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## Putin's Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs)

The Pro-Russian Stalinist Parties  
in the current NATO-Russia Conflict

by Michael Pröbsting

## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.70, March 2022

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Picture on the cover: Russian Special Operations Forces (Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special\\_Operations\\_Forces\\_\(Russia\)#/media/File:06.KSO\(14\)\(1\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Operations_Forces_(Russia)#/media/File:06.KSO(14)(1).jpg))

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# Putin's Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs)

## The pro-Russian Stalinist parties and their arguments in the current NATO-Russia Conflict

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 9.2.2022

### INTRODUCTION

The current escalation of tensions between NATO and Russia is the sharpest manifestation (up to now) of the Great Power rivalry which became a key feature in world politics in the last decade. For the first time, this rivalry has provoked the danger of war between these Great Powers respectively their proxies in the Ukraine.

As we have elaborated in a number of documents, the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) characterizes both camps – NATO as well as Russia – as imperialist. We therefore consider the conflict between these powers – respectively between their proxies in the Ukraine – as thoroughly reactionary. Consequently, socialists have to oppose both sides in this conflict. They need to advocate a program of *revolutionary defeatism*, i.e. working towards the defeat of the respective governments and the transformation of this conflict into a revolutionary crisis at home.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, such an event is a key test for all political currents. Great crisis in world politics force self-proclaimed socialists to clarify their analysis, to deepen their understanding of the necessary orientation and to sharpen their tactical slogans. In other words, the aggravation of the contradictions between the classes and states leaves no space for ambiguity and evasiveness. Hence, such crises bring into the open the real nature of political tendencies.

This law of politics is organically linked with another occurrence. The acceleration of rivalry between the Great Powers is, ultimately, rooted in the structural crisis of cap-

italism and the resulting the aggravation of contradictions between classes and states. Such development inevitable causes also the aggravation of contradictions between political forces representing the interests of the struggling classes (respectively factions of it). Hence, crisis like the current escalation of tensions between NATO and Russia inevitable deepen the divisions between Marxism and opportunism.

In our articles, we have analyzed and criticized the positions of various Stalinist, social democratic and centrist parties in the current crisis. At this place, we want to deal in more detail with those Stalinist parties which explicitly take a side by supporting the camp of Russian imperialism. A critical discussion of their arguments is useful also because one can find their ideas – explicitly or implicitly – in statements of other opportunist forces.

Before we start the examination, we would like to call the readers attention to the following. In this essay we discuss the arguments of a number of Stalinist parties concerning the NATO-Russia conflict. While we explain our counter-arguments, we will refrain from elaborating our political, economic and military analysis of the Great Powers in much detail. We have done so extensively in our book *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*<sup>2</sup> and several pamphlets and, therefore, refer readers to look for facts and figures in the bibliographical reference which is listed in the respective footnotes.



### *Publications of the RCIT*

## The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

Introduction \* Another Denial of Russia's Imperialist Character \* The Methodological Failure of our Critics \* Russia's Economy: Dominated by Domestic, not Foreign, Monopolies \* Capital Export and the Problem of "Round-Tripping" Foreign Direct Investments \* "Phantom FDI": No Russian Peculiarity but a Global Phenomenon \* Russia's Leading Multinational Corporations and their Foreign Investments \* Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Capital Export \* Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Migration \* Conclusions \* Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

## 1. NATO IS THE SOLE AGGRESSOR! REALLY?

A common theme among the Stalinist parties siding with Russian imperialism is the claim that U.S. imperialism, respectively NATO, is the sole responsible force for the current escalation of tensions. In contrast, they consider Russia as a party without expansionist demands which is simply defending itself against the Western aggression.

Let us give a few examples for this. A broad alliance of Stalinist, semi-Stalinist and petty-bourgeois pacifist forces issued a joint statement some days ago, claiming that it is only the U.S. (and its allies) which acts as aggressor.

*“Once again, our world is facing an imminent threat of war between two major nuclear powers. As in the past, the United States is using the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as the vehicle to wage war in clear violation of international law and the Charter of United Nations. The Biden administration is currently flying \$200 million worth of weapons and other “lethal aid” to Ukraine and has 8,500 US troops on standby to enter that country. ‘Nonessential’ US diplomatic personnel and their families are being withdrawn from the country. The corporate media is lockstep in its portrayal of Russia as the enemy who is about to invade Ukraine. These actions constitute a de facto declaration of war, while the corporate media fan the flame of war. This current escalation of aggression against Russia through expansion of NATO’s presence into Ukraine is a serious threat to world peace and requires a unified and rapid response by anti-war organizations to stop a major war.”*<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, this statement has been signed not only by various (semi-)Stalinist forces like the Workers World Party, Party of Communists, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization (all in the U.S.), the Communist Party of Ireland, or the New Zealand friends of the North Korean dictatorship (NZ DPRK Society) but also the New York branch of *Socialist Action* (the leading force of the so-called left opposition in the Mandelite “Fourth International”) Obviously *Socialist Action* is unburdened by the fact that its “Fourth International” officially characterizes Russia and China as “imperialist” and refuses to take side in the current NATO-Russia conflict.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the opportunist appetite of *Socialist Action* in its national work is bigger than its internationalist principles!

The above-mentioned *Communist Party of Ireland* restate the idea that it is only the U.S. which acts as aggressor in its own declaration. *“It is clear that it is not the actions of Russia that are threatening world peace, with the potential huge loss of life and environmental destruction if war is allowed to happen, but rather the aggressive military build-up by NATO as well as the military strategy of the EU under its PESCO strategy. The actions of the NATO alliance is to undermine the 2015 Minsk Peace agreement which called for the removal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Ukraine.”*<sup>5</sup>

The *Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)* argue in the same spirit. *“In this context, from the Middle East to Latin America, from Africa to Europe and Asia, US imperialism, with the support of its allies, pursues its aggressive policy against countries and peoples that do not submit to its dictates and that assert their sovereignty, and intensifies its policy of confrontation against China and Russia. (...) The Central Committee of the PCP condemns the escalation of confrontation promoted by the*

*USA, NATO and the EU against Russia. An escalation that, being expressed on the military, economic and political levels, is being sustained by an intense campaign of misinformation, and constitutes a serious threat to peace. In this context, the inclusion of Ukraine in the aggressive strategy of US imperialism – which turned this country into an instrument of its dangerous provocative action – assumes particular seriousness, as well as the insistence of the USA and NATO in its policy of encircling Russia, with the rejection of the proposals presented by this country – namely those to put an end to the continuous enlargement of NATO and the installation of military resources along its borders – with a view to promoting security in Europe.”*<sup>6</sup>

The Canadian CP repeats the same idea: *“The fact is that the main danger to peace in Europe and throughout the world does not come from Moscow, but from Washington and NATO.”*<sup>7</sup>

And, to provide one more example, the Mexican Popular Socialist Party states: *“In this context, the growing tension started at the end of 2021 in the territory of Ukraine, which maintains a military campaign against the two secessionist republics of Donbas. (...) For these reasons, the Popular Socialist Party of Mexico condemns in the strongest terms: the reckless aspirations of the Ukrainian government, sponsored by its American and European partners, to resolve the conflict with the use of force; the irresponsible goal of including Ukraine in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which, if realized, would do nothing for the peace of the country or the region, but rather the opposite; the Ukrainian government’s numerous violations of the Minsk treaties and its lack of political will to resolve the conflict peacefully. (...) We call upon: The peoples of the world and their advanced organizations to be alert and denounce the provocative siege of NATO troops in this region.”*<sup>8</sup>

The argument that U.S. imperialism – and its European allies – are aggressors is, of course, correct. The U.S. was the most important victorious power of World War II. It became the leading force within the imperialist camp and the main opponent of the Stalinist states led by the USSR. After the collapse of the latter in 1991, Washington expanded its hegemony even more for more than a decade.

However, this is only half of the truth. U.S. imperialism is in decline since at least one decade and, by now, it has lost its absolute hegemony. Economically, it has been surpassed (or nearly surpassed, depending on the calculation method) by China – the new imperialist Great Power in the East.<sup>9</sup> And Russia is the world’s largest nuclear power together with the U.S.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, the U.S. is no longer an unchallenged hegemon. Its world order has been replaced by a global situation characterized by massive instability and accelerating rivalry between different Great Powers (U.S., China, EU, Russia and Japan). As we have elaborated on this issue extensively in various works, we will not go into detail at this place and refer readers to the RCIT’s literature.<sup>11</sup>

This shift in the global situation in the past decade has resulted in several humiliating retreats and defeats of U.S. imperialism. The most important event has been the chaotic defeat in Afghanistan in August 2021. The result of this development was the fact that the Taliban came back to power, i.e. the very same force which the U.S. overthrew in November 2001 when it invaded this country

and which had waged a heroic guerilla struggle against the Western occupiers for two decades.<sup>12</sup>

However, the global retreat of the U.S. is not limited to Afghanistan. Washington had to withdraw troops also from other countries (e.g. Iraq, Syria) and lost much influence in the Middle East. The same has been the case in Central Asia where Russia and China replaced the U.S. as the hegemon.

As a result, it has been Russia and China which expanded their influence in the past decade. China possesses enormous political and economic influence on all continents. It tries to control the whole *South Sea* (or “*East Sea*”, as it is called by Vietnam) irrespective of the claims of all other littoral states. Beijing also threatens to invade Taiwan which has been allied with U.S. imperialism since the end of the civil war.<sup>13</sup>

Russia, which is economically weaker than China but militarily stronger, wields important influence in the Middle East, in North, East and Central Africa, in Europe as well as in Asia. Its troops are stationed – officially or concealed – in various other countries and regions (e.g. in Central Asia, Eastern Ukraine, Syria, Libya, Mali, Central African Republic, etc.) As Moscow’s military intervention in Kazakhstan has demonstrated recently, Russia acts as the imperialist *Gendarme of Eurasia*.

This is even more the case today in the current conflict between NATO and Russia. It is Russia which has stationed more than 100,000 troops at the border to the Ukraine, threatening to invade that country. True, NATO has decided now to send also a few thousand additional troops to Eastern Europe, but the escalation was clearly initiated by Moscow. The Biden Administration initially had no intention to launch a political-military offensive against Russia for the simple reason that it is fully occupied with containing China in East Asia.

For all these reasons it is simply white-washing of the Putin regime if these Stalinist parties denounce *only* the U.S. as the aggressor without saying a single word of criticism about the offensive of Russian (and Chinese) imperialism in the past decade and, in particular, in the last few months!

It is worth noting that smarter observers among the Stalinists recognize this shift in the world order. The *Communist Party of India (Marxists)* – abbreviated as CPI(M), one of the largest Stalinist parties in the world – recently published an article on the NATO-Russia crisis which pointed to the important changes in the relation of forces between the Great Powers.

*“However, the growing assertion of Russia due to its improved economic condition, economic crises that weakened the US and the emergence of China as a force to reckon, marked a change in geopolitical realities. In 2008, Russia unequivocally registered its opposition to NATO’s expansion and made it clear that it draws a ‘red line’ on the inclusion of Georgia and Ukraine into the alliance. (...) US efforts to mobilise all its NATO allies is facing resistance as Germany and France are not buying this idea of Russian invasion. Both of them earlier had even vetoed against the decision to include Ukraine into the NATO alliance. Many of the European countries are dependent on the cheap natural gas supplied by Russia and hence cannot afford to forego their relations with it. They are also aware of the growing threat of neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine, the corrupt and authoritarian regime there and are concerned about the fall-out of all this in their own countries. They are also skeptical of US and the*

*outcome of a military conflict with Russia. After all, Russia still possesses high grade military technology and a war with it, will be disastrous to not only European countries, but to the entire humanity.”*<sup>14</sup>

However, this does not lead the Indian Stalinists to take a position opposing all imperialist powers, as we will see below.

The Stalinists’ one-sided opposition only against the Western imperialists is caused by their support for Russian (and Chinese) imperialism. Basically, they act as Putin’s poodles. A particularly outspoken example for this is the Russian KPRF led by Gennady Zyuganov. As we did already point out somewhere else, this party openly hailed Russia’s military intervention in Kazakhstan to put down the popular uprising. Such advocacy for counterrevolution was justified with the argument that West is waging a “*hybrid war on Russia*” and that “*the collective West will do everything to destabilize the situation along the Russian borders.*”<sup>15</sup>

The same social-patriotic spirit has driven the KPRF to put forward a parliamentary proposal to formally recognise the independence of Donbass “*Republics*”. One of the supporters of this bill, Alexander Borodai – a former Donetsk political leader who is now a lawmaker for the ruling, pro-Putin *United Russia* party – said that the separatists would look to Russia to help them wrest control of parts of the territory that are now held by Ukrainian forces. “*In the event of (the republics) being recognised, a war will become a direct necessity.*”<sup>16</sup>

We shall conclude this chapter by pointing out the theoretical consequences of the Stalinists’ assertion that only the NATO states qualify as “*imperialist*” but not their rivals in the East. This position effectively reveals an adaptation to revisionist theory of “*Ultra-Imperialism*”. This concept was elaborated by the German theoretician Karl Kautsky in 1914 – ironically at the beginning of World War I! According to this theory the economic laws of capitalism would push the bourgeoisie to overcome the stage of imperialism and to enter a stage called “*ultra-imperialism.*” Such epoch would be characterized by an increasing exploitation of the working class as well as of the colonial and semicolonial countries. At the same time, the imperialist powers would increasingly overcome their rivalry and unite in a single imperialist trust or alliance.

The historical experience of the past century has, of course, completely refuted this theory. The Great Powers fought each other in two World Wars which caused up to 100 million deaths. There was a period in which the rivalry between the imperialist powers receded to a certain degree (1948-91). But the reason for this was that the contradictions between these powers were superseded by their common antagonism to the Stalinist workers states. However, in the past one, two decades new Great Powers did emerge (Russia and China) and the inter-imperialist rivalry has become, once again, a key feature of the world situation.

The Stalinist idea that Russia and China would not constitute imperialist powers and all the (Western) imperialist states are united under the leadership of the U.S. is a kind of remake of the Kautskyian theory of “*Ultra-Imperialism*”. As Lenin once noted about this concept, “*there is not a whit of Marxism in this urge to ignore the imperialism which is here.*”<sup>17</sup> We refer readers interested to other works where we have dealt in detail with this question.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. IS IT RELEVANT FOR MARXISTS WHO IS THE AGGRESSOR?

In our opinion, it would be a grave mistake to focus the debate on the question which Great Power is stronger or more aggressive. For Marxists, this is not the main issue. It is not decisive if the U.S. provoked the conflict by enlarging NATO in Eastern Europe or if Russia started the tensions by assembling 100,000 troops at the border to the Ukraine. Marxists never characterize a conflict by judging who started the aggression first. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, formulated such an approach very clearly in a resolution adopted at a conference in spring 1915 – a few months after the beginning of World War I.

„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.“<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, it is not the decisive issue which power is stronger, and which is weaker. We do not side with the weaker robber against the stronger robber. We oppose all robbers! Lenin and Zinoviev – another leader of the Bolsheviks at that time – expressed such an approach in their well-known pamphlet “Socialism and War”, published a few months after the above-mentioned conference.

“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.“<sup>20</sup>

They took the example of the situation before 1914 when Britain (and France) were the imperialist powers with the largest possession of colonies. Compared with these, Germany was a weakling. Replace, Britain and France with the U.S. and its allies and Germany with China or Russia and you will see a very accurate characterization of the current world situation!

“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.“<sup>21</sup>

In short, it is not decisive for socialists if the U.S. is larger or has been more aggressive in the past than Russia (or China). We oppose all Great Powers, and we must not support the challengers of the hegemonial powers in their efforts to replace these!

# Books of the RCIT

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

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan.

A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective

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

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

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

nizations 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 of Theorists

### 3. WHAT IS CAUSING THE ESCALATION OF TENSIONS BETWEEN GREAT POWERS: THE PARTY OF WARMONGERS OR THE IMPERIALIST SYSTEM?

A characteristic feature of the argumentation of the pro-Russian Stalinists is the fact that they do not locate the cause of the Great Power rivalry in the fundamental contradictions of the imperialist world system. They rather suggest that the danger of war is the result of irrational, militaristic intentions of some sectors of the ruling class in the U.S. If it were not for such reactionary groups, diplomatic negotiations and a peaceful solution would be entirely possible. Let us give an example by quoting from *Peoples World*, the publication of the *Communist Party of the USA* (CPUSA).

*"Indications are that Russia's bottom line in this conflict is stopping Ukraine from joining NATO, and it wants promises that the United States will never place offensive military weapons on its borders, particularly in Ukraine. Stationing such weapons there would cut off any possibility of diplomacy and likely leave the Russians feeling they have no choice but to intervene. If we were not dealing in the U.S. with a foreign policy establishment dominated by the Pentagon and the dangerous military-industrial complex, there would be more than enough grounds for pursuing diplomacy rather than war."* <sup>22</sup>

Such an explanation of the escalation of tensions is identical with the recent statements of the ex-Stalinist *Party of the European Left* on the NATO-Russia conflict which we analyzed in another article. <sup>23</sup> This alliance includes the LINKE (Germany), PCF (France), IU & PCE (Spain), SYRIZA (Greece) and other parties. Ironically enough, the Spanish parties of these alliance are part of the government, i.e. of the very government of a NATO member state which just sent warships to the Black Sea to confront Russia. To put it diplomatically, the unity of theory and practice is not a characteristic feature of Stalinism!

Such an approach which identifies certain parties or groups as responsible for the escalation of tensions instead of the fundamental antagonism between imperialist powers has nothing to do with Marxism. We have seen the policy of militarism, the reactionary war-mongering, the launching of wars many times in the past decades. Is has happened under conservative and "progressive" gov-

ernments of capitalist powers and it has happened under U.S.-Administrations led by Republicans as well as by Democrats. Furthermore, it has happened with the participation of social democratic and green parties in governments – and even with the participation of "Communist" parties (e.g. the PCF was a government party when France participated in the NATO war against Yugoslavia 1999 and Afghanistan 2001). <sup>24</sup>

Claiming that imperialist warmongering is caused by "wrong" governments, by "bad-intentioned" groups of interests creates confusion among workers and peace activists. Such a myth provokes the illusion that if another party would come to power, peaceful development would be entirely possible *within* the capitalist system, i.e. that long-lasting peace could be established *without* the overthrow of the ruling class via a socialist revolution. However, the history of modern capitalism, i.e. of the past 120 years has demonstrated the opposite. Lenin and other communists emphasized this analysis numerous times.

*"War is no chance happening, no "sin" as is thought by Christian priests (who are no whit behind the opportunists in preaching patriotism, humanity and peace), but an inevitable stage of capitalism, just as legitimate a form of the capitalist way of life as peace is."* <sup>25</sup>

*"...sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale. And this summary proves that imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under such an economic system, as long as private property in the means of production exists."* <sup>26</sup>

*„Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable."* <sup>27</sup>

As the Stalinists deny the inevitability of wars in capitalism, the preach a system of peaceful capitalism. In order to enable such a pacifist utopia, these parties build alliances with bourgeois parties (which supposedly oppose warmongering) and try to enter capitalist governments. As we did show before, this does not work, unsurprisingly. As a result, Stalinist parties repeatedly did become supporters of imperialist wars.



## Publications of the RCIT

### The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

## 4. CAN SOCIALISTS DEFEND “LEGITIMATE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE” OF GREAT POWERS?

Stalinist parties continue such illusionary and treacherous policy of building alliances with bourgeois forces and joining capitalist governments also on a global level. Since, according to them, warmongering is not rooted in the fundamental contradictions of capitalism which accelerate in the current period of historical decay, a peaceful compromise between the Great Powers is entirely possible. As a basis for this, the Stalinists propose that the Great Powers should respect the spheres of imperialist domination of each other. Let us quote from another article published by the CPUSA.

*“A deeper look at history and recent events reveals that it is the West, by pursuing a long-term policy of NATO aggression, that bears responsibility for the crisis now gripping eastern Europe. It is helpful to understand that all countries, the U.S. included, have core strategic interests that, if violated, can force them into taking military action and going to war. To understand the Russian view of NATO’s possible expansion and placement of weapons or troops in Ukraine—which multiple U.S. administrations, including the current one, have threatened—a simple thought experiment is useful. Since the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. has declared the entirety of the Western Hemisphere as a core strategic interest. It would never tolerate Russian or Chinese weapons being placed in countries directly on its border, such as Canada or Mexico. But a situation just like that is what Russia’s leaders fear. Russia cannot tolerate NATO weaponry (like the U.S.-managed nuclear weapons NATO has in Germany) to be stationed right along its borders in Ukraine. Missiles that can reach Moscow in five minutes or less are a definite no-no.”*<sup>28</sup>

The logic of such argumentation is pretty clear. The CPUSA does not state its fundamental opposition against the Monroe Doctrine and any sphere of influence for U.S. imperialism. Instead, it calls the U.S. to restrain their expansionism to a certain degree and to allow Russia its own proper sphere of influence. So, in effect, the CPUSA supports the implementation of a Russian version of the Monroe Doctrine so that both – Washington as well as Moscow – can control their share of the world. This is the geopolitical version of the “Fair Trade” utopia – one could say this is the illusionary concept of “Fair Imperialism”.

As a matter of fact, Marxists have always opposed U.S. imperialism and its Monroe Doctrine. They are no less opposed to Russian imperialism and its *Putin Doctrine*.

The approach of the Stalinists is in fact identical with the strategic goals of Russian and Chinese imperialism. As the joint statement issued at the recent Putin-Xi meeting demonstrates, these two Great Powers advocate a new world

order characterized by “*genuine multipolarity*” and “*the democratization of international relations.*”<sup>29</sup> The hegemony of the U.S. shall be replaced by the hegemony of *several* Great Powers – obviously with a prominent role for Beijing and Moscow. In other words, the Stalinists want to replace the imperialist world order of the period after the collapse of the USSR in 1991 with a kind of the imperialist world order which existed before 1914. (Some of them even make explicitly reference to this, as we will see below.)

Another reflection of such advocacy of a multilateral imperialist order is the repeated positive reference to the United Nations and its political principles. The UN has been founded by the victorious powers of World War II and Russia and China are veto-wielding states within the UN Security Council.

Such writes the Portuguese PCP: “*We reaffirm the importance of developing the struggle against aggression and interference by imperialism, against the enlargement of NATO and for its dissolution, against the militarisation of the European Union, for peace and disarmament, in compliance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.*”<sup>30</sup>

And the joint statement mentioned at the beginning of chapter 1 lists among its demands: “*Obey international laws and the UN Charter*” and “*Resolve the current conflict within the United Nations Security Council.*”<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, these forces also advocate – like the Putin regime – the implementation of the so-called *Minsk II agreement* – the diplomatic solutions negotiated by the three imperialist powers Russia, France and Germany plus the Ukraine. “*The only way of the present impasse is to stick to the Minsk agreement signed between Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany. This agreement was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council and this includes the US also.*”<sup>32</sup>

Such demands are absurd to the extreme. Socialists must not create any illusions in imperialist institutions like the UN. This is an institution dominated by Great Powers – mainly the veto-wielding states within the Security Council (U.S., China, Russia, France and Britain). UN institutions either implement the joint interests of these robbers respectively a compromise between them (e.g. sanctions against North Korea) or they adopt impotent resolutions which nobody cares to implement.

Socialists must not advocate replacing one form of imperialist order with another version of the same order. They must fight for the abolition of all Great Powers and its institutions (like the UN) and the creation of global socialist federation of workers and peasant republics.

## Comunismo Revolucionario Spanish-language Journal of the RCIT

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## 5. PUTIN AND GREAT RUSSIAN CHAUVINISM CLAIM THAT THE UKRAINE IS NOT AN INDEPENDENT NATION

Let us deal now with another issue which is no less important. The Stalinists' support for Russian imperialism and its demands often goes hand in hand with propagating the viewpoint of Great Russian chauvinism concerning the Ukraine. As it is well known, Moscow has always denied the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation or claimed that it is "naturally" close to the Russian nation. In other words, the Ukrainians supposedly have no reason to oppose being part of "*Russkij Mir*" (the Russian world).<sup>33</sup>

Since many years, the Putin regime has effectively denied the right of the Ukrainian people to have their own, independent state.<sup>34</sup> In July 2021, President Putin published a long essay titled "*On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*". It is a kind of manifesto which has been translated and published by the Kremlin itself and which officially reflects the Russian Presidents' views about the Ukraine.<sup>35</sup>

Basically, this essay presents the point of view of undisguised Great Russian chauvinism. Putin denies the existence of a Ukrainian nation. He claims that Russians and Ukrainians are "*one people – a single whole*". Elsewhere, he suggests that the Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians would constitute a "*single large nation, a triune nation*". His conclusion is that the Ukraine should enter close unity with Russia, i.e. become Moscow's vassal. ("*I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia.*")

In Putin's view, the main culprit for Ukrainian separatism have been Lenin and the Bolsheviks. He particularly blames the Bolsheviks policy called *Korenisazija* (which means something like "*building national roots*"; the English version of Putin's essay misleadingly translates this category as "*localization policy*" which robs it of the national element.) With this policy, the Bolsheviks enabled non-Russian people to freely develop their culture, language, literature, etc.<sup>36</sup> Later, Stalinism pushed back these reforms and encouraged Great Russian chauvinism. For Pu-

tin, the Leninist nationality policy is evil.

*"The localization policy undoubtedly played a major role in the development and consolidation of the Ukrainian culture, language and identity. At the same time, under the guise of combating the so-called Russian great-power chauvinism, Ukrainization was often imposed on those who did not see themselves as Ukrainians. This Soviet national policy secured at the state level the provision on three separate Slavic peoples: Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, instead of the large Russian nation, a triune people comprising Velikorussians, Malorussians and Belorussians."*

Similarly bad, in Putin's view, was the Bolshevik's policy of allowing nations the rights to freely determine their status, including the right to form a separate state. "*In 1922, when the USSR was created, with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic becoming one of its founders, a rather fierce debate among the Bolshevik leaders resulted in the implementation of Lenin's plan to form a union state as a federation of equal republics. The right for the republics to freely secede from the Union was included in the text of the Declaration on the Creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, subsequently, in the 1924 USSR Constitution. By doing so, the authors planted in the foundation of our statehood the most dangerous time bomb, which exploded the moment the safety mechanism provided by the leading role of the CPSU was gone, the party itself collapsing from within. A "parade of sovereignties" followed."*

Hence, the evil Bolsheviks "*robbed us Russians*". "*The Bolshevik leaders who were chopping the country into pieces was. We can disagree about minor details, background and logics behind certain decisions. One fact is crystal clear: Russia was robbed, indeed."*

These excerpts from Putin's essay demonstrate clearly that the Kremlin does not consider Ukraine as a separate nation but rather as part of a Great Russian "*triune nation*". Hence, the Ukrainians have no separate future since they can only be sovereign if they are very close to Russia, i.e. if they become part of the "*Russkij Mir*".



### *Publications of the RCIT*

## The Inter-Imperialist Cold War between the US and China

*By Michael Pröbsting, March 2021*

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

**Introduction \* A symbolic public row \* Two thieves as upholders of moral standards \* Escalating the conflict between China and Japan \* The Quad Summit \* Inter-Imperialist tensions in the Taiwan Strait \* Unavoidable continuation and acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry \* Continuing doing business \* Towards escalation on the Korean Peninsula? \* "Fuck the EU" and Russia, again? \* Confirmation of the Marxist analysis \* Footnotes**

## 6. STALINISM VERSUS BOLSHEVISM: THE UKRAINE AND THE RIGHT OF NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

After all, one can agree with Putin on one thing: his policy is indeed diametrically opposed to the approach of Lenin! The Bolsheviks consistently fought against all forms of Great Russian chauvinism. They did not only recognize the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation but they also advocated its right of self-determination, including the right to form a separate state. *"We, the Great-Russian proletarians, who defend no privileges whatever, do not defend this privilege either. We are fighting on the ground of a definite state; we unite the workers of all nations living in this state; we cannot vouch for any particular path of national development, for we are marching to our class goal along all possible paths. However, we cannot move towards that goal unless we combat all nationalism, and uphold the equality of the various nations. Whether the Ukraine, for example, is destined to form an independent state is a matter that will be determined by a thousand unpredictable factors. Without attempting idle "guesses", we firmly uphold something that is beyond doubt: the right of the Ukraine to form such a state. We respect this right; we do not uphold the privileges of Great Russians with regard to Ukrainians; we educate the masses in the spirit of recognition of that right, in the spirit of rejecting state privileges for any nation."*<sup>37</sup>

Hence, the Bolsheviks stated in their official program, adopted in 1919: *"In order to remove mistrust felt on the part of the working-class masses of the oppressed countries towards the proletariat of those states which oppressed them, it is necessary to abolish all privileges of any national group, to proclaim the full equality of nations and to recognize the rights of colonies and dependent nations to state separation."*<sup>38</sup>

It is particularly shameful that various Stalinist parties do not only support the policy of Russian imperialism but even repeat its Great Russian ideology. Parroting the Kremlin propaganda, they claim that Ukrainians and Russian are very close, that there does not exist any history of national oppression and, consequently, there would be no reason for an independent existence of the Ukraine. Take the notorious KPRF led by Gennady Zyuganov. He published a remarkable appeal to the "fraternal people of Ukraine" in early February.<sup>39</sup>

This "appeal" reminds the Ukrainians to the long-standing historical closeness of the Russian and the Ukrainian people. The West, Zyuganov lectures the "ignorant brothers and sisters" always tried to divide us. *"Our friendship has been attacked more than once. There was a time when the enemy had the guise of cunning Papal legates who were dragging southern Russian principalities into the Catholic fold."* Unfortunately, the "fraternal relations" were tested not only by the catholic Papal but also many other enemies. Of course, Zyuganov strongly denounces the "smokescreen of a 'Moscow invasion'" provoked by "the world oligarchy" which "is stepping up its Anti-Russia project and is staging dangerous provocations." It seems that there is such a massive smokescreen that the KPRF leader can not see the 100,000 Russian troops at the border to the Ukraine. At least, he fails to mention this not unimportant fact a single time in his long Open Letter!

Zyuganov also tries to win the sympathies of the Ukrai-

nian "brothers and sisters" by reminding them to the glorious times when the Stalinist USSR still existed and the Ukrainians enjoyed the advantages of Moscow's wisdom. *"Wily brains dream of erasing from the consciousness of our people the fact that Soviet Ukraine was respected and loved in the Soviet Union. Its successes were rejoiced at. They added to the common heritage of a great and powerful country where citizens were not divided by nationality and language."* But why on earth did and do most Ukrainians insist on having their own independent state if live was so enjoyable in the Stalinist USSR? Why did the Ukraine (and many other states) choose to leave the USSR after 1991?! And if it would not have been for the Russian tanks, the Chechen people would also have their independent state by now.<sup>40</sup>

But why should the Stalinists bother about such historical facts?! And, anyway, if the ungrateful peoples forgot the benefits of being ruled by Russia, bad luck for them! He that will not hear must feel. Putin will show them the advantages of Moscow's rule – if they like it or not!

It is therefor no accident that Zyuganov mentioned the independence of the Ukraine only twice in his Open Letter. Once as a plot of the Western states and, the second time, as a dangerous idea of the Nazi leader Arthur Rosenberg! Guess how much independence the Ukrainian people would be granted if the KPRF and their master Putin would have their way?!

But the KPRF is only the most explicit Great Russian chauvinist party. Their international allies basically share this approach. For example, the CPUSA writes: *"It is also useful to keep in mind a bit of history regarding Ukraine and Russia. They have historically been closely linked. The Russian state began centuries ago in Kiev, the present-day capital of Ukraine, and in modern times, both were part of the Soviet Union. During those years, Ukraine had a higher standard of living than any of the other Soviet Republics, including Russia. Then and now, 40% or more of the population in Ukraine was and is Russian. The productive industrial part of Ukraine in the east is almost entirely Russian by language and ethnicity. Millions of families in the country are headed by parents of different ethnicities, one of whom is Ukrainian and the other Russian. Even Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine today, was a well-known Russian-speaking comedian before he ran for that office. He started speaking Ukrainian, however, after he was elected. The short story is that there should be no ethnic basis for hostility between Ukraine and Russia."*<sup>41</sup>

One finds the same idea in articles of other Stalinist parties. The Indian CPI(M), for example, states: *"Ukraine and Russia share common history and familial bonds."*<sup>42</sup> Let us note in passing that it is no accident that the CPI(M) itself has a long history of adapting to Indian chauvinism towards national and ethnic minorities on the sub-continent, resulting in the denial of the right of self-determination of these nationalities and the refusal to support the legitimate resistance of these oppressed peoples.<sup>43</sup>

These Stalinists fail to mention a single word about the fact that the Ukrainian nation was nationally oppressed by Russia for most of the time since the beginning of its

existence until the dissolution of the USSR in 1991! The Ukraine was “close” to Russia because Russia forced it to be close by occupying and oppressing it!

Of course, one can not deny that there are bonds between the Ukraine and Russia. But, first, there exist also historical bonds between the Ukraine and Poland, Belorussia, Moldavia, with the Crimean Tatars, etc. All such bonds exist. The task of socialists is to oppose any nationalist prejudices between these nations and to intensify such bonds in order to advance the unity of people beyond national boundaries. But all such bonds must rest on *voluntary agreement and not on pressure and force!*

Secondly, and more important, the historical relationship of national oppression has made the Ukrainian people very sensitive to such offers of Russian “brotherhood”. The existence of a separate Ukrainian nation with its own language and culture was simply denied under the rule of Tsarism before 1917. All attempts of public expression of the Ukrainian nation were brutally suppressed. While the period of authentic Bolshevism after the October Revolution resulted in a spectacular period of flowering of Ukraine’s national development (see the above-mentioned policy of *Korenisazija*), it could not last long because the Stalinist bureaucracy took power in the 1920s. From then on, Moscow encouraged Great Russian chauvinism at the cost of smaller peoples – including the Ukrainians.<sup>44</sup>

A particularly traumatic experience was the Stalinist policy of forced collectivization since the end of the 1920s which had devastating consequences for poor peasants and, hence, for peoples for which agriculture played a central role. While the exact figures are under dispute, there is no doubt that several million people died during the Great Famine in 1932-33, including many Ukrainians. Leon Trotsky noted in *“The Revolution Betrayed”* – his most comprehensive work on Stalinism – that, in this period, the USSR *“again became an arena of civil war, famine and epidemic”*.<sup>45</sup> However, this time such catastrophe was not caused by foreign invaders and White counterrevolutionaries but by the Stalinist bureaucracy itself!

It is self-explaining that this has been a traumatic experience for the Ukrainian people. There exists a vast literature about this tragedy which also discusses the question if this

famine was intended by Stalin in order to subjugate the Ukrainian people (the *“Holodomor”*).<sup>46</sup>

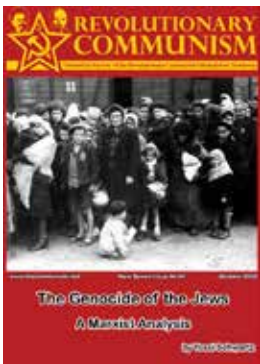
The Fourth International led by Leon Trotsky, which had its origins in the Left Opposition in the Communist Party against the Stalinist leadership from 1923 onwards, always opposed the nationality policy of the regime and defended the rights of the smaller peoples. In the late 1930s Trotsky concluded from the experience of national oppression of the Ukrainian people that socialists should advocate the slogan of *“a united, free and independent workers’ and peasants’ Soviet Ukraine.”* Such a *“workers’ and peasants’ Ukraine”* had to be defended *“in the struggle against imperialism on the one hand, and against Moscow Bonapartism on the other.”*<sup>47</sup>

To come back to the current situation, given such historical experience, it is hardly surprising that the vast majority of the Ukrainian population emphatically rejects any form of Russian occupation. According to recent polls, a third of Ukraine’s citizens would be willing to take up *“armed resistance”* in case of a Russian invasion!<sup>48</sup>

One can not criticize Putin for refusing the Bolshevik’s policy of national self-determination. He is no communist and does not even claim so. He is a class enemy and the imperialist gendarme of Eurasia. But what is the excuse of the Stalinists who call themselves *“communists”* standing in the tradition of Lenin?! Lenin used to say about Russian communists who failed to consistently oppose chauvinism: *“Scratch some Communists and you will find Great Russian chauvinists.”*<sup>49</sup> But in the case of modern-day Stalinism, it is not necessary to scratch at all in order to see their reactionary adaption to chauvinism!

Let us note in passing that, as we have pointed out in other works, the Ukraine is not an isolated case. It is a general feature of Stalinism that it adapts to the chauvinism of dominant nations.<sup>50</sup>

In summary, Stalinists adhere to the original principles of Lenin’s program as little as the corrupted bishops in the Middle Ages adhered to the teachings of the *New Testament!* Lenin’s denunciation fully fits to these epigones: *“Russian Socialists who fail to demand freedom of secession for Finland, Poland, the Ukraine, etc., etc. – are behaving like chauvinists, like lackeys of the blood-and-mud-stained imperialist monarchies and the imperialist bourgeoisie.”*<sup>51</sup>



## Publications of the RCIT

# The Genocide of the Jews A Marxist Analysis

By Yossi Schwartz

**Introduction \* The Conditions of the Jews on the Eve of World War II \* The Pseudo-Scientific Racist Theory of Social Darwinism \* Anti-Semitism as a Branch of Social Darwinism \* The Nazi Labor-Death Camps \* Zionist Ideology as a Branch of Social Darwinism \* The Genocide of the Palestinians \* Who Are the Guilty Parties for the Genocide of the Jews? \* The Uniqueness of the Genocide of the Jews \* The Use of the Holocaust \* So What Is Unique About the Genocide of the Jews? \* Conclusions \* Footnotes**

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*

## 7. FROM KAZAKHSTAN TO SYRIA: STALINISM IS SIDING WITH THE COUNTERREVOLUTION

The support of Stalinist parties for Russian imperialism can not be simply explained as a result of nostalgic memories about the “glorious” times of the USSR when it was still a superpower. It rather reflects a broad agreement of these parties with the agenda of building up an alternative imperialist order in which American hegemony is replaced with a “multipolar order” with Russia and China playing a decisive role.

As a result, these Stalinist parties do not only support the efforts of Beijing and Moscow in countering Washington’s foreign policy. They also support Russia’s (and China’s) drive to expand their influence by supporting reactionary dictatorships which brutally suppress popular uprisings in their countries. The counterrevolutionary position of the Russian KPRF and its Stalinist allies against the popular uprising in Kazakhstan is only the most recent example.<sup>52</sup> As we did show somewhere else, many Stalinists smear the recent rebellion of the workers and poor against the authoritarian-capitalist regime of Tokayev as a “CIA-directed color revolution”. Consequently, these Stalinists supported the deployment of Russian troops which ensured – hand in hand with the regime thugs – a bloody crackdown of the uprising, leaving hundreds of people dead and up to 8,000 arrested.<sup>53</sup>

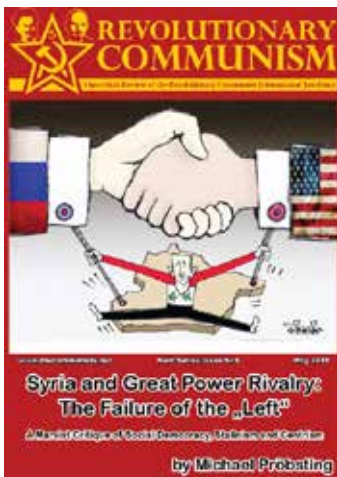
The CPI(M) is another one of these reactionary Stalinist parties which unconditionally supports the Putin/ Tokayev counterrevolution in Kazakhstan. “Without learning any lessons from its interventionist attitude and continuing with its belligerent policies, the US is now trying to poke its nose in another Central Asian country, Kazakhstan. The reason is once

again the same as in Ukraine – to instill a pro-US government in that country, which shares long borders with both Russia and China – and destabilise the entire region. The developments in Ukraine and Kazakhstan reflect the attempts of the US to impose its hegemony over the entire world. It is intolerable to the rise of any other country, particularly that of China and Russia. It is attempting to come out of the deep crises that engulfs the US by using its military might on other countries. History has proved that such attempts would never succeed. The US and its imperialist allies should once again be taught the same lesson. This is essential for the survival of humanity and world peace.”<sup>54</sup>

The recent statement of the Irish Stalinists reflects that Putin’s poodles oppose popular mass movements in many other countries as well. Named statement accused the West that it “continually misrepresented the vast majority of the Syrian rebels as anything other than extreme Islamic jihadis; engaged in nonstop regular and often successful attempts at funding (to the tune of billions of dollars) and organising colour revolutions against governments that attempt to preserve some degree of sovereignty, to wit Venezuela, Belarus, Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Nicaragua.”<sup>55</sup>

And the Portuguese Stalinists express the same counterrevolutionary position in their above-mentioned statement: “The Central Committee of the PCP expresses its solidarity and values the resistance of Syria and its people.”<sup>56</sup>

We reemphasize our conclusion elaborated in several RCIT documents that siding with the Assad tyranny or other reactionary dictatorships exposes the thoroughly counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism once more.<sup>57</sup>



### Publications of the RCIT

## Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018

*The bleeding Syrian Revolution and the recent Escalation of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry between the US and Russia –*

*A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism*

**Introduction \* The liberation struggle of the Syrian people against Assad retains its just character \* Against all imperialist aggressors! \* Old and new Great Powers \* The Ex-Stalinist turned social democrats: “God save the United Nations” \* The Stalinists (and some caricatures in Trotskyist camouflage): social-imperialist servants of Assad and Putin \* The Morenoite LIT, UIT and FLTI: the heart on the right place but not their brains \* CWI and FT: failure to understand the imperialist nature of China and Russia \* CWI / SWP(UK) / FT: refusing to support the Syrian Revolution \* Conclusion \* Footnotes**

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*

## 8. IS RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM A “FORCE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS”? DISCUSSION OF A REMARKABLE STALINIST DOCUMENT

We want to conclude our essay by discussing an interesting article which has been published by the Workers' Party of Ireland. This document is remarkable because it puts the theoretical conclusions of Stalinist social-imperialism much more clearly than its comrades usually do. We will quote extensively from this document in order to present its logic as complete as possible.<sup>58</sup>

Basically, the Irish Stalinists create a certain historic continuity between the Stalinist USSR – which was a *degenerated workers state* where a bureaucratic dictatorship ruled over a planned economy<sup>59</sup> - and imperialist Russia today. While they admit that Russia is no longer socialist at all, they consider it nevertheless as a “force of social progress”.

“Of course, the renewed Russia was and remains a far cry from the USSR of old. Geographically and demographically it is much reduced. It retains, albeit in a much more tamed fashion, some of the oligarchic economic structure that mushroomed in the 1990s. It lacks, therefore, the ideological orientation of the USSR and pushes a much more modest agenda internationally, as well as domestically. Be that as it may, the mere fact that Russia is insisting on maintaining its *de facto* independence from the US Empire, itself the spearhead of a global capitalism that relegates all collective identities of class and nation to the scrap heap of history, constitutes an ideological opposition, limited though it is in comparison to the USSR.

Socialism requires state action to push forward. States which surrender their sovereignty to the American imperium or even just exist in a relationship of dependency to multinational corporations are not and cannot be vehicles for socialism. As such the existence of states such as Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, and Russia, despite their significant differences, and in some cases regrettable abandonment of socialism, remain essential bearers of the possibility of constructing a future that is not suffocated by the US led capitalist order.

*This perspective does not entail any illusions about Russia or*

*its government. They have made clear that they do not wish to resurrect the USSR and in fact they have consistently impeded the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which continues to have a mass following within Russia itself. The question at hand, however, is not the domestic politics of Russia but the necessity to avoid a bloody conflict in such a way that does not involve Russia's submission to the US Empire. In this regard the Communist Party of the Russian Federation are no less patriotic and it takes little effort to recall that it was the Red Army that defended not only the October Revolution but also the very existence of the Russian and other nations within the Soviet Union.”*

“Russia may no longer be socialist and its present defensive orientation internationally may be a result of weakness of position rather than any definitive commitment to abstract moral ideals, but nevertheless it is the USA that has been rampaging around the world for decades now; it is the USA that is expanding its military reach to the border of Russia and not vice versa; it is the US that funds and arms Neo-Nazi and Jihadi militias. One does not have to view the Russians as innocent choir boys to be able to discern the reality of US imperialism and how it renders the foreign policy of Russia as mild and sensible by way of comparison.”

“Indeed, once again, the Russian Federation is not the USSR, and has no inherent ideological reservations about partnering with the USA and NATO. Its error is that it wishes to do so on the basis of equality whereas the United States expects submission. For a long time the Russians have attempted to forge a relationship with the United States, but now, with the advent of the complete incorporation of Ukraine into the US military sphere it calculates that it will not be able to remain sovereign into the medium term if its security is so directly weakened.”

There is no purpose to repeat our arguments that the idea of a still existing absolute hegemony of U.S. imperialism belongs to the realm of Stalinist phantasy and has nothing to do with the universe in which present-day humanity is

**Table 1. Concentration of Income and Wealth in Russia, UK and the U.S. (2021)**<sup>61</sup>

	Income	Wealth
	Share of total (%)	
<i>Russia</i>		
Top 10%	46.4%	74.1%
Top 1%	21.5%	47.7%
<i>UK</i>		
Top 10%	35.7%	57.1%
Top 1%	12.7%	21.3%
<i>U.S.</i>		
Top 10%	45.5%	70.7%
Top 1%	18.8%	34.9%

living. We rather want to point out the logic (or lack of it) presented in these paragraphs.

The Stalinists feel obligated to admit that *“Russia may no longer be socialist”*. A bold statement, congratulations! So, what is it? Might it be too much to say Russia has become *“capitalist”*? One can see that the Stalinists are aware of this fact but try to skirt it. This is all the more astonishing as it is well-known that Russia’s economy is dominated by a small number of domestic monopolies connected with a thin layer of big capitalists.

As we have demonstrated in our studies on Russian imperialism, its economy is dominated by powerful domestic corporations. Several years ago, a report revealed that the thirty-two largest Russian monopolies control almost 51% in Russia’s GDP.<sup>60</sup> A recently published study shows that Russia’s richest 1% of the population has accumulated a higher share of income and wealth than their colleges in the old imperialist countries like Britain or the U.S. managed to do. (See Table 1)

Of course, it is understandable that the Stalinists want to avoid the issue of Russia’s class character because if they would have to admit that Russia is capitalist, that it is strong enough to remain independent *“from the US Empire”*, they would have difficulties to explain why Russia should not be characterized as an imperialist power (albeit weaker than the U.S.).

By avoiding this uncomfortable truth, the Irish Stalinists manage to present Russia not only as a challenger of the U.S. but also as an *“ideological opposition”* to *“global capitalism”*! This sounds definitely much better than saying that Moscow represents the interests of Russian monopolies which rival with their American counterparts for spheres of influence!

However, the Stalinist authors of this remarkable document sense the truth that the current situation is not one in which two different socio-economic system confront each other. It even enters their minds that the present acceleration of rivalry between the Great Powers mirrors the situation before 1914, i.e. before World War I.

*“The present crisis has echoes of the pre-1914 era; a long period of peace is undermined by constant manifestations of crises, each*

*one rendering the possibility of war a bit more likely. The Anglo-American hegemonic powers are wary of rising industrial rivals; Germany then, China now and tempted to strike before they can attain the full measure of their strength.*

*However, many fundamental differences have emerged since 1914, not least the possibility of a terminal nuclear conflict which serves to reduce — but not eliminate — the possibility of escalation to a generalised world war. The other major departure is the accomplished industrialisation of Russia and China and the concomitant setting of the peasant question through a process of urbanisation and proletarianisation. Both historic states were extremely vulnerable to revolution in the 1914 period because their state form — remnants of a pre-capitalist mode of production — had been brought into contradiction with realities of industrial capitalism and the social relations it engendered. This is not the case today.”*

One can discuss if it is true that Russia and China are not *“vulnerable to revolution”* today. But, basically, the Irish Stalinists are correct in this historical comparison. However, it is all the more astonishing that it does not enter their mind that Marxists characterized the rivalry between the Great Powers in 1914, and the years before, as conflicts between *imperialist* states! Did they forget that Lenin and the Bolsheviks denounced any support for one of the two imperialist camps?! As we did show above, Marxists at that time were fully aware that the Great Powers were not *“equal”*, that one camp (Britain and France) had much larger colonial possessions than the other (Germany). But no authentic Marxist at that time did arrive at the conclusion to side with Germany against *“the British Empire”*! The fact that the Stalinists recognize the similarity of the current situation with that which existed before 1914 demonstrates both their historical insight as well as their contempt for the internationalist and antiimperialist principles of Marxism!

Finally, there is also another characteristic conclusion in this remarkable document which deserves attention. Again, one has to admire the authors’ drive to develop their logic to the end as it helps to reveal openly the reactionary nature of Stalinism.

*“The reassertion of state power vis-à-vis capital, even by a non-*

## **The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power**

- \* Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire**
- \* Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism and Russia’s Rise as a Great Power**

***Two Pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)***  
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*working class government would be in itself an improvement in the objective conditions for socialists. The specific step required is for the United States to suffer a major setback such that it can no longer operate as the gendarme for the western bourgeoisie. While the USA seems to be working towards internal collapse, a significant military setback would serve to accelerate the reduction of their domination abroad and create space for the reassertion of state power more broadly. (...) It is in this narrow assertion of state sovereignty that Russia, despite its fall from the USSR, can yet serve as an agent of social progress."*

So, the "reassertion of state power" by a "non-working class government" would improve "the objective conditions for socialists". What could be such a "non-working class government"? Obviously, the Stalinists have in mind the kind of government which, in their opinion, is currently challenging the "US Empire". In other words, they have in mind a government like the Putin regime. Remember, they don't characterize this regime, or Russia itself, as "capitalist" in their document – not a single time despite the considerable length of more than 2,300 words!

In the end, such advocacy of the Putin-type regime as a step forward lies within the logic of Stalinism. In the 1930s, the Stalinists advocated the notorious "popular front" policy – an alliance which they concluded with capitalist parties. Such governments were also "non-working class government" which supposedly improved "the objective conditions for socialists". As a matter of fact, such "popular front" governments saved the rule of the bourgeoisie in critical situation and always resulted in the defeat of the working class (e.g. Spain and France 1936-39). Usually, the Stalinists were kicked out of such governments after they had lost their usefulness for the capitalist class (e.g. in France, Italy and Austria in 1947).

Based on such a political method of class collaboration, Stalinism also did look for alliances with imperialist powers. In the 1930s, Moscow and its international lackeys advocated an alliance Britain, France and the US against Nazi-Germany. For this purpose, they rarely referred to these powers as "imperialist". 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.<sup>62</sup> Not only this, but Moscow also even handed over a number of German and Austrian communists to the Gestapo.<sup>63</sup> In that period, Stalinism denounced Britain and France as "brutal colonial masters" oppressing the peoples in Asia and Africa. Of course, 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 as oppressive imperialists but rather as democratic antifascist allies. The allies changed but the Stalinist's method of political hypocrisy and unprincipled maneuvers with imperialist powers remained the same!

The document of the Workers' Party of Ireland demonstrates that Stalinism continues to operate with the very same methods from the 1930s and 1940s applied to the present-day conditions. The names and states change – instead of Roosevelt, Churchill and Hitler it is Putin (and Xi) who help improving "the objective conditions for socialists". The Stalinist logic is both remarkable and disgusting: anti-imperialism is replaced by unconcealed social-imperialism and Russian imperialism serves as "an agent of social progress"!

As we said before, the Irish document is more explicit in articulating the logic of Stalinism. But, in the end, it is representative for the approach of most Stalinist parties. The following quote from the above-mentioned document of the Indian CPI(M) demonstrates this clearly. "The other concern for imperialism to strongly ensure Ukraine remains in its fold is the strategic location. Russia wants to form an alliance of Eurasian countries and having Ukraine in such an alliance will definitely increase its economic power. Most of these countries share friendly relations with both Russia and China. Ukraine joining such an alliance or maintaining friendly relations with such countries would not only strengthen Russia and China, but also means that imperialism will completely lose their foothold. Given the setback received in Afghanistan, this would mean another major blow to their hegemonic designs. The US is not ready to accept this changing reality."<sup>64</sup>

We see, Putin has many poodles around the world!

# **China: Restoration of Capitalism and Transformation into an Imperialist Power**

**A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power**

**By Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)**

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## 9. STALINISM AND SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM: CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we just explained, Stalinism (like reformism in general) has always looked for a *strategic alliance* with one sector of the bourgeoisie against another. This was true both on the national as well as on the international terrain. In contrast, authentic Trotskyism always strives to rally the working class and the oppressed, nationally and internationally, against *all* sectors of the bourgeoisie and against *all* Great Powers.

However, as we pointed out elsewhere, there is an important difference to the current situation. In the past, Stalinist parties justified their collaboration with one sector of the bourgeoisie or with one imperialist camp against the other, by arguing that this would help defending the “socialist” states (USSR, China, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, etc.). As a result, they were pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist pseudo-socialists *in the service of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy of degenerated workers states*.

However, this is different to the present situation since today no “socialist” state, i.e. degenerated workers state, exists any more. True, a number of Stalinist parties still claim that China would be “socialist”. This is, of course, utter nonsense. But, irrespective of this fact, even in their own words, the Stalinists apply their method to different conditions today. As we demonstrated in this essay, they advocate also the support of powers like Russia which, even in their own analysis, have nothing to do with “socialism”.

Hence, in the past, the Stalinist parties were direct agents of the bureaucratic caste of degenerated workers states and, as such, supported this or that faction of the bourgeoisie or imperialist camp. Today, these Stalinists serve *directly* a faction of the ruling class respectively one camp of the imperialist states in their struggle against rivals.

Therefore, this kind of social-imperialism takes the form of *bourgeois geopoliticism*. We say bourgeois geopoliticism because it means defining the world situation and the tasks of the struggle not from the point of view of the international class struggle to advance the cause of the working class and the oppressed peoples but rather from the point of view of reordering the world to the disadvantage of the

old Great Powers (U.S., EU and Japan) and to the advantage of the new Great Powers (China and Russia).

As a side note, one can say, that bourgeois geopoliticism is the bastard child of the classic Stalinist theory of “*socialism in one country*”. It deletes “*socialism*” and is satisfied with some kind of “*capitalism in one country*”.<sup>65</sup>

In contrast to such vulgar social-imperialism, the task of authentic socialists is to fight against all Great Powers and to support all liberation struggles of the workers and oppressed against all imperialist powers.<sup>66</sup> Those reformist parties which support one or the other Great Power, which support the suppression of this or that popular uprisings, such parties are enemies of the people! Socialists must fight against their influence in the working class.

In order to advance the struggle against the Great Powers and their social-imperialist servants within the workers and popular mass organizations, authentic revolutionary forces need to unite and strengthen their forces. True, this is a difficult task since revolutionaries constitute a small minority today. The creation of a new World Party of Socialist Revolution requires a long process of building roots among the masses, education of cadres, practical tests, etc. But recognizing the difficulties and weaknesses is no reason to despair but rather to consciously tackle the existing problems and to energetically going to work!

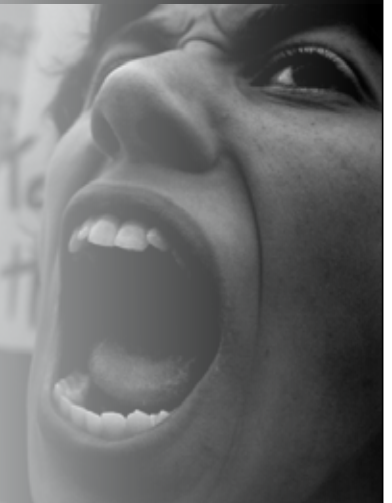
Today the RCIT is a pre-party organization committed to build such a world party. We are still a small organization but in the course of the past decade we have managed to build an international organization with sections and activists in more than a dozen countries on all continents. We reach out to all revolutionary organizations and activists around the world who agree with us on the most important issues of the global class struggle. Let us join forces in building a Revolutionary World Party! Let us build a joint international organization which fights against *all* Great Powers – both in East and West – and which supports *all* liberation struggles of the workers and oppressed peoples against any Great Power or its reactionary lackey.

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## FOOTNOTES

1 We refer readers to a special page on our website where all RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>; our two key statements are: Neither NATO nor Russia! Down with all Imperialist Warmongers! No support for either imperialist camp or its proxies in the Ukraine and Donbass! Unite the workers and oppressed for an independent struggle for liberation! 25 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/neither-nato-nor-russia-down-with-all-imperialist-warmongers/>; The Current NATO-Russia Conflict and the Anti-Imperialist Tasks of Revolutionaries. Down with all Great Powers and their proxies! For an independent and socialist Ukraine! 29 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-current-nato-russia-conflict-and-the-anti-imperialist-tasks-of-revolutionaries/>. Most of our documents have been translated in several languages.

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