imperialist program, the RCIT also opposed the military intervention of French imperialism in Mali when an Islamist-led insurgency threatened its proxy government in January 2013. We called for the defeat of the European invaders and denounced the French Communist Party which failed to oppose this intervention.

In a statement, published at that time, we said: *“The RCIT calls the international workers movement to mobilize against the imperialist intervention in Mali! We call for the defeat of the imperialist troops and the allied Mali government army! In the tradition of the Communist International in Lenin’s time and Trotsky’s Fourth International we support the military struggle of the colonial people against the imperialist forces and their allies without supporting in any way the politics of the Islamists and bourgeois nationalists. Let’s transform Mali into another Afghanistan for imperialism!”*²³

In Austria, our comrades initiated a united front with other organisations which organized a small rally in front

of the French embassy in January 2013. In our speech, we called for the defeat of French imperialism and the military victory of the resistance. (See the video in the appendix)²⁴

State repression against Muslim migrants and Islamophobia in Western Europe

We also want to briefly mention our struggle against state repression against Muslim migrants and Islamophobia in Western Europe. While such does not represent imperialist war in itself, Islamophobia has been closely related to the military intervention of Great Powers in Muslim countries in the past two decades (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Chechnya, Mali, Somalia).

The RCIT has always defended the democratic rights of Muslim migrants. While we do not support individual terrorist actions, we emphasise that such actions are the result of the systematic oppression of Muslim minorities as well as the imperialist crusade in Muslim countries. When a global movement of boycott against imperialist France emerged in the Muslim world in autumn 2020 as a result of the obscene support of the Macron government for the racist Charlie Hebdo caricatures, we immediately stated our support.

*“The RCIT strongly welcomes the mass protests and the popular boycott movement against imperialist and Islamophobic France. Macron must be taught a lesson! It is important to build a broad international solidarity movement of workers and popular organizations – Muslim and non-Muslim. Such a campaign should organize an effective support for the brothers and sisters in France and other European countries who currently face conditions of harsh repression by the state and the media. Such a movement should also organize an effective campaign to boycott French products. It should also organize mass actions against the imperialist aggression of Paris in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as in North and West Africa. In addition, it should state its support for the Chechen people who experience a horrible regime of occupation by Russian imperialism. Finally, socialists in France should try to link anti-racist activities with protests against the anti-democratic repression by the Macron government (under the pretext of COVID-19) as well as with protests against neo-liberal attacks (e.g. with the Yellow Vests movement)”*²⁵

Our Austrian section has a long-standing reputation of defending Muslim migrants against such reactionary attacks and our activities have been reported repeatedly in various international media.²⁶

Russia’s wars against Chechnya in 1994-96 and 1999-2009 and the ensuing period of occupation

As we said at the beginning of this essay, our struggle against the wars of the U.S. and its European allies has never been driven by vulgar Anti-Americanism but rather by the Marxist principles of anti-imperialism. Hence, the comrades in Europe did oppose not only the wars of the Western Great Powers but also those waged by Russian imperialism.²⁷

When Russia invaded Chechnya twice (in 1994-96 and in 1999-2009), we unconditionally supported the heroic Chechen people and called for their victory.²⁸ In an *“Open Letter to the Chechen People”*, the RCIT stated: *“We send you our warmest greetings in the name of the RCIT. We strongly*

condemn Russian imperialism! We support your struggle for freedom and national self-determination! (...) In our opinion, the Chechen people can only be free if no imperialist Great Power (neither Russia, nor the U.S. or the EU) dominates the Caucasus and no group of rich exploiters rules over you. We think that the future of freedom is closely connected with the struggle for international equality of people and socialism.”

Consequently, our comrades in Austria have collaborated closely with the Chechen migrant community since a number of years and repeatedly spoke at their solidarity rallies. (See pictures and videos in the appendix)²⁹ Likewise, our comrades in Russia take the same position of unconditional defence of liberation struggle of the Chechen people.³⁰

Russia's military intervention against the Syrian Revolution since 2015

The RCIT has taken the same approach since the beginning of Russia's military intervention in Syria. We have supported the liberation struggle of the Syrian people against the Assad tyranny as well as against its master Putin.³¹

Our line can be summarised in the following excerpt of one of our statements published shortly after the beginning of the Russian military intervention in 2015: “Socialists both in Syria and internationally should rally to support the Syrian Revolution and the struggle of the rebels against Assad as well as against the reactionary Salafist-Takfiri Daesh. The RCIT supports the rebels' resistance both against all imperialists, the Russians as well as the US, British and French. At the same time socialists have to fight against the political agenda of the rebels' leadership. It is vital to support all steps to strengthen local self-governing structures. It is crucial to build local councils and militias in order to break the hold of the petty-bourgeois mil-

itaristic Islamist and secular factions over the revolution. This is the only perspective to advance in the struggle for a workers' and fellahin republic in Syria and a socialist federation in the Middle East. In any possible confrontation between Russian and Western military forces, revolutionaries must support neither side but oppose both, since both are reactionary imperialists and enemies of the Syrian Revolution.”³²

Our Austrian comrades established close links with the Syrian migrant community since the beginning of the revolutionary process in March 2011. Since then, we have participated in numerous solidarity activities and spoke at their rallies. (See pictures and videos in the appendix)³³

Putin's invasion of the Ukraine since 24 February 2022

Since we have documented the RCIT's stance on the Ukraine War in our publications in much detail in the past months, we will limit ourselves at this place only to a few words.³⁴ It is such principles of internationalism and anti-imperialism which have led the RCIT to oppose all imperialist powers – both in West as well as in East. It is on this basis that we defend the Ukrainian people against Putin's invasion since the very beginning while opposing both NATO as well as Russian imperialism.

It is on such a programmatic basis that we (co-)organised three solidarity convoys – together with a Chechen migrant organisation in Austria resp. together with the International Labour Network for Solidarity and Struggles – in bringing humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian people. We also participated with two delegates in an international conference held in Lviv (Ukraine) on May Day this year. (See pictures and videos in the appendix)³⁵

Based on such principles of consistent internationalism and anti-imperialism the RCIT has been able to massively expand its collaboration with Marxists in Russia since the



Activists of the RCIT at anti-imperialist activities

beginning of the war. As a result of this work, we could recently fuse with the comrades of “*Socialist Tendency*”.³⁶

Our comrades in Russia have followed the same principled approach of consistent internationalism and anti-imperialism which the RCIT comrades in Western Europe and Occupied Palestine have pursued in the past decades. Russian revolutionaries, like their Western comrades, take the side of the oppressed people attacked by “their” imperialism and advocate the defeat of “their” ruling class.³⁷

Conclusions

In this essay we have we have elaborated the stance of revolutionaries based in imperialist countries to reactionary wars waged by their “own” ruling class against oppressed peoples. We have demonstrated this on the basis of the experience of the RCIT (resp. its predecessor organisation) and its attitude in the most important imperialist wars of the past four decades – the Malvinas War 1982, the Iraq Wars in 1991 and 2003 (and the ensuing period of occupation), the Afghanistan War in 2001 (and the ensuing period of occupation), the Palestinian liberation struggle against the Zionist Apartheid State and the four Gaza Wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014 and 2021), France’s military intervention in Mali in 2013 and the state repression against Muslim migrants in Western Europe.

We have furthermore shown, based on the RCIT’s experience, that revolutionaries in Western Europe do not oppose only their “own” imperialism but also other Great Powers waging reactionary wars of aggression against oppressed peoples. As examples for such we used our struggle against the reactionary wars of Russian imperialism (Chechnya 1994-96 and 1999-2009, Syria since 2015 and the current Ukraine War). We are proud that our comrades in Russia share the same approach of consistently opposing their “own” imperialist bourgeoisie as well as those in Western countries.

In our struggle against imperialist wars the RCIT comrades in Western Europe combined theory and practice, words and deeds. We advocated our analysis and tactics through all forms of propaganda and agitation. At the same time, we also intervened in anti-war movements, helped to build united fronts with other forces and established, wherever possible, close collaboration with organisations of migrants from the regions under imperialist attack.

In all these conflicts and wars, our policy was based on the Marxist principles of internationalism and anti-imperialism. These principles can be briefly summarised in the following:

1. In a reactionary war of an imperialist power against an oppressed people, revolutionaries advocate the military defeat of the former and the victory of the latter. From such a stance follows that we also support all forms of practical aid for the oppressed people in such a war (including weapons).

2. Revolutionaries in imperialist countries must not lend any support to their “own” ruling class and their military, political, economic or ideological war efforts. At the same time, they have to equally oppose any other imperialist power and their wars of aggression. Hence, we do not lend any support to the policy of a Great Power even if it tactically sides with an oppressed people (in the hope of advancing their sphere of influence at the cost of its rival).

3. Our support for the liberation wars of oppressed peoples does not include any political support for the non-revolutionary leadership which usually is at the top of such struggles (often these are petty-bourgeois or bourgeois nationalist and/or Islamist forces). We advocate the creation of organs of self-organisation and self-government like workers and popular councils and militias.

4. Our consistent defence of oppressed peoples against imperialist aggression constitutes an essential part of our struggle for socialism. It is impossible to move towards socialism without opposing all forms of national oppression and imperialist super-exploitation. It is impossible to move towards socialism without weakening and eventually defeating the imperialist powers. It is impossible to move towards socialism without utilizing each and every conflict which could help advancing the struggle of the working class and the oppressed peoples.

5. These principles of internationalism and anti-imperialism have put the RCIT comrades in the imperialist heartlands in complete contrast to most reformist and centrist forces in the imperialist heartlands over the past decades. Hardly any of these opportunists has gone beyond pacifist opposition to wars or the abstract denunciation of imperialist aggression. Hardly any of them has dared to advocate the victory of the military struggle of the oppressed peoples and the defeat of the Great Powers. Hardly any of these has been able – or even willing – to approach the migrant organisations of the oppressed peoples and jointly work with them. The wide gulf between Marxism and opportunism is not limited to the world of theory and program – it equally exists in the practical struggle.

To summarise our principles in a few words: *With the liberation struggle of the oppressed people – always! With the (petty-)bourgeois leadership of the oppressed people – sometimes, when they confront the imperialist aggressor! With any of the Great Powers – never!*

Footnotes

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

2 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia’s Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; by the same author: Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today’s Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia’s Imperialist Character, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net>

[net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/](#); Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; Russia: An Imperialist Power or a “Non-Hegemonic Empire in Gestation”? (Reply to Claudio Katz), New Politics, <https://newpol.org/russia-an-imperialist-power-or-a-non-hegemonic-empire-in-gestation-a-reply-to-the-argentinean-economist-claudio-katz-an-essay-with-8-tables/>; Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies, in: New Politics Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022, https://newpol.org/issue_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/ (the same essay has been republished by International Viewpoint, 21. April 2022, <https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7618>); Once Again on Russian Imperialism (Reply to Critics). A rebuttal of a theory which claims that Russia is not an imperialist state but would be rather “comparable to Brazil and Iran”, 30 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-russian-imperialism-reply-to-critics/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT’s website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>

3 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power. See on this e.g. the book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also by the same author “Chinese Imperialism and the World Economy”, an essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1; China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet? A Theoretical Question with Very Practical Consequences! Continuing the Debate with Esteban Mercatante and the PTS/FT on China’s class character and consequences for the revolutionary strategy, 22 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-imperialist-power-or-not-yet/>; China’s transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, https://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-1-10/#anker_4; How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China’s State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>; China’s Emergence as an Imperialist Power (Article in the US journal ‘New Politics’), in: “New Politics”, Summer 2014 (Vol:XV-1, Whole #: 57). See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT’s website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

4 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: A Marxist Slogan and its Caricature. On the social-imperialist distortion of the slogan “The Main Enemy Is At Home” in the context of the Ukraine War and the Taiwan Strait Crisis, 17 August 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-marxist-slogan-the-main-enemy-is-at-home-and-its-social-imperialist-distortion/>

5 We have published a number of articles which critically deal with opportunist policy of various groups. They can be found at a special page on our website on the Ukraine War: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compila->

[tion-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/](#)

6 Workers Power, No. 32, May 1982, p. 1. The paper can be downloaded here: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/workers-power-uk/index.htm>; see also: Workers Power: Arguments on the Malvinas, in: Workers Power, No. 32, May 1982, p. 1&3, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/archive-documents-from-the-lrci-and-lfi/#anker_4

7 See on this e.g. chapter 12 and 13 in our book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>.

8 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Am Beispiel des Iraks: Anti-Imperialistische Strategie und Taktik, ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt (October 1990); by the same author: Kampf dem Imperialismus! Verteidigt den Irak!, in: ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt Nr. 32 (January 1991); Stoppt den imperialistischen Massenmord!, in: ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt Nr. 33 (February 1991); Workers Power (Britain): Working class action to defeat imperialism – Victory to Iraq! (1991), <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/working-class-action-defeat-imperialism-victory-iraq>

9 Workers Power, No. 139, February 1991, p. 1. The paper can be downloaded here: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/workers-power-uk/index.htm>

10 See on this e.g. chapter 12 and 13 in the above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South.

11 For a compilation of several documents which we published at the time of the Afghanistan War 2001 see <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/archive-documents-from-the-lrci-and-lfi/afghanistan-invasion-2001/> (English language) and <https://www.thecommunists.net/home/deutsch/us-krieg-vs-afghanistan-2001/> (German language). The issues of our British section’s paper which were published during the war (Workers Power No. 257-259, October – December 2001) can be downloaded here: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/workers-power-uk/index.htm>.

12 See on this e.g. chapter 12 and 13 in the above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South.

13 See on this e.g. the compilation of RCIT documents on the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/collection-of-articles-on-us-defeat-in-afghanistan/>

14 Michael Pröbsting: Bush führt Krieg für Weltherrschaft und Öl – Erklären wir Bush den Krieg! In: ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt Nr. 125 (2003), (our translation)

15 We have published numerous statements during the four Gaza Wars. The documents on the Fourth Gaza War in May 2021 – including those of our Argentinean comrade from “*Convergencia Socialista*” – are compiled on a special sub-page: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/the-fourth-gaza-war-has-begun/>. For statements on previous wars see, as examples, RCIT: Israel Starts Ground Offensive: Defend Gaza! Defeat Israel’s War! Support the Palestinian Resistance! For a Workers’ and Popular International Campaign to Boycott Israel! Down with the Regimes which Collaborate with Israel! For a Free, Red Palestine! 22.7.2014, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/joint-statement-defend-gaza/>; RCIT: New Wave of Israeli terror against Gaza: Support the Palestinian Resistance! Defeat the Zionist killing machine! 15.11.2012, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/defend-gaza/>.

16 See e.g. The ISL’s Break with the IMT, August 2009, <https://the-isleague.com/isl-imt-split/>

17 Yossi Schwartz: A Jewish Anti-Zionist in Israel Says: For Military Victory of Gaza against Zionist Apartheid! Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied

Palestine), 11 May 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/a-jewish-anti-zionist-in-israel-says-for-military-victory-of-gaza-against-zionist-apartheid/>

18 There exist numerous reports about our solidarity activities with the Palestinian people. At this place we limit ourselves to one report from each of the last three wars. In the appendix, you find also pictures and videos of our activities during the first Gaza War in 2008/09. RKOB: Vienna/Austria: Mass Demonstration in Solidarity with Palestine, 12 May 2021, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/the-fourth-gaza-war-has-begun/#anker_3; Austria: Rally in Solidarity with Gaza on 13.7.2014! <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/rally-for-palestine-13-7-2014/>; Successful demonstration in Vienna in solidarity with Gaza! 19.11.2012, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/report-gaza-demo-19-11/>.

19 See e.g. the overview of the RCIT's media work during the Fourth Gaza War in 2021, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/the-fourth-gaza-war-has-begun/#anker_5

20 See e.g. Stop Judicial Prosecution for Solidarity with Palestine! A Call to the Austrian State to Drop Its Charges against Michael Pröbsting! <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/solidarity-proebsting/>; see also: Victory! The Charge against RKOB Spokesperson and Palestine Solidarity Activist Johannes Wiener has been dropped! 10.1.2013, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/solidarity-with-wiener-won/>

21 Report on May Day 2016 in Austria: Joint Resistance against Racist Attacks. Forceful, militant, internationalist demonstration despite racist attacks. Report (with Pictures and Videos) on the multinational, internationalist demonstration in Vienna marking May Day 2016 organized by the Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/report-may-day-2016-in-austria/>

22 See e.g. KPÖ schließt RKOB aus und macht den Weg frei für Frauenschläger der Anti-Nationalen Szene. Wiederholter körperlicher Angriff auf Genossin Gunić am Volksstimmefest, 05.09.2016, <https://www.rkob.net/wer-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei-bericht-vs-fest-2016/>; Austria: "Left-Wing" Zionists Attack Arab Migrants at Demonstration in Solidarity with Refugees! Report (with Pictures and Videos) from the anti-racist Demonstration on 26 November in Vienna by the Austrian Section of the RCIT, 27.11.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/zionists-attack-rcit-austria/>

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24 See: Austria: Rally in Solidarity with Mali and against the French Intervention, 26.1.2013, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/rally-for-mali-in-vienna-25-1/>

25 RCIT: Boycott Imperialist and Islamophobic France! Solidarity with the Muslim migrants! Drive out the French occupiers from Mali and other countries! 26.10.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/boycott-imperialist-and-islamophobic-france/>

26 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting speaks on Al Jazeera on Islamophobic Racism in Austria, 13 November 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/michael-probsting-speaks-on-al-jazeera-on-islamophobic-racism-in-austria-12-11-2020/>; Michael Pröbsting speaks on TV Channel Arabi21 on Islamophobic Racism in Austria, 19 November 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/michael-probsting-speaks-on-tv-channel-arabi21-on-islamophobic-racism-in-austria/>; Media Coverage of Activities of Austrian RCIT Section against Islamophobic Racism

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27 See e.g. RCIT: Solidarity with the Liberation Struggle of the Chechen People! Open Letter to the Oppressed Chechen People, February 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/solidarity-with-the-liberation-struggle-of-the-chechen-people/>; Where does the RCIT Stand on Russia's Occupation of Chechnya? <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/russia-and-chechnya/>

28 See e.g. the issues of our British section's paper which were published during the wars which can be downloaded here: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/workers-power-uk/index.htm>; see also LRCI and FT: Russian Troops Out! Self-determination for Chechnya! 30.06.1996, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/archive-documents-from-the-lrci-and-lfi/#anker_17

29 See e.g. Chechnya: Rally against the Murder of Mamikhan Umarov by the Russian Security Service, 7 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/chechnya-rally-against-the-murder-of-mamikhan-umarov-by-the-russian-security-service/>; Chechnya: Rally against the Murder of Zelimkhan Khangoshvili by the Russian Security Service, 30 August 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/chechnya-rally-against-murder-of-zelimkhan-khangoshvili-by-russian-security-service/>; Freedom for the Chechen People! Down with Putin and Kadyrov! 26 February 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/chechnya-solidarity-feb-2017/>

30 See e.g. Fight against Russian capitalism and imperialism at home and abroad! Provisional Platform of the Revolutionary Communists (Russian Federation), September 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/platform-of-rcit-russia/>

31 The RCIT has published a number of booklets, statements, and articles on the Syrian Revolution that can be accessed on a special sub-section of this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>

32 RCIT: Defend the Syrian Revolution against Russian Imperialism! Stop the US, UK and French Air Strikes! Smash the Assad Dictatorship! 9.10.2015, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/defend-syria-against-russia/>

33 Readers can find numerous reports on the above-mentioned sub-page dedicated to the Syrian Revolution. Here is the latest rally where our comrades Medina Gunić and Michael Pröbsting spoke: Rally on the 11th Anniversary of the Syrian Revolution 2011, 20 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/rally-on-11th-anniversary-of-syrian-revolution-20-3-2022/>

34 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 100 RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and the current NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. In particular we refer to the RCIT Manifesto: Ukraine War: A Turning Point of World Historic Significance. Socialists must combine the revolutionary defense of the Ukraine against Putin's invasion with the internationalist struggle against Russian as well as NATO and EU imperialism, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/>

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Russia and the Theory of “Lesser-Evil” Imperialism

On some Stalinists and “Trotskyists” who formally recognize Russia’s class character but reject the political consequences

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 July 2022

Introduction

We have argued for many years that Russia, after overcoming the chaotic years of capitalist restoration in the 1990s, became an imperialist power at the turn of this century.¹ Since then, unfortunately, most socialists treated this question as a rather abstract-theoretical issue. In fact, the subject did not provoke much interest. However, this has changed since 24 February when Putin invaded the Ukraine. Now many people recognize that this is a theoretical issue of major actual importance!

Usually, the deniers of Russia’s imperialist character belong to Stalinist or Bolivarian parties for which this thesis serves as excuse for supporting, openly or concealed, Moscow (and Beijing).² Recently, Claudio Katz, a progressive professor at the University of Buenos Aires who is a well-known economist in Latin America, developed the theory that Russia is not an imperialist power but rather “a semi-periphery country which is harassed by the United States” and “a non-hegemonic empire in gestation.”³

At this place, we will not deal again with this revisionist theory. Here, we rather want to discuss a different concept which, however, arrives at similar practical conclusions like the deniers of Russian imperialism.

We talk about a conception which we can label as a theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism. The advocates of such a policy formally recognize the characterization of Russia (or China) as “imperialist” but still consider this state as less dangerous than its Western rivals in NATO. As a result, the supporter of the “lesser-evil” theory refuse to draw the political and tactical conclusions from their designation of Russia as imperialist, i.e. they reject the policy of *revolutionary defeatism*.⁴

The originator: the Stalinist RKRП (Russia)

It is fair to say that the *Russian Communist Workers’ Party – Revolutionary Party of Communists* (RKRП-RPK), led by Viktor Tyulkin, is the originator of the theory of Russia as a “lesser-evil” imperialism. This party has been, at least until recently, probably the second-largest Stalinist party in Russia – after the misnamed *Communist Party of the Russian Federation* (KPRF) under the leadership of Gennady Zyuganov.⁵ The latter is the largest opposition party in the State Duma where it acts as a Great Russian chauvinist servant of the Putin regime and a loyal defender of Russian imperialism.⁶

The RKRП avoids such unashamed red-brown “*Ruskij*

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

Mir" socialism a la Zyuganov. They take a more critical stance to the Putin regime (which is certainly easier for them as – in contrast to the KPRF – they don't have to lose any positions in the state apparatus). Furthermore, as we discussed in our book *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*, the RKRП explicitly recognizes Russia's imperialist class character.⁷

*"The foreign policy of Putin is connected with the interests of the Russian capital. Russian imperialism is still young. Nevertheless, it is well established and has a good appetite. It faces competition in the world arena from much larger and experienced opponents like the USA and the EU. (...) Russia and China as imperialist countries form some kind of union (including the BRICS) ..."*⁸

*"At the same time, we explained from the very beginning and are now explaining that help from the Russian Federation can and should be accepted, but imperialist Russia is not the Soviet Union, that the Vlasovites are no better than the Banderaites."*⁹

When Putin's invasion of Ukraine started on 24 February, the RKRП leadership advocated its support in the name of "helping the people's republics of Donbass against fascist aggression by the Kiev Nazis." It declared in an official statement after the beginning of the war: "Once again, returning to the fact of recognition of the republics of Donbass, we note that it happened, although late, much later than it should have been, but better late than never. The RKRП not only supported this step from the very beginning of the proclamation of these republics, but also demanded that the bourgeois authorities of the Russian Federation take this step as help in supporting the people's republics of Donbass against fascist aggression by the Kiev Nazis. Of course, the goals of the military intervention of the Russian Federation by the authorities and Putin are only declared as humanitarian - saving people from the reprisals of the Nazis. In fact, the source of the conflict is the inter-imperialist contradictions between the US, the EU and Russia, into which the Ukraine is drawn. The goal of the most powerful US imperialism in the world is to weaken the Russian competitor and expand its influence in the European market space. (...) From the class viewpoint, the Russian ruling powers, as well as those of the USA and the EU, do not care in the least about the working people in the Donbass, or those in Russia and Ukraine. We have no doubt that the true objectives of the Russian state in this war are entirely imperialistic - to strengthen the position of imperialist Russia in world market competition. But, since this struggle today to some extent helps the people of Donbass to repulse Banderita fascism, the communists in this part of it do not deny, but allow and support as much as it is waged against fascism in the Donbass and Ukraine. And they categorically oppose the actions of their government, when, under the cover of the fight against fascism, the issues of expansion and strengthening of Russian imperialism and its allies will be resolved. As long as Russia's armed intervention helps save people in the Donbass from reprisals by punishers, we will not oppose this goal. In particular, we consider it acceptable if, due to circumstances, it is necessary to use force against the fascist Kiev regime, insofar as this will be in the interests of the working people."¹⁰

We see, the Stalinists of the RKRП-type abstain from the vulgar "Ruskij Mir" chauvinism a la Zyuganov. They pursue a more "Marxist"-sounding policy, recognize the class interests of the Putin regime, and even recognize Russia's imperialist character. This is, we note in passing, an insight which many so-called "Trotskyists" have not managed to achieve until now!¹¹ However, they combine such

a correct thesis with an arch-Stalinist policy as they call for support of such an imperialist power against "fascist" Ukraine and Western imperialism.

The tradition of Lenin ... and Stalin

Of course, such a class-collaborationist policy of supporting one imperialist power against another (or even against a semi-colonial country like the Ukraine) is thoroughly reactionary and has nothing to do with the principles of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In the midst of World War I, the Russian Marxists strongly denounced any "tactical" support for one imperialist power against its rival under the pretext of "national rights" or "democracy" or because it would be smaller.

*"The question of which group dealt the first military blow or first declared war is immaterial in any determination of the tactics of socialists. Both sides' phrases on the defence of the fatherland, resistance to enemy invasion, a war of defence, etc., are nothing but deception of the people."*¹²

*"But imagine a slave-holder who owns 100 slaves warring against another who owns 200 slaves, for a more "just" redistribution of slaves. The use of the term of a "defensive" war, or a war "for the defence of the fatherland", would clearly be historically false in such a case and would in practice be sheer deception of the common people, philistines, and the ignorant, by the astute slave-holders. It is in this way that the peoples are being deceived with "national" ideology and the term of "defence of the fatherland", by the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie, in the war now being waged between slave-holders with the purpose of consolidating slavery."*¹³

*"From the standpoint of bourgeois justice and national freedom (or the right of nations to existence), Germany might be considered absolutely in the right as against Britain and France, for she has been "done out" of colonies, her enemies are oppressing an immeasurably far larger number of nations than she is, and the Slavs that are being oppressed by her ally, Austria, undoubtedly enjoy far more freedom than those of tsarist Russia, that veritable "prison of nations". Germany, however, is fighting, not for the liberation of nations, but for their oppression. It is not the business of socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to plunder the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow all of them."*¹⁴

Such an internationalist and anti-imperialist policy was the complete opposite of the one pursued by the reformist parties which lent support (or refused to oppose) one or the other imperialist power. As is well-known, the British, French and U.S. social democrats sided with their bourgeoisie against the "reactionary monarchies" of Germany, Austria and Turkey during World War I. And, using the same national-reformist logic, the German social democrats argued that they had to defend "their cultural superior fatherland" against the "Tatarian Russians".

From the 1930s onwards, Stalinism picked up this political method and advocated an alliance with one imperialist camp against the other. In the years 1935 to 1939, they advocated siding with the "democratic", "anti-fascist" imperialist states against the "reactionary", "fascist" imperialist rivals. When Moscow's foreign policy interests changed, the whole hypocritical ideology was turned on its head. Between 1939 and 1941, during the period of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Stalinists' fire was focused on

“plutocratic” Western imperialism, while “peace-loving” Nazi-Germany was treated much more cautiously. In fact, Moscow handed over a number of German and Austrian communists to the Gestapo (among them the founder of the Austrian Communist Party Franz Koritschoner or the German communist Margarete Buber-Neumann). Likewise did various Stalinist parties in France, Denmark, etc approach the German occupants and looked for possibilities of collaboration. In that period, Stalinism denounced Britain and France as “brutal colonial masters” oppressing the peoples in Asia and Africa.

And when the Nazis invaded the USSR in June 1941 – to the complete surprise of Stalin and Molotov – everything changed again. Britain and France were no longer considered oppressive imperialists but rather democratic antifascist allies. Political hypocrisy, ideological confusion and unprincipled manoeuvre were definitely the hallmark of Stalinism!

The RKRK’s version of “*Philosophia ancilla theologiae*”

Today, the RKRK applies the same method to the current conditions. They proclaim that Russian imperialism – which, by “accident”, happens to be the motherland of these “Marxist-Leninists” – is the “lesser evil” against the “bigger evil”. This means, effectively, that the supports imperialist Russia against nearly everyone – from the Western Great Powers to the semi-colonial Ukraine (which conveniently is slandered as “fascist”).

Needless to say that this is all reactionary nonsense from the beginning to the end. If “democracy vs fascism” would be the criterion for support, the RKRK would have to side with the U.S. and Western Europe since these countries are definitely more “bourgeois-democratic” than Putin’s Russia. Surely, there exist a bunch of right-wing extremists in the Ukraine. But the same is true for Russia – just think about Aleksandr Dugin and his “Eurasian” movement, the notorious ex-FSB paramilitary leader Igor Girkin/Strelkov or *Tsargrad*, a right-wing media owned by the Great Russian monarchist oligarch Konstantin Malofeev.

But it would be naïve to imagine that the RKRK leadership would consider Marxist theory as a scientific guideline. These Stalinists rather follow the notorious method of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages which proclaimed the principle “*Philosophia ancilla theologiae*” (‘Philosophy is the servant of theology’), i.e. that science and rational thought must be subordinated to its dogmas.

Authentic Marxists do not base their analysis of imperialist wars on such criteria like which side was more expansive before, which side is stronger, has more military basis, is more “democratic”, etc. These are secondary issues compared to the main question: what is the *class character* of a given state and its goals? These issues are decisive for the approach of Marxists. In a conflict between rivalling imperialist powers, socialists can not support any side irrespective of which one is “more aggressive” or “more democratic”. In a conflict between an imperialist and a semi-colonial country, other things being equal, socialists defend the latter. These are the most important conclusions from the program of revolutionary defeatism as it was elaborate by Lenin and Trotsky!¹⁵

However, one has also to admit that the position of the RKRK contains at least one advantage: it makes no effort

to hide its theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism and openly states its approach. The same compliment can not be made to other Stalinists and pseudo-Trotskyists.

The Stalinist KKE (Greece) and its allies: a discreetly hidden version of the “lesser-evil” theory

The *Communist Party of Greece* (KKE) is a sizeable party which constantly receives between 5-8% of the votes at elections. It is also a key force in the international Stalinist milieu since it has been the initiator of the so-called *International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties*. This is a loose alliance which holds annual conferences since 1998. The parties attending this conference adopt joint declarations. A number of these organizations publish a journal – the *International Communist Review* – and constitute a *Working Group*. While these structures exist on a very federalist and loose basis, they nevertheless manage sometimes to initiate joint statements on important world political events.

While it often plays a militant role in the class struggle (combined with wild sectarianism towards other left-wing forces), it has also taken a reactionary position promoting Greek chauvinism against neighbouring states (e.g. Türkiye, Macedonia) or support for the Assad dictatorship in suppressing the uprising of the Syrian people since 2011.¹⁶

However, as we noted somewhere else, the KKE has recently moved towards a more progressive position concerning their approach to Russian imperialism. It strongly condemned Moscow’s military intervention in Kazakhstan in January this year.¹⁷ And when the Ukraine War started, it denounced it too. Furthermore, since a few months it publicly characterizes Russia as an “imperialist state”.¹⁸ Remarkably, the KKE even attacked the above-mentioned RKRK in a polemical article for “its supports of the imperialist Russian invasion of Ukraine.”¹⁹

However, despite such welcoming criticism the KKE itself pursues a different, more concealed version of the theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism. While it denounces both NATO and Russia as imperialist, while it condemns Putin’s invasion, it nevertheless directs most of its criticism and its public activities against NATO. Worse, it even initiates acts of boycott against military aid for the Ukraine, i.e. they are deliberately weakening the resistance of the Ukrainian people and their ability to fight back Putin’s attempt to colonise the country.²⁰

Hence, in essence, while the KKE formally recognizes the imperialist character of Russia, it refuses to defend semi-colonial countries – like the Ukraine, like Syria – which are under attack of the very same power. So, its political consequences demonstrate that the KKE views Russia as a “lesser-evil” imperialism.

Alan Woods’ IMT: A de facto version of the theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism

The so-called “*International Marxist Tendency*” (IMT), led by Alan Woods and his group, effectively pursues a similar theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism. As we did show somewhere else, while it sometimes recognises, in passing, the fact that Russia is an imperialist power, it usually “forgets” to mention this fact in its articles.²¹ Most of its documents on the Ukraine War focus on denouncing ...

Western imperialism and do not even mention the imperialist character of Russia.

The IMT version of the theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism is built on the concept that U.S. imperialism is a much worse enemy than its Russian rival. It repeatedly calls the U.S. “*the most counterrevolutionary force on the planet*” in its major documents on the Ukraine War.²² The meaning of this formula is evident: even if Russia might be an imperialist power, it would be “*a less counterrevolutionary force on the planet*” than the U.S.!

Based on such a revisionist conception of “*more*” and “*less counterrevolutionary*” Great Powers, it is only consequential that the IMT leadership strictly opposes any support for the Ukrainian people and its war of defence against Putin’s invasion. It considers both Russia as well as the Ukrainian people as equally reactionary. “*We cannot support either side in this war, because it is a reactionary war on both sides.*”²³

According to the IMT’s assessment, the Ukraine War is merely a “*US imperialism’s proxy war*”, i.e. the Ukrainian people are resisting Putin’s attempt to colonize their country only because they are servants of Washington.²⁴ In the end, the IMT considers NATO as the main reactionary factor in the Ukraine War; it views the Ukraine – a semi-colonial country – not worth of defence against the invasion by a Great Power; in other words, effectively, it characterises Russian imperialism as a “*lesser evil*” compared to the U.S. and Western Europe.

Such a shameful approach was symbolised by the participation of a representative of the IMT Russia as a speaker at a recently held conference which promoted support for Russia in the Ukraine War!²⁵

In fact, the leaders of the IMT are continuing the same line which led them to support the so-called “*People’s Republics*” in Donbass in their war against the Kiev government in 2014/15.²⁶ They claimed that these pseudo-states were the expression of a working-class rebellion while, in reality, these were proxies of Russian imperialism, based on the military power of thousands of Russian soldiers which had intervened in the civil war.²⁷

It is not without irony, by the way, that the IMT denies the proxy nature of the so-called “*People’s Republics*” in Donbass in 2014/15 despite the well-known presence of up to up to 16,000 Russian soldiers (not to speak about the artillery and tanks which Moscow sent).²⁸ However, at the same time, the IMT denounces the Ukraine as a “*proxy*” of U.S. imperialism despite the fact that there are, at most, a few hundred Western advisers and agents on the ground!

The IMT pro-Russian opportunism has gone so far that it even praised a warlord like the late Alexei Mozgovoy (commander of the so-called “*Ghost Brigade*”) as a kind of communist hero because of his “*statements in favor of a class war of the people against the oligarchs.*”²⁹ We note in passing that the above-mentioned Stalinist RKRП also called this figure a “*spontaneous communist*”.

As we did show somewhere else, Mozgovoy was, in fact, a red-brown figure who mixed class rhetoric with Great Russian chauvinism and Anti-Semitism, denouncing “*Jewish Nazis*” for having plans to “*build a new Israel in Ukraine*” and for waging “*Jewish terror after the Jewish revolution that has won in Ukraine [by this he meant the Euromaidan insurrection in February 2014, Ed.]*”³⁰

Conclusions

At the end of this essay, we shall summarize our main conclusions in a few theses.

1. The theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism is wrong in principle. There are stronger and weaker, bigger and smaller imperialist states. None of them is a “lesser evil”. They are all enemies of the working class and the oppressed peoples. The people in Afghanistan and Iraq, suffering from years of U.S. war and occupation as well as the people of Chechnya and Syria, tortured by Russia, bear witness to the equally criminal character of the imperialist powers of East and West.

2. It is impermissible for socialists to lend support, in any form, to one or the other of these imperialist states. Such could only result in the political subordination of workers and oppressed to the monopoly bourgeoisie in this or that country. Marxists characterize such a policy as *social-imperialism* which has been implemented by social democracy since World I and by Stalinism since the 1930s.

3. The RCIT advocates the program of *revolutionary defeatism*. This means that in conflicts between Great Powers, we support neither the one nor the other. Both are enemies and the working class must oppose all of these.

4. In case of an attack by a Great Power against an oppressed people, the program of revolutionary defeatism, other things being equal, obligates socialists to defend the latter against the imperialist aggressor and to openly advocate the defeat of the imperialist aggressor.

5. The RCIT therefore unreservedly condemns the theory of “lesser-evil” imperialism. We strongly reject the position advocated by various Stalinist and pseudo-Trotskyist forces – like the RKRП (Russia), the KKE (Greece) or Alan Woods’ IMT – that Russia would constitute such a “lesser-evil” imperialist power. This thesis is wrong and only serves as an excuse for downplaying the reactionary role of Russian imperialism. The practical consequences of this revisionist theory are either open support for its reactionary wars of aggression (RKRП) or, at the least, denunciation of the legitimate resistance of oppressed people like in Syria or in the Ukraine (KKE, IMT).

Footnotes

1 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. The most important ones are several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: *The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia’s Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory*, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; by the same author: *Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today’s Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia’s Imperialist Character*, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; *Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics*, 18 March 2014 (this pamphlet contains a document written in 2001 in which we established for the first time our characterisation of Russia as imperialist), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; see also these essays: *Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies*, in: *New Politics* Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022, https://newpol.org/issue_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/; *Once Again on Russian Imperialism (Reply to Critics)*. A rebuttal of

a theory which claims that Russia is not an imperialist state but would be rather “comparable to Brazil and Iran”, 30 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-russian-imperialism-reply-to-critics/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT’s website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

2 See e.g. these pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: Putin’s Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs). Putins Pudel. The pro-Russian Stalinist parties and their arguments in the current NATO-Russia Conflict, 9 February 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/nato-russia-conflict-stalinism-as-putin-s-poodles/>; Servants of Two Masters. Stalinism and the New Cold War between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West, 10 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/servants-of-two-masters-stalinism-and-new-cold-war/>; by the same author: Stalinist and “Trotskyist” Supporters of Chinese Imperialism under the Fig-Leaf of “Anti-Imperialism”. A commentary on the statement “No to U.S. war threats against China!” by the “United National Antiwar Coalition” in the U.S., 4 April 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/stalinist-and-trotskyist-supporters-of-chinese-imperialism-under-the-fig-leaf-of-anti-imperialism/>; One-sided and Naïve ... at Best! A joint call by the friends of Chinese imperialism and the daydreamers of well-meaning global capitalism, 31 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/joint-call-by-friends-of-chinese-imperialism-and-the-day-dreamers/>.

3 Claudio Katz: Is Russia an imperialist power? Part I, <https://katz.lahaine.org/is-russia-an-imperialist-power-part-1/>; Part II, <https://katz.lahaine.org/is-russia-an-imperialist-power-part-2/>; Part III: <https://katz.lahaine.org/is-russia-an-imperialist-power-part-3/>; Part IV, <https://katz.lahaine.org/is-russia-an-imperialist-power-benevolent/>. This essay has been reproduced on various websites. The Spanish original can be also viewed on Katz’s website (<https://katz.lahaine.org>). We will publish a reply to this essay in the near future.

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

5 Since the RKRП suffered several splits in the last period, it is difficult to say if it still the second-largest Stalinist party.

6 For our critique of the KPRF see e.g., in addition to the two pamphlets mentioned above in footnote 2, Michael Pröbsting: “Socialism” a la Putin. On a telling dialogue between the Stalinist party leader and the Russian President, 13 July 2022, [https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/socialism-a-la-putin-](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/socialism-a-la-putin/)

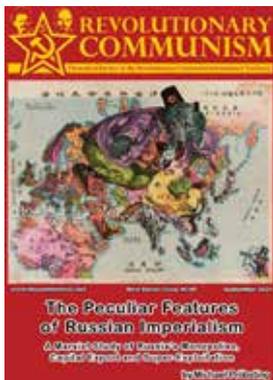
[tin/](#); by the same author: The Popular Uprising in Kazakhstan and Putin’s Patriotic “Communists”. The Stalinist KPRF of Gennady Zyuganov supports the bloody crackdown of the protests and the imperialist intervention of Russian troops, 8 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/kazakhstan-and-putin-s-patriotic-communists>

7 See chapters VIII and XVI in Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>

8 Viktor Tyulkin: Some words on the Russian imperialism, 09.10.2017, <https://rkrp-rpk.ru/2017/10/09/%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2-%D0%BE-%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B0%D0%BB/> (our translation)

9 RKRП: Перспектива для Донбасса - Заявление коммунистических и рабочих партий Донбасса, России и Украины, 19.2.2022 <http://www.solidnet.org/article/RCWP-00001/> (our translation)

10 RKRП: Нет фашизму, нет империалистической войне! О вооружённой фазе конфликта между РФ и Украиной, Заявление Политсовета ЦК РКРП-КПСС, 25.2.2022 <http://www.solidnet.org/article/Russian-CWP-00003/> (our translation). The party leadership polemized against opponents who recognized the reactionary nature of Putin’s war. “[T]hey say, there are only imperialists around, which means “a plague on both your houses.” At the same time, Comrade Batov somehow immediately forgot the assessments already given earlier and the position of the party worked out on the previous events in the Donbass. The fact that in order to fight fascism it is possible and necessary to use the contradictions of the imperialists, incl. aid to bourgeois Russia. (...) And meanwhile, we repeat, the party has not only declared that it stands for the recognition of the DPR and LPR, but also believes that in order to fight fascism, it is possible and necessary to make alliances even with bourgeois forces. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that the military campaign of assistance to the Donbass from Russia will develop into a truly completely aggressive war.” (Комментарий первого секретаря ЦК РОТ ФРОНТА тов. Тюлькина, 5.3.2022, <https://aloban75.livejournal.com/6049225.html> [our translation]) One month later, the RKRП noted with satisfaction: “I would say that the Russian Federation has come to a key moment, the territory of Donbass has almost been liberated, which we consider a positive component in this military operation. The military power of Ukraine is



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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

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significantly suppressed. Putin and the government need to think about how to emerge victorious from the war. (...) It's time for bidding. Under the conditions that have been created, the positive component is only in the recognition of the Crimea and Donbass, and, well, a little in demilitarization." (Stepan Malentsov on Ukraine war: "The fundamental solution of the problem is only on the path of socialism", March 21, 2022, <http://www.idcommunism.com/2022/03/stepan-malentsov-on-ukraine-war-the-solution-of-the-problem.html#more>)

11 Examples of such "Trotskyists" are the Argentinean PO and its affiliates (like DIP, EEK, etc.), the PTS/FT, Alan Woods' IMT, Peter Taafe's CWI, various Stalinophile groups of the so-called Spartacist family, etc. See on this . Michael Pröbsting: Closet Putinistas. On the Ukraine War and the inter-imperialist rivalry: a reply to a polemic of the Partido Obrero (Argentina), 7 June 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-closet-putinistas-reply-to-po-argentina/>; by the same author: Ukraine War: Stalino-"Trotskyist" Chamber of Horrors. On a recently held "anti-war" conference organised by some "Trotskyists" as well as Russian Stalinist parties, 29 June 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/stalino-trotskyist-chamber-of-horrors/>; Ukraine War: The Outcome of the Stalino-"Trotskyist" Conference. On the official conference declaration in support of Russian imperialism and on some "Trotskyists" participants (IMT, OKDE Spartakos), 13 July 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-outcome-of-stalino-trotskyist-conference/>; No to Workers Boycott against Russia but Yes to Boycotting the Ukraine? On the support of the PTS/FT for boycott actions against arms shipments for the Ukraine, 26 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/pts-ft-workers-sanctions-against-ukraine/>; The IMT and the Ukraine War: A Shameful Betrayal. Alan Woods and the IMT fail to defend the Ukrainian people against the Russian invasion and effectively refuse to recognize Russia's imperialist character, 2 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-imt-and-the-ukraine-war-a-shameful-betrayal/>; NATO-Russia Conflict: The Anglo-Saxon 'Marxist' Tendency. On the IMT's confusion about the role of Russian imperialism, 31 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/nato-russia-conflict-the-anglo-saxon-marxist-tendency/>

12 V. I. Lenin: The Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. Groups Abroad (1915); in CW 21, p. 159

13 V.I. Lenin: Socialism and War (1915); in: CW 21, p. 301

14 V.I. Lenin: Socialism and War (1915); in: LCW 21, p. 303

15 For a more detailed elaboration see e.g. the book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>

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Comrade Detlef Mühling (1952-2022)

An Obituary by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 August 2022

Our comrade Detlef Mühling has died unexpectedly in Kassel (Germany) a few days ago at age 70. We extend our deep condolences to his wife and comrade, Anita. Detlef has been an elected member of the RCIT's International Executive Committee. He was one of our "Old Guard", a member of the RCIT resp. its predecessor organization for nearly a quarter of a century. Like many others, Detlef became radicalized as a school student active in the '68 Movement. He soon became a militant in a Maoist organization. Later, however, he joined the Trotskyist movement and became a member of our predecessor organization – the "*League for a Revolutionary Communist International*" in 1998. He was the leader of the Kassel branch and was part of the National Committee of its German section.

Comrade Detlef opposed the political degeneration of our predecessor organization and eventually left it in 2014. In the next year, he joined the RCIT which had been founded by a nucleus of cadres soon after they were bureaucratically expelled from the same organization in April 2011 after a short period of faction struggle.

Detlef had been a lifelong militant for the cause of socialism. He understood that this struggle requires the construction of a revolutionary party which intransigently fights against the reformist bureaucracy as well as against opportunist deviations. Through his tireless local work, mostly in the region of Kassel, he recruited numerous comrades for the cause of revolutionary Marxism.

He was particularly engaged in the environmental movement for many years and participated in numerous activities. In the last years, he was instrumental in building a local initiative protesting against nuclear energy.

Since 2015, Detlef and his comrades were also particularly active in refugee solidarity work. He helped to build local

groups which organized practical help for refugees. The comrades combined this with political education, explaining the role of imperialism and racism and the importance of building international unity of workers and oppressed across the borders.

Comrade Detlef was also a member of the European Bureau of the RCIT and regularly participated in its bi-weekly meetings. He was known for his serious preparations of the meeting and his thoughtful contributions. In fact, he remained a highly active member of our organisation until the last days of his life.

One of the last meetings in which he participated was a conference on 6 August where the comrades of "*Socialist Tendency*" in Russia joined the RCIT on the basis of agreement about the defence of the Ukraine against Russian imperialism. He died knowing that our movement is marching forward!

Comrade Detlef Mühling was a lifelong revolutionary – from his days as a school student until his last breath. He was a dedicated Trotskyist and a loyal member of our organization for nearly a quarter of a century. Physically, he is no longer among us. But he will continue to live in our memories and his contribution to the cause of socialist revolution will be immortal!

International Bureau of the RCIT

We refer readers to a special sub-page on the RCIT website dedicated to comrade Detlef Mühling which contains other obituaries and pictures: <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/comrade-detlef-muehling-1952-2022/>

