



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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## Ukraine War: The Struggle against Putin's Invasion & Great Power Rivalry

## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.75, June 2022

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*Picture on the cover: Delegates at the international conference in solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance which took place in Lviv (Ukraine) on May Day 2022*

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# The ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians has not stopped

Yossi Schwartz, ISL the section of the RCIT in Israel/Occupied Palestine, 08.05.2022

According to the reactionary ADL that spread fake information, the Palestinian refugee issue originated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, when five Arab armies invaded the State of Israel just hours after it was established. During the ensuing war, as many as 750,000 Palestinian Arabs fled their homes in the newly created state as a result of many factors. Some of the Palestinian Arabs who fled did so to avoid the ongoing war or at the urging of Arab leaders, and expected to return after a quick and certain Arab victory over the new Jewish state. Other Palestinians were forced to flee by individuals or groups fighting for Israel. [i]

As we shall show the above statement is no less than 3 lies:

A. It is a lie that the Palestinians were expelled as result of the war that began in May 1948, it originated in the mass expulsion between December 1947 to May 1948.

B. It is a lie that the Palestinians fled the country at the urging of the Arab leaders with expectation to return to Palestine with the victorious Arab armies. As a matter of fact, the Palestinian leadership demanded from the Palestinians not to flee. The Zionists carried out at least 40 massacres. Among the most known massacres were in Dir Yasin, Lydia (Lod), and Daumia.

C. It is a lie that only individuals or groups carried out massacres. The main massacres were ordered by Ben Gurion and according to plan D.

The Zionists are lying because the real facts make it clear that two years after the end of WWII where the Nazis committed horrible war crimes against the Jews and others the Zionists committed genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

The aim of this article is not to show that the Zionists lie, this has been proven long ago by the "new historians", but to examine whether the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians has ever ended. The importance of the reply to this question is that it shows that under certain conditions like a major war and the availability of large pool of cheap labor from poor countries that can replace the super exploited Palestinian labor the Zionists will carry out another Nakba. This will not happen in the short term but the possibility that it will happen in the future exists and this is the aim of the growing ultra-right led by fascists like Ben-Gevir and ultra nationalist Bezalel Yoel Smotrich and PM Bennet and his Yemina party. At the present they are still a minority but a growing one.

## The idea of 'transfer' in Zionist thinking before 1948

Theodor Herzl the father of Zionism wrote in his diary on the 12th of June 1895:

*"We must expropriate gently . . . We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our country . . . Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly" [ii]*

*"In 1911 Arthur Ruppin, head of the Zionist Organization's Palestine Office, proposed 'a limited population transfer' of peasants to Syria; a year later, Leon Motzkin, one of the organization's founders, declared: 'The fact is that around Palestine there are extensive areas. It will be easy for the Arabs to settle there with the money that they will receive from the Jews.' For years, the Zionist advocate and novelist Israel Zangwill had been trumpeting the transfer solution to the Arab problem: We cannot allow the Arabs to block so valuable a piece of historic reconstruction . . . And therefore, we must gently persuade them to 'trek'. After all, they have all Arabia with its million square miles . . . There is no particular reason for the Arabs to cling to these few kilometers. 'To fold their tents and silently steal away' is their proverbial habit: Let them exemplify it now" [iii]*

*"During the 1930s and 1940s by the dawning recognition among many of the Zionist leaders, including Ben-Gurion and Zeev Jabotinsky, the leader of the right-wing Revisionist Movement, that Palestine's Arabs had brought forth a new, distinct (albeit still 'Arab') nationalism and national identity; Palestinian transferees might not feel at home in Transjordan or Iraq. For all these reasons, the notion of transfer was something best not mulled over and brought out into the open in public discourse and disputation; best not to think about it at all. Zionism might necessitate displacement of Palestinians, but why trouble one's conscience and linger over it? Rather, the Zionist public catechism, at the turn of the century, and well into the 1940s, remained that there was room enough in Palestine for both peoples; there need not be a displacement of Arabs to make way for Zionist immigrants or a Jewish state. There was no need for a transfer of the Arabs and on no account must the idea be incorporated in the movement's ideological-political platform" [iv]*

*"In May 1930, the director of the Jewish Agency's Political Department and the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive in Palestine, Colonel F. H. Kisch, proposed to the president of the Zionist Organization, Chaim Weizmann, that the Jewish Agency should press the British to promote the emigration of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq, which is in urgent need of agricultural population. It should not be impossible to come to an arrangement with [King] Faisal [of Iraq] by which he would take the initiative in offering good openings for Arab immigrants . . . There should be suitable propaganda as to the attractions of the country which indeed are great for Arab immigrants – and there should be specially organized and advertised facilities for travel. We, of course, should not appear [to be promoting this], but I see no reason why H.M.G. should not be interested . . . There can be no conceivable hardship for Palestinian Arabs – a nomadic and semi-nomadic people – to move to another Arab country where there are better opportunities for an agricultural life – c.f. English agricultural emigrants to Canada" [v]*

*"By 1936, the mainstream Zionist leaders were more forthright in their support of transfer. In July, Ben-Gurion, the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and de facto leader of the Yishuv, and his deputy, Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the director of the Agency's Political Department, went to the High Commissioner to plead the Zionist case on immigration, which the Mandatory was considering suspending: Ben-Gurion asked whether the Government would make it possible for Arab cultivators dis-*

*placed through Jewish land purchases . . . to be settled in Transjordan. If Transjordan was for the time being a country closed to the Jews [i.e., closed to Jewish settlement], surely it could not be closed to Arabs also” [vi]*

In 1937 the Peel Commission that recommended the partition of Palestine further recommended the transfer of all or most of the Arab population out of these areas allocated to the Zionist state.

*“Ben-Gurion deemed the transfer recommendation a central point whose importance outweighs all the other positive [points] and counterbalances all the report’s deficiencies and drawbacks . . . We must grab hold of this conclusion [i.e., recommendation] as we grabbed hold of the Balfour Declaration, even more than that – as we grabbed hold of Zionism itself. . . because of all the Commission’s conclusions, this is the one that alone offers some recompense for the tearing away*

*of other parts of the country [and their award to the Arabs] . . . What is inconceivable in normal times is possible in revolutionary times. Any doubt on our part about the necessity of this transfer, any doubt we cast about the possibility of its implementation, any hesitancy on our part about its justice, may lose [us] an historic opportunity that may not recur . . . If we do not succeed in removing the Arabs from our midst, when a royal commission proposes this to England, and transferring them to the Arab area – it will not be achievable easily (and perhaps at all) after*

*the [Jewish] state is established . . . This thing must be done now – and the first step” [vii]*

Teveth also informs us that Ben-Gurion, inspired by the Peel Report, which he accepted, considered “a Jewish state in part of Palestine [Peel’s suggestion] as a stage in the longer process towards a Jewish state in all of Palestine.” Lecturing to Mapai activists on 29 October 1937, Ben-Gurion explained that the realization of the Jewish state would come in two stages: the first, “the period of Teveth also informs us that Ben-Gurion, inspired by the Peel Report, which he accepted, considered “a Jewish state in part of Palestine [Peel’s suggestion] as a stage in the longer process towards a Jewish state in all of Palestine.” [viii]

We also learn from the official history of the Haganah that in the summer of 1937, ten years before the UN partition resolution, Ben-Gurion ordered the Haganah commander of Tel Aviv, Elimelech Slikowitz (“Avnir”), to draw up a plan for the military in the summer of 1937, for a takeover of the entire country in anticipation of the Peel Report. [ix]

The Haganah under Ben-Gurion tried selectively to keep its distance from the “dissidents” (Lehi), but this did not inhibit it from carefully orchestrated joint operations with them against British “targets” in Palestine in 1946. It was during this period that an innovative array of tactics was first introduced into the Middle East by the Zionist forces, including letter bombs, parcel bombs, vehicular bombs (the ultimate weapon in urban warfare), the whipping and lynching of British soldier hostages, booby-trapping their corpses, and electrically detonated mines against civilian targets [x]

There is no question that the UN partition plan included the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian in the 56% of Palestine allocated to the Zionists that owned less than 6% of the lands of Palestine. The 44% allocated to the Palestinians did not have any sea ports. The proposed Jewish state covered some 56 percent of Mandate Palestine divided into three barely contiguous parts/areas: the eastern Galilee (including Safed, Tiberias, Baysan, and the Sea

of Galilee), a coastal area (about two-thirds of Palestine’s coast, including Haifa, Tel Aviv, and the fertile lowland plains), and most of the Negev (excluding Bir al-Sabi’ and a strip/area running about half-way down the border with Egypt, but giving access to the Red Sea). Of Mandate Palestine’s sixteen districts, nine were allotted to the Jewish state, only one of which had a Jewish majority. the UN-proposed Jewish state as a whole had an Arab “minority” approaching 47 percent.

Thus, there is no doubt that to form a Zionist state with a Jewish Majority the Zionists had to remove most of the Palestinians as they intended to do and did.

### The UN the den of thieves

*“The UN 1947 partition was not the legal, moral, fair, balanced, pragmatic, practicable “compromise” formula that it is made out to be. That it was legal at all is moot. The UNGA altogether failed to address the very serious legal challenges posed by the Arab delegations in the form of draft resolutions submitted to the UNGA meeting to discuss the Palestine problem. The Arab delegations requested that before a decision be taken, the International Court of Justice be asked for its opinion on the following subjects: (a) whether or not Palestine was included in the Arab territories that had been promised independence by Britain at the end of World War I; (b) whether partition was consistent with the objectives and provisions of the Mandate; (c) whether partition was consistent with the principles of the UN Charter; (d) whether its adoption and forcible execution were within the competence or jurisdiction of the UN; and (e) whether it lay within the power of any UN member or group of members to implement partition without the consent of the majority of the people living within the country. The voting on the issue of UN competence to partition Palestine—a combination of (d) and (e)—is particularly instructive. The draft counter resolution that said that the UN did have the authority was carried by only 21 votes to 20 in the Ad Hoc Committee whose total membership was 57”. [x]*

*“Nor is there much evidence that moral considerations played a significant role in the pro-Zionist votes of the member states or that these were genuinely motivated to alleviate the plight of European Jewry. In the spirit of UN- SCOP’s above-mentioned recommendation of international responsibility for the Jewish plight, the Arab delegations had proposed a draft resolution to the effect that “Jewish refugees and displaced persons . . . should be absorbed in the territories of members of the UN in proportion to their area, resources, per capita income, population, and other relevant factors.” The resolution in the UNGA, again meeting as an ad hoc committee, was not carried. The voting was 16 to 16, with 25 abstentions” [xi]*

*“Apropos the morality of the UN partition resolution, the arm-twisting tactics utilized by Washington to pressure the smaller nations to vote in its favor against their own inclinations and better judgment have been amply documented, while even a cursory reading of the general debate preceding the vote reveals the serious moral misgivings about partition entertained by many of its proponents. Equally striking is the convergence of opinion about partition between the United States and the Soviet Union on the very eve of the cold war. It is left to the reader to impute considerations of compassion to Moscow, when its driving motive was to hasten Britain’s withdrawal from one of its principal Middle Eastern strategic bases in Palestine” [xii]*

Indeed, it was Ben-Gurion himself who at the time warned

his colleagues against seeing his acceptance of partition as a concession. He explained that there was such a thing as “deep Zionism” and that there are stages in the understanding of Zionism. Teveth paraphrases Ben-Gurion’s thoughts as follows: “Only those with deep Zionism would appreciate his doctrine of gradual implementation of the ideology. The Zionist vision could not be fulfilled in one fell swoop, especially the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish state. The stage-by-stage approach dictated by less than favorable circumstances required the formulation of objectives that appeared to be ‘concessions’ to Zionists at the lowest level of comprehension.” Perhaps also relevant in this regard is Ben-Gurion’s entry in his diary of 14 May 1948, the eve of the establishment of Israel: “Take the American Declaration of Independence, for instance.... It contains no mention of the territorial limits. We are not obliged to state the limits of our State” [xiii]

Ben Gurion’s plans to conquer all Palestine were not a secret. Those who voted for the partition knew them. Thus, the UN behaved as Lenin called the League of Nations a den of thieves.

In 1947-8 the Zionist armed forces launched a vicious process of ethnic cleansing in the form of large-scale attacks aimed at the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their towns and villages to build the Jewish state, which is known as the Nakba.

The evidence provided by Pappé attests to the master plan of ethnic cleansing. Inferences made (Morris) prior to the declassification of some documents in the late 1990s, that many officers acted on displacement of Palestinians was a product of a rather myopic, if not ideologically and political claim, Pappé affirms: “Plan Dalet was handed t vague guidelines, but as clear-cut operations. Commanders were given specific date-line, location of every mission (large-scale intimidation; siege towns; setting homes on fire; expelling planting mines in the rubble to prevent the return of the expellees” [xiv]

### The ethnic cleansing has never stopped

Contrary to the lie that the Palestinian refugees were the result of the war forced on the Zionists in May 1948 from December 1947 to mid-May 1948, Zionist armed groups expelled about 440,000 Palestinians from 220 villages. By the end of the war 750,000-900,000 Palestinians were expelled and 530 villages were occupied and destroyed.

There is a wrong notion that the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians ended by the end of the 1948 war. This impression is wrong as the transfer of the Palestinians has never stopped. The forced displacement and dispossession of

the Palestinian population under a regime of apartheid of the settler colonialist has continued before and after 1967.

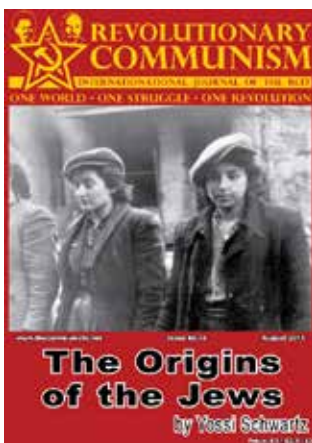
Between 1949 and 1950, according to historian Benny Morris, “Israel had displaced and expelled between 30,000 and 40,000 Palestinians and Bedouin. Excluding the Negev Bedouin, it is probable that the number of Arabs kicked out of, or persuaded to leave, the country in the border-clearing operations and in the internal anti-infiltration sweeps during 1948-1950 was around 20,000. If one includes expelled northern Negev Bedouin, the total may have been as high as 30,000-40,000.” [xv]

On the eve of the 1956 war on Egypt the Israeli border police committed a massacre of Kefar Qasem killing more than 50 farmers returning from the fields. This massacre was by the order of Ben Gurion the arch Zionist war criminal. It was part of his plan to use this massacre to force Palestinians to flee the country.

Nineteen years after the Nakba (1947-1949), Israel carried out a second wave of expulsions of Palestinians from their homeland during and after the 1967 war. Without hope of return, they were forcibly displaced from the Latroun area, East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley to Jordan.

During and immediately after the war, some quarter a million to 420,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes. This happened through war operations and was cemented by making some regulatory interventions that prevented the displaced persons from returning to their homes. One of the most significant was the eviction of three villages near the central Latroun area at the western edge of the West Bank, close to the Israeli border, resulting in the displacement of 10,000 civilians. Latroun looks on the map like a finger sticking out the West Bank body, which Israel failed to occupy in the 1948 war. The villages in the Latroun area continued to be populated until the 1967 war, when Israel forcibly expelled the whole population and demolished every single building. The lands that belong to the Latroun villages were later turned into a park called Canada Park, and an Israeli settlement was also built on part of the lands. In addition, Israel built part of its rail line on another part of the lands from which the refugees were displaced. The villages of Bayt Marsam, Bat ‘Awa, Habla, Jiftlik and Al-Burj were all destroyed.

Another area of strategic importance was the Jordan Valley, which is the border between the West Bank and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. During the war, Israel displaced 88% of the population of that area. The first to be driven out of the area were refugees who had been displaced from what became Israel in the aftermath of the



## 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

1948 war. The residents of three refugee camps in the area were all expelled or fled to Jordan, in addition to half of the native population of the area.

In Jerusalem Israeli occupation forces demolished four Palestinian villages along with the Al-Sharaf and Al-Magharbeh neighborhoods in the Old City. During that war, 70,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites were either forcibly displaced or prevented from returning to the City. 50,000 others were violently driven out by the hostilities. Immediately following the occupation, Israel declared Jerusalem its "undivided capital."

Although Israel annexed the area of 1967 occupied Jerusalem to its state territory in contravention of international law, the city's Palestinians were not afforded automatic Israeli citizenship. Instead, only those Palestinians and their descendants who were registered in the 1967 Israeli census were given permanent residency status in Jerusalem. *"The Ministry claimed that permanent residency, unlike citizenship, is a matter of the circumstances in which the individual lives, and when these circumstances change, the permit granting permanent residency expires. Thus, every Palestinian who lived outside the city for a number of years lost their right to live in the city, and the Ministry ordered them to leave their homes."*

*"Since then, Palestinians must demonstrate that Jerusalem is their "center of life" regardless of whether they live in adjacent areas in the West Bank or abroad, and even if they do not hold foreign passports or permanent residency elsewhere. In 2008 alone, Israel revoked the residency permits of 4,577 Palestinian Jerusalemites.<sup>6</sup> Israel revoked 721 permits in 2009 and between January and June 6, 2010, the state revoked 108 residency permits. This policy, which amounts to "quiet deportation," has significantly altered the demographic composition of Jerusalem and is indicative of an ongoing forced population transfer policy."* [xvi]

*"The explicit aim of planning in Jerusalem, and East Jerusalem in particular, is to maintain a demographic balance wherein Jewish nationals constitute an absolute majority. In its municipal plan, "Jerusalem 2000," Israeli authorities expressed a desire to maintain a balance of 70 percent Jews to 30 percent Arabs in the city. Moreover, because trends project a balance of 60:40 by the year 2020, the plan proposed a number of measures aimed at maintaining a 'Jewish majority in the city while attending to the needs of the Arab minority.' These policies take on two dimensions: the privileged treatment of Jewish nationals and citizens and/or the discriminatory treatment of Jerusalem's Palestinian residents.*

*Despite their best efforts to secure building permits, the Jerusalem municipal government rejects Palestinian applications almost as a matter of policy. Consider that while Israel provides the services of urban planners to its residents free of charge, several Palestinian neighborhoods have hired and paid for planners to develop plans intended for review by municipal authorities. According to Human Rights Watch, municipal authorities have never approved such plans."* [xvii]

In flagrant violation of international law, US (President Donald Trump) recognized Israel's illegal annexation of Jerusalem in 2017 and moved the U.S embassy to the city in 2018. Since then, Israel has escalated its ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the 1967 occupied Jerusalem. In addition to endorsing the war crime of annexation, the US (Trump administration) took the unprecedented and unparalleled step of endorsing settlement construction and expansion, declaring them legitimate. This, despite their

clear unequivocal classification as a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a war crime under the Rome Statute. To enforce its aim of changing the Palestinian character of Jerusalem, Israel uses the illegal practices of home demolitions, forced evictions, ID revocation, illegal settlement construction, daily harassment and detentions, entry bans, family separation and imposing high taxes.

The Biden administration criticized Israel for building settlements but it is not hard to understand this is no more than hypocritical lip service.

*"In 2002, Israel began building the illegal annexation wall, separating Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied West Bank and de facto annexing the most fertile and water-rich parts of the territory. The illegal wall extends 181 km and was built on 7,000 dunams, preventing Palestinian construction on a total of 18,000 dunams. In 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the wall and its associated settlement regime was illegal. The ICJ also affirmed that Israel was obliged to dismantle the Wall and pay reparations to Palestinians whose land, property or livelihoods were adversely affected by the Wall's construction. The Court also declared that the Wall and Israeli settlements viola the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and that all States have an obligation to ensure the Palestinian people's exercise of their right to self-determination. The Wall especially targets Jerusalem, severing its natural and physical connection with Palestinian cities. It creates a physical, economic, and cultural siege that burdens all aspects of life in the city."* [xviii]

So, the International Court of Justice paid lip service to the Palestinian rights that Israel protected by other imperialist states simply ignored.

In 1948 Jews who lived in the old city were evicted. At the same time Palestinian refugee families settled under the Jordanian rule in Sheikh Jarrah. The evicted Jews from Sheikh Jarrah were given Palestinian homes in West Jerusalem in compensation. In 2001, Israeli settlers moved into the al-Kurd family's house in Sheik Jarrah and refused to leave, claiming the property was owned by Jews. The case was heard by the Jerusalem District Court, which ruled in 2008 that the property belonged to the Jews. Forty-three Palestinians were evicted in 2002, the Hanoun and Ghawi families in 2008, and the Shamasneh family in 2017. The struggle over the Palestinian neighborhood was one of the reasons for the military clash between Israel and Gaza last year. On 20 January 2022, eviction was set for a trial. between March 1 and April 1, 2022. Since 12 February, Israeli police restricted exit and on 22 February 2022, the court froze the eviction order pending the hearing of an appeal. What can the Palestinians expect of the Zionist court system we can learn from the following case:

*"Israel's High Court ruled late Wednesday night that the Israeli army could evict around 1,300 Palestinians living in eight villages in the South Hebron Hills, after a legal battle lasting more than 20 years. In a unanimous decision, Justice David Mintz wrote that the Palestinian petitioners had not successfully proved they had lived in the villages as permanent residents before the army declared the area a training zone in the area in the early 1980s. The court also dismissed the Palestinians' argument that mass eviction would violate a widely held prohibition against population transfer in international law. Mintz ruled the ban sought to prevent atrocities such as genocide and thus had "nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with the issue before*

us.”

The B’Tselem rights group said the court’s decision was meant to “transfer the land on which they live to Jews.” [xix]

The Zionist judges are not the first judges who say that the racist national laws of their own state are above the international law. This is the case not only with the Nazi judges but with all the judges of the imperialist states.

Thus, the answer to the question of when the Zionists stopped the ethnic cleansing is never. As long as this apartheid state will exist it will continue with ethnic cleansing.

### The reformists and the centrists

Hadash – the front of the Stalinist party of Israel supports the phony program of two states. A Palestinian state on 22% of Palestine alongside of imperialist and apartheid state on 78% of historical Palestine. This is the continuation of its support for the creation of Israel in 1947-8 and getting the Zionists the weapons from Stalinist Russia to be used for the Nakba. 76 years have passed since the establishment of Israel. Enough time to understand that as long as Israel will exist a Palestinian state even in the size of a washroom will not exist. Short of a revolution as part of the Arab revolution the Palestinians will not be able to get their right to self-determination and the right of return of the Palestinians refugees.

The right-wing centrist – “Socialist Struggle”, the section of the ISA also supports the two states solution but they decorate it by claiming that the two states will be socialists. Their rationale is that without convincing the Jewish workers to struggle for socialism no solution is possible. To convince the Jewish workers they argue it is necessary to promise them a Jewish state. If you think that this is a pro Zionist position you are not wrong.

The right centrists MIT led by woods also recognize the right of self-determination for the settler colonialists but in a form of a bi national federation which means the right to separate and have a Zionist state.

*For a free Palestine from the river to the sea!*

### Endnotes:

- [i] <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/palestinian-refugees>
- [ii] B Morris THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED p.41
- [iii] Ibid
- [iv] B Morris THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED p.43
- [v] B Morris THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED p 44
- [vi] B Morris THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED P. 45-46
- [vii] B Morris THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED P.47-48
- [viii] Walid Khalidi Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution
- [ix] Ibid
- [x] Ibid
- [xi] Ibid
- [xii] Ibid
- [xiii] Ibid
- [xiv] Ibid
- [xv] D. Seif review of Han Pappé. The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.
- [xvi] Morris (2004) “Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited P.536
- [xvii] <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-183864/>
- [xviii] Ibid
- [xix] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/high-court-greenlights-expulsion-of-1300-palestinians-from-army-firing-zone/>

# Books of the RCIT

## Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

### The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People.

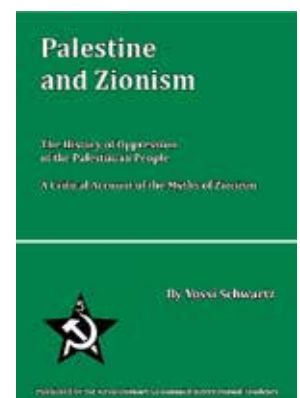
### A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz provides a critical analysis of numerous Zionist myths about the Jews as well as about the Palestinians. He demonstrates that the Zionist claim that Palestine is the historic homeland of the Jews lacks any serious basis. *Palestine and Zionism* shows that the history of Zionism in the 20th century is a history of colonialism in the service of the Great Powers and directed against the native population – the Arabs. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz deals with key events – the “Nakba” in 1948, the wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973, more recent events like the Lebanon War, etc. – which were decisive for the expulsion of most Palestinians from their homeland. Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership by signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz defends the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian people and outlines

a socialist perspective. He emphasizes that the only solution is the right of millions of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland and to replace the Zionist entity with one democratic state from the river to the sea – a *Free Red Palestine* with equal civil rights to the Arabs and the Israeli Jews.

The book contains an introduction and 7 chapters (112 pages) and includes 7 Tables and 3 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/palestine-and-zionism/>



## Crossing the Line

### A critique of Murray Smith's article "Four points on the war in Ukraine" which falls into line with NATO in the name of solidarity with the Ukraine

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12 May 2022

The Ukraine War and the escalation of the inter-imperialist rivalry between NATO and Russia are without doubt the most important events in the current world situation. Consequently, these are crucial tests for socialists which force them to develop their program concretely and to elaborate its consequences.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and other authentic socialists have pointed out since the beginning of the war that the current conflict has a *dual character*. We therefore support the Ukrainian people and their resistance against the invasion of imperialist Russia. At the same time, we oppose both camps in the ongoing inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers – Russia as well as NATO. We summarized our position in the following slogans:<sup>1</sup>

\* *Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Russian imperialism! International popular solidarity with the Ukrainian national resistance – independent of any imperialist influence!*

\* *Down with all imperialist powers – NATO and EU as well as Russia! In all conflicts between these powers, revolutionaries fight against both camps!*

Since the beginning of the conflict, we have critically examined the positions of various self-proclaimed socialist currents. In the majority of cases, we have attacked those which either sympathize – openly or concealed – with the Russian aggressor or which take a neutral, abstentionist position.<sup>2</sup>

#### On the political background of the author

However, at this place we want to deal with another position which has been elaborated in an article by Murray Smith, a long-time socialist who defends the Ukraine in its war against Russian imperialism.

First, a few words about the author. Smith has been a member of the "Fourth International" in the tradition of Pablo and Mandel and was co-director of the *International Institute for Research and Education* in Amsterdam – the "think tank" affiliated with this organization.<sup>3</sup> The article in question has been published on websites of which at least one is affiliated with the Mandelite "Fourth International".<sup>4</sup>

Smith is also a leader of *déi Lénk* (Luxembourg), which he represents on the Executive Bureau of the *Party of the European Left* (PEL).<sup>5</sup> The latter is the federation of various left-reformist, ex-Stalinist parties with a presence in national as well as the European parliament. The most prominent ones of these parties are the LINKE (Germany), PCF (France), PCE and IU (Spain, currently part of the government coalition) and SYRIZA (Greece).

For all these reasons, we can state that the article of Murray Smith is representative for a certain trend within the spectrum of right-wing centrism and left-reformism.

#### Russia as a worse type of imperialism than NATO?

Let's go in medias res. Murray Smith correctly argues in his article that socialists need to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion and that they should also support its rights to get arms from wherever they can. Furthermore, Smith, again correctly, characterizes Russia as an imperialist power.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, we also agree with his criticism of those who view the Ukraine War only as a subordinated element of the inter-imperialist rivalry.

However, the author overstates the case by far – to put it mildly. It is not the case that he would ignore the rivalry between NATO and Russia.<sup>7</sup> No, he is fully aware of it. But, shamefully, he develops a theory that NATO is the "better imperialist", the "lesser evil" compared to its Russian rival. Consequently, Murray Smith advocates a program of tactical support for Western imperialism in order to defeat the "barbaric, fascist imperialists". The following quotes demonstrate his thinking very clear.

*"We must ask ourselves the question of what Russia is and where it is going. Before the war I would simply have said that Russia was the most reactionary country in Europe, the most repressive at home and the most aggressive abroad. When a Finnish comrade characterized it as fascist in a meeting at the beginning of February, I thought she was exaggerating. Today the discussion is wide open and the terms fascist and fascist are becoming commonplace. Not only do wars call many things into question. Sometimes they provide answers. (...) When we look at things from this perspective, Russia is not just an imperialist country in the abstract, but an imperialist country that is falling into barbarism. The United States, through Secretary of Defense Austin, is making it clear today that the goal is to weaken Russia. It is clear that this would be in the interest of the United States and NATO. But frankly, it would also be in the interest not only of Ukraine, but of all countries in the region, and ultimately of the Russian people themselves."*

The RCIT has characterized the Putin regime in various documents as *bonapartist*. We have also explained that since the beginning of the recent crisis, an important shift has taken place. *"We can therefore conclude that there has been a clear shift in the nature of the bonapartist Putin regime. It has massively increased its authoritarian character and nearly liquidates all elements of bourgeois democracy. This is combined with a massive radicalization of its Great Russian chauvinism and militarism as well as a shift towards more state-capitalist regulation."*<sup>8</sup>

However, we consider it as wrong to characterize the regime as "fascist". For Marxist, this is not a curse word but a scientific category in order to characterize a specific form of regime of the ruling class. Leon Trotsky, leader of the October Revolution and co-founder of the Third as well as the Fourth International, once described fascism as follows.

*„Fascism may assume different aspects in different countries; it can be diversified in point of social composition, but in its es-*



sence fascism is that combat grouping of forces which is moved to the fore by threatened bourgeois society in order to repel the proletariat in a civil war. When the democratic-parliamentarian state apparatus becomes entangled in its own internal contradictions, when bourgeois legality hampers the bourgeoisie itself, the latter sets in motion the most combative elements at its disposal, freeing them from the fetters of legality, and obliging them to employ all the methods of force and terror. This is fascism. Therefore fascism is a condition of civil war on the part of the bourgeoisie, just as we have the grouping of forces and the organization for an armed uprising in the epoch of civil war on the part of the proletariat. We thereby say that fascism cannot represent a protracted and, so to speak, "normal" condition of bourgeois society, just as a condition of an armed uprising cannot be a constant, normal condition of the proletariat."<sup>9</sup>

In contrast, the Putin regime has always been an authoritarian regime of the ruling elite without street mobilizations and without attempts to liquidate each and every mass organization. Of course, the regime has become more and more totalitarian. However, it rather resembles classic elements of a dictatorship but not of the fascist kind but rather one which allows certain camps within the elite and which tolerates a certain spectrum of opposition forces (which do not cross the line, of course).

#### Is the character of the Putin regime decisive for the socialists' position in the Great Power rivalry?

However, the decisive point is not if the Putin regime is fascist or not. Even if it is fascist, this could not justify whatsoever any support of socialists for "democratic" imperialist powers! In conflicts between Great Powers, the decisive issue is not the form of *political regime* but the *class character* of the state as such. An imperialist power is one which plays a dominating role in world politics and which super-exploits the oppressed peoples. It does so irrespective of the specific character of the political regime of the bourgeoisie.

U.S. imperialism has always been (bourgeois) "democratic" but this didn't alter the fact that for many decades it was the dominant imperialist power which squeezed the

workers and popular masses and forced them to live under barbaric conditions.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, it is well-known that "democratic" U.S. imperialism throughout its history since 1945 has always collaborated pretty well with all kinds of fascist and bonapartist dictatorships (e.g. Franco's Spain, Salazar's Portugal, the military regimes in South Korea, South Vietnam, Pinochet's Chile, the Gulf monarchies, etc.)

Trotsky outlined very clearly the Marxist approach on Great Power rivalry and on the relevance of the character of the political regime. "A modern war between the great powers does not signify a conflict between democracy and fascism but a struggle of two imperialisms for the redivision of the world. Moreover, the war must inevitably assume an international character and in both camps will be found fascist (semi-fascist, Bonapartist, etc.) as well as "democratic" states. The republican form of French imperialism did not prevent it from basing itself in peacetime on the military-bourgeois dictatorship in Poland, Yugoslavia and Romania, as it will not prevent it, in case of necessity, from restoring the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as a barrier against the unification of Austria with Germany. Finally, in France itself, parliamentary democracy, already sufficiently weakened today, would undoubtedly be one of the first victims of war if it is not upset before its start."<sup>11</sup>

Since the class character of a state – and not the form of its political regime – is decisive for socialists, Trotsky emphasized that in the case of a conflict between a "democratic" imperialist power and a "fascist" semi-colonial country, he would defend the latter.

"I will take the most simple and obvious example. In Brazil there now reigns a semifascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally – in this case I will be on the side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness



## Publications of the RCIT

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

By Michael Pröbsting, March 2021

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slaveowners, and robbers!"<sup>12</sup>

It is not by accident that Murray Smith states that socialists in World War II should have joined the Western imperialist alliance in its war against Nazi-Germany.<sup>13</sup> In fact, this has been the policy of social democracy and Stalinism.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, Trotsky and the Fourth International advocated a policy of *revolutionary defeatism* against all Great Powers – “fascist” as well as “anti-fascist” – while they defended the Soviet Union as well as the colonial people against the imperialist aggressors.<sup>15</sup>

### Opposing the Dissolution of NATO in the foreseeable future

Unfortunately Murray Smith, a former Trotskyist, has erased all these teachings from his memory. Today, he repeats the phrases of the liberal columnists in bourgeois papers. He claims that the goal of U.S. imperialism “to weaken Russia (...) would also be in the interest not only of Ukraine, but of all countries in the region, and ultimately of the Russian people themselves.” This is nothing but social-imperialist support for NATO!

Has this man forgotten each and everything?! We have decades of U.S. hegemony behind us. Surely, the middle class and the labor aristocracy in the rich Western countries might remember with nostalgia to these “good, old times”. But the workers and popular masses around the world do not! In fact, it is one of the ideological trump cards of the emerging imperialist powers of the east – China and Russia – that they claim to strive for alternative world order. Numerous Stalinist, Castro-Chavista and Pan-Africanist parties all over the world exploit such justified anti-Western sentiment among the masses. The pro-NATO advocacy of people like Murray Smith is not only politically wrong, it also makes sure that such kind of “solidarity with the Ukraine” will find only little support in the semi-colonial countries of the South.

It is a sad fact that Murray Smith goes even further in his advocacy of Western imperialism. He even states his opposition against the “irresponsible” demand for the dissolution of NATO in the short term! Quite the opposite, our ex-Trotskyist says that “we must accept the status quo”!

“It is against this background that the question of NATO must be understood today. This is not just a problem for the left in the East. It is clear that our objective (which can be widely shared, in the East as well as in the West) is the dissolution of NATO and its replacement by a system of collective security (a well-known watchword of reformist Stalinism! Ed.). It should be obvious that this is not a short-term perspective. And in the meantime, talking about the dissolution of NATO as an immediate objective, as part of the Western left still does, does not make sense. It is even irresponsible, because it would leave the countries of the East, but also the Scandinavian countries, defenceless. We must answer the question posed by the populations of these countries: if we are not part of NATO, who will defend us against Russia? And this question deserves a concrete answer: therefore, neither

a perspective of a collective security system at an unspecified date in the future, nor a general discourse on peace, negotiations, etc. In the absence of a credible alternative, we must accept the status quo. This does not prevent us from fighting the increased militarization of our countries, as the Danish comrades of the Red and Green Alliance are currently demonstrating.”

Effectively, this means that Murray Smith calls for currently neutral countries like Finland and Sweden to join NATO. Furthermore, it means that he opposes the long-standing demand of progressive forces in NATO member states to leave this imperialist alliance. It seems that Biden has found a new friend!

### Left Reformism in practice

It is well-known that NATO imperialism currently presents the escalating tensions with Russia as a struggle between two different ideologies, two different models of society. As Biden put it in his speech at the Royal Castle in Warsaw in March, Ukraine is now “on the front lines” in “the perennial struggle for democracy and freedom.”<sup>16</sup>

It is hardly surprising to see leaders of Great Powers concealing their imperialist interests behind good-sounding phrases. But it is impermissible for socialists to aid them in such efforts! Effectively, Murray Smith’s advocacy of support for NATO against Russia behind “left-wing” phrases makes him appear as a government adviser in waiting. The sad truth is that he has crossed the lines and joined the ideological camp of the class enemy.

It is certainly no accident that he serves in the Executive Bureau of the *Party of the European Left* which is the alliance whose Spanish sister parties are member of Prime Minister Sanchez government coalition since two and a half years! “Socialist” phrases and bourgeois deeds – this is a typical characteristic for social-imperialist servants of the ruling class. Authentic socialists have nothing to do with such a policy. It can only discredit any anti-imperialist and internationalist support for the just national war of defense of the Ukrainian people against Russia’s invasion!

### Footnotes

1 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 60 RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict and the Ukraine War are compiled: <https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. The most important documents are: 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.thecomunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/>; RCIT: Ukraine War: An Action Program for Authentic Socialists, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-an-action-program-for-authentic-socialists/>; Medina Gunić: A new turning point in Russia’s invasion of the Ukraine, 25 February 2022, <https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/global/a-new-turning-point-in-russia-s-invasion-of-the-ukraine/>; RCIT: Down with Putin’s Imperialist War against the Ukraine! Neither Russia nor NATO - against all imperialist powers! For an independent popular struggle to defend the Ukraine! For a workers government to defeat the Russian invaders! No to imperialist sanctions! For an independent socialist Ukraine! 24 February 2022, <https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/global/down-with-putin-s-imperialist-war-against-the-ukraine/>; see also our joint statement with UIT-CI and LIT-CI, <https://www.thecomunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-on-ukraine-war-13-3-2022/>

2 To name only two documents in place of these currents we refer to the pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: Putin’s Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs). The pro-Russian Stalinist parties and their arguments in the

current NATO-Russia Conflict, 9 February 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/nato-russia-conflict-stalinism-as-putin-s-poodles/>; by the same author: 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/>

3 See e.g. <https://www.iire.org/node/45>

4 See e.g. Murray Smith: Four points on the war in Ukraine, 18 Apr 2022, <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article62344> and <https://anticapitalistresistance.org/four-points-on-the-war-in-ukraine/>. All quotes are from this source if not indicated otherwise.

5 See e.g. <https://www.transform-network.net/de/netzwerk/autorinnen/autorinnen/murray-smith/>

6 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/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/>; 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/](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/>

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

8 Michael Pröbsting: World Situation: In the Midst of a Global Political Tornado. Notes on global developments characterized by the Ukraine War, inter-imperialist rivalry, global energy and food crisis as well as spontaneous mass protests, 13 April 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-april-2022/>

9 Leon Trotsky: Perspectives of World Development (1924), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/07/world.htm>

10 See on this RCIT: Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States, 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>; see also the above-mentioned 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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11 Leon Trotsky: War and the Fourth International (1934), in: Trotsky Writings 1933-34, p. 307

12 Leon Trotsky: Anti-Imperialist Struggle is Key to Liberation. An Interview with Mateo Fossa (1938); in: Writings of Leon Trotsky 1938-39, p. 34

13 "Take the situation in May 1940. After the German blitzkrieg in Western Europe only Britain was left standing against Germany. What should have been the attitude of internationalists? On one side was the Communist Party of Britain (CPGB). After having made anti-fascism its identity since 1935, the CPGB received new directions from the Communist International following the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Anti-fascism was no longer the priority, the war was imperialist. Not only that, but the main enemy was not Nazi Germany, which had made an agreement with the Soviet Union, but "reactionary, anti-Soviet England." The CPGB carried out the somersault demanded by Moscow, not without some resistance. After June 22, 1941, it would perform a somersault in the other direction, with less resistance, it must be said.

At the same time that the CPGB was defending this line, young men in Britain were volunteering for the army. And not only them. Tens of thousands of Irishmen (70,000 in the course of the war) came to join them (Ireland maintaining neutrality). There were also Poles, Czechs, French and other survivors of the Nazi occupation of their countries. And they immediately took up arms again. In particular they contributed whole squadrons to the Royal Air Force to conduct the Battle of Britain against the Luftwaffe, whose victory removed the imminent danger of an invasion

So, who was right, these young people ready to fight against Nazism or the CPGB? Who was the most internationalist? To ask the question is to answer it. The lesson is not only that one should not allow one's policy to be dictated by any international centre. But that we must not approach a new reality by repeating the analyzes and watchwords of another period, however correct they were at that time. Nothing replaces the concrete analysis of a concrete situation. In this specific case, the main thing was not that Germany was imperialist, but that it was Nazi. And therefore that its victory would have led to the establishment of a dictatorship: suppression of all democratic rights, dissolution of unions and parties, fierce repression. And it was necessary to fight against it, even under the flag of the British Empire. The main enemy is not always in our own country."

14 The Stalinists advocated an alliance of the USSR with the "democratic" imperialist powers from 1935 to 1939 and again from 1939-47. In the years 1939-41, Stalin was in an alliance with Hitler-Germany.

15 Rudolf Klement, a secretary of Trotsky and a leader of the Fourth International, summarized these principles pretty well in an article published in 1938 (shortly before he was murdered by Stalinist agents). "War is only the continuation of politics by other means. Hence the proletariat must continue its class struggle in wartime, among other things with the new means which the bourgeoisie hands him. It can and must utilise the weakening of its "own" bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries in order relentlessly to prepare and to carry out its social revolution in connection with the military defeat engendered by the war, and to seize the power. This tactic, known as revolutionary defeatism, is one of the strongest levers of the proletarian world revolution in our epoch, and therewith of historical progress.

Only, where the struggle is imperialistic only on one side, and a war of liberation of non-imperialist nations or of a socialist country against existing or threatening imperialist oppression on the other, as well as in civil wars between the classes or between democracy and fascism—the international proletariat cannot and should not apply the same tactic to both sides. Recognising the progressive character of this war of liberation it must fight decisively against the main enemy, reactionary imperialism (or else against the reactionary camp, in the case of a civil war), that is, fight for the victory of the socially (or politically) oppressed or about-to-be oppressed: USSR, colonial and semi-colonial countries like Abyssinia or China, or Republican Spain, etc. (...)

In the application of revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist bourgeoisie and its state there can be no fundamental difference, regardless of whether the latter is "friendly" or hostile to the cause supported by the proletariat, whether it is in—treacherous—alliance with the allies of the proletariat (Stalin, the bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial counties, the colonial peoples, anti-fascist liberalism), or is conducting a war against them. The methods of revolutionary defeatism remain unaltered: revolutionary propaganda, irreconcilable opposition to the regime, the class struggle from its purely economic up to its highest political form (the armed uprising), fraternisation of the troops, transformation of the war into the civil war." (Rudolf Klement: Principles and Tactics in War, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/klement-war/>)

16 Remarks by President Biden on the United Efforts of the Free World to Support the People of Ukraine, March 26, 2022, The Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/03/26/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-unity-efforts-of-the-free-world-to-support-the-people-of-ukraine/>

# Socialists Should Not Support Imperialist Sanctions or the UN

## A comradely critique of a joint statement of Russian and Ukrainian socialists

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 17.4.2022

A few days ago, two socialist organizations issued a joint statement about the Ukraine War. This statement is highly remarkable – mainly for two reasons. It takes a unambiguous stance against Russian imperialism and in favor of the resistance struggle of the Ukrainian people. Such a position, valuable in itself, is even more worthy of praise as it has been jointly issued by a Russian and a Ukrainian organization – the *Российское Социалистическое Движение* (Russian Socialist Movement) & *Соціальний Рух* (Social Movement, Ukraine).<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the comrades' support for the Ukraine's just war of defense includes even the explicit call for "increased military support to Ukraine, in particular the provision of air defense systems". All this is worth praising not only because such a stance is correct in itself but also – and in particular – since it has been co-signed by a Russian organization. Everyone who is aware of the repressive conditions under the Putin regime – even more so since the beginning of the war – will surely respect such courage!<sup>2</sup>

While the RCIT's comrades in Russia and Ukraine would certainly not formulate every sentence in the same way as the PCД&CP statement does, we repeat our appreciation of it for the unambiguous stance for the Ukrainian resistance and against Russian imperialism.<sup>3</sup>

However, there are two demands in this statement which we consider as wrong and which we ask the comrades to reconsider. The first demand is the call for "the sanctioning of Russian oil and gas" (plus "new targeted, personal sanctions on Putin and his multimillionaires"). And the second demand is the "the introduction of UN peacekeepers from non-NATO countries to protect civilians, including the protection of green corridors and the protection of nuclear power plants (Russia's veto in the UN Security Council can be overcome at the General Assembly)".

Both demands have in common that they represent calls to (Western) imperialist Great Powers to take actions against its Russian rival respectively to intervene directly in the Ukraine.

### Yes to sanctions by workers but not by Great Powers!

We have already explained at various occasions that it is essential for socialists to strongly differentiate between sanctions imposed by the working class, on one hand, and sanctions imposed by imperialist states, on the other hand.<sup>4</sup>

Workers sanctions – like those of dockers in various countries against Russian ships or of Belarus railway workers against Russian military supply – strengthen the power and the self-confidence of the working class. They demonstrate to workers in Russia that their class brothers and sisters stand with the victims of imperialist aggression.

In contrast, sanctions imposed by imperialist states strengthen not the working class but these very imperialist states. They strengthen the power and the self-confidence not of the working class but of the imperialist rulers.

It should be not difficult to understand the difference.

Take the analogy of violence. We support violence of the oppressed against the oppressor. But we don't call one mafia don to beat up his rival! The first case strengthens the oppressed. The second case strengthens the mob boss.

Psychologically we can understand the comrades. They desperately want to see the Ukraine win and imperialist Russia to be defeated. But such understandable motive must not lead one to end up supporting imperialist institutions and actions!

The problem is, so it seems to us, that the comrades do not fully understand the specific, *dual character* of the current conflict. As we have elaborated in various RCIT's documents, it is crucial to recognize the *two lines of struggle* which are taking place. First, there is the Ukraine War which has been provoked by the invasion by Russia – an imperialist power – against a semi-colonial country.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the RCIT fully supports the resistance of the Ukrainian people against Russia as it represents a just war of defense.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, the RCIT has initiated the *International Workers Aid* campaign which brings material aid to the Ukrainian people – the "Sunflower Convoy" – in collaboration with socialists in the Ukraine as well as the organization of the Crimean Tatar people.<sup>7</sup>

However, there is also a *second* conflict taking place – the acceleration of the inter-rivalry between the Great Powers – first and foremost the U.S. and Western Europe against Russia. Socialists must not take side in this rivalry under any circumstances. This is a conflict between two robbers – *both are enemies* of the workers and oppressed. Hence, the RCIT advocates a *revolutionary defeatist* position, *opposing both camps* – Russia as well as NATO.

We have summarized our position in the following slogans:

\* *Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Russian imperialism! International popular solidarity with the Ukrainian national resistance – independent of any imperialist influence!*

\* *Down with all imperialist powers – NATO and EU as well as Russia! In all conflicts between these powers, revolutionaries oppose both camps!*

Supporting or justifying any kind of sanctions of Western imperialism against its Russian rival is completely wrong and unprincipled for socialists! It mixes *proletarian* policy with *imperialist* policy. It confuses the *methods of class struggle* with the *methods of capitalist power rivalry*. It blurs the lines between *working-class internationalism* and *imperialist Great Power aggression*.

In the history of modern capitalism, the policy of imperialist sanctions has often resulted in major imperialist wars. The sanctions of the U.S. against Japan in the years before Pearl Harbor in 1941, or various sanctions during World War I or in the inter-war period are well known. Since 2018, we have seen imperialist punitive tariffs or sanctions of the U.S. against China and vice versa.<sup>8</sup> Here too, it is evident that both powers are heading towards military confrontation in the next years.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, objectively, socialists become accomplice with imperialist power politics if they lend support to such

sanctions.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, such support for Western sanctions can only discredit socialists in the eyes of the numerous oppressed peoples around the globe which have become victims of U.S. and European imperialism and which despise these power strongly.

### The Marxist tradition about imperialist sanctions

For these reasons, it was always clear for Marxists that they must not lend any kind of (not even “critically”) support to imperialist sanctions! Lenin pointed out already in his writings in the early stage of World War I that the policy of economic aggression on one Great Power against the other inevitable provokes the danger of inter-imperialist war.

„Hence the keener and “closer” economic competition becomes, i.e., the economic driving of a competitor towards bankruptcy, the more the capitalists strive to add military pressure in order to drive the competitor in that direction.”<sup>11</sup>

It therefore became a hallmark of the Communist International in the times of Lenin and Trotsky and, later, of Trotsky’s Fourth International, to oppose all forms of imperialist sanctions. When the so-called “League of Nations” – the predecessor of the United Nations – imposed sanctions against fascist Italy (because of the latter’s attack against Ethiopia in 1935), Trotsky and the Fourth International sharply denounced such measures. They argued that such sanctions would basically serve as instruments of British, French and U.S. imperialism against their rivals. This assessment was proven right only four years later when World War II began.

Trotsky explained that “economic sanctions, if real, lead to military sanctions, to war.”<sup>12</sup> He therefore insisted that Marxists must break with all those who lend support to this or that imperialist power by supporting such sanctions. “The struggle against war, properly understood and executed, presupposes the uncompromising hostility of the proletariat and its organizations, always and everywhere, toward its own and every other imperialist bourgeoisie. Yet among the announced adherents of the London Bureau congress are to be found such notorious supporters of the League of Nations (i.e., imperialist) “sanctions” as the Italian Socialist Party, which is presumably to organize a common struggle against war with opponents of these “sanctions,” such as the British ILP claims to be. A prerequisite for the proletarian struggle against war is not unity between pro-“sanctionists” and anti-“sanctionists” but the ruthless separation of them.”<sup>13</sup>

### The United Nations – an institution dominated by imperialist Great Powers

We refute the second demand in the PC&CP statement for similar reasons. The call for the “the introduction of UN peacekeepers” in the Ukraine effectively means to invite military forces of an institution which is controlled by the imperialist Great powers.<sup>14</sup>

Such a demand is absolutely wrong. Socialists must not create any illusions in imperialist institutions like the UN. This is an institution created and 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

# 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 of Workers

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 kind of 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.

True, the comrades try to circumvent this problem by calling for UN troops *"from non-NATO countries to protect civilians, including the protection of green corridors and the protection of nuclear power plants (Russia's veto in the UN Security Council can be overcome at the General Assembly)"*.

But, in our opinion, these arguments don't make sense. First, it is not true that *"Russia's veto in the UN Security Council can be overcome at the General Assembly"*. Votes of the UN General Assembly, in contrast to decisions of the UN Security Council, are not binding by international law. As it is well-known, the UN General Assembly adopted dozens of resolutions against Israel because of its oppression of the Palestinian people. However, these resolutions had no effect because of the impotence of the body of the UN General Assembly.

An actual example are the resolutions of the UN General Assembly against Russia's invasion in the Ukraine. Since they are not adopted by the UN Security Council, these decisions are not binding.

In addition, the decisive issue is not the nationality of UN soldiers. It has been often the case that UN troops come from African or Asian countries. The decisive issue is who is commanding such troops, under which leadership do they operate and whose interest do they serve. Since the UN is a body dominated by imperialist Great Powers, such troops can not but serve imperialist interests.

Finally, it might sound nice that UN troops would only serve *"to protect civilians"*. But, in reality, troops are troops and once they are deployed in the Ukraine, they will serve their master and their master only.

Look where UN troops have been deployed – from Bosnia to Lebanon they do not serve the interests of the liberation struggle but rather those Great Powers which have an interest to pacify a status quo in a given conflict.

The call for UN troops does not empower the working class and the oppressed people but rather an imperialist institution resp. the Great Powers which dominate the UN.

### The Communist International about the predecessor organization of the UN

Intransigent hostility against the *"League of Nations"* – the predecessor organization of the UN in the inter-war period – was a key element of the program of the Communist International (Comintern) in its early period when it was led by Lenin and Trotsky. In its first Manifesto, drafted by Trotsky and unanimously adopted at the founding congress in March 1919, the Comintern posed the following alternative to the international working class.

*"In other words: Shall all toiling mankind become the bond slaves of a victorious world clique who, under the name of the League of Nations and aided by an 'international' army and 'international' navy, will plunder and strangle in one place and cast crumbs elsewhere, while everywhere shackling the proletariat, with the sole object of maintaining their own rule; or shall*

*the working class of Europe and of the advanced countries in other parts of the world themselves take in hand the disrupted and ruined economy in order to assure its reconstruction on socialist foundations?"*<sup>15</sup>

In its conditions for membership, adopted at its Second Congress in 1920, the Comintern posed as one of these conditions the following thesis: *"Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose not only avowed social-patriotism, but also the insincerity and hypocrisy of social-pacifism; to bring home to the workers systematically that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism no international court of arbitration, no agreement to limit armaments, no 'democratic' reorganization of the League of Nations, will be able to prevent new imperialist wars."*<sup>16</sup>

The UN today is no better than the *League of Nations* was hundred years ago. Socialists must not have any illusions in such imperialist institutions!

In the past decade, the RCIT has discussed many times various forms of pro-Eastern social-imperialism by reformist and centrist parties in Western Europe and North America. These forces – in one way or another – sympathized with the imperialist rivals of "their" own rulers. They justified such a position by explaining that the main enemy are the U.S. and European imperialism and not Russia or China. We always sharply refuted such positions as tantamount to pro-Eastern social-imperialism.

Unfortunately, the comrades of PCД and CP are guilty to a certain degree of the same mistake – just under the opposite sign. Here we have a Russian (and Ukrainian) socialist organization which calls for actions by the Western Great Powers against their "own" imperialist rulers. The geographical characteristic of this policy is different – but the political characteristic is the same!

We conclude this article by repeating that we strongly appreciate the unambiguous opposition of the Russian resp. Ukrainian comrades of PCД and CP in their opposition against Russian imperialism and their support for the Ukrainian war of defense. But their highly praiseworthy position is tinted by its support for Western sanctions as well as the intervention of the United Nations. Such mistaken support objectively represents a deviation towards pro-Western social-imperialism. We therefore urge the comrades to reconsider this position!

### Footnotes

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4 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Can Socialists Support Imperialist Sanctions? The "Fourth International" in the tradition of Pablo and Mandel supports Western sanctions against Russia, 4 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/can-socialists-support-imperialist-sanctions/>; by the same author: Ukraine War: Dockworkers Boy-

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5 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/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/>; 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/](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/>.

6 We refer readers to a special page on our website where currently about 60 RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict and the Ukraine War are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. The most important documents are: 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/>; RCIT: Ukraine War: An Action Program for Authentic Socialists, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-an-action-program-for-authentic-socialists/>; Medina Gunić: A new turning point in Russia's invasion of the Ukraine, 25 February 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/a-new-turning-point-in-russia-s-invasion-of-the-ukraine/>; RCIT: Down with Putin's

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7 See on this the website of the *International Workers Aid* campaign ([www.workers-aid.net](http://www.workers-aid.net)) and the report about the first trip of the Sunflower Convoy in this Ukraine ([www.workers-aid.net/convoy/updates](http://www.workers-aid.net/convoy/updates)).

8 See on this the RCIT's documents on the Global Trade War which have been compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/>.

9 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: "Maritime Freedom" – A Keyword of the U.S./NATO Warmongers. A leading representative of the U.S. Navy outlines a militaristic strategy against Russia and China, 5 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/maritime-freedom-a-keyword-of-the-u-s-nato-warmongers/>

10 On the RCIT's analysis of the Great Power rivalry 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/>

11 V. I. Lenin: The Collapse of the Second International (1915); in: LCW Vol. 21, p. 230

12 Leon Trotsky: Once Again: The ILP (1936), in: Trotsky in: Writings 1935-36, p. 198

13 Leon Trotsky: Resolution on the Antiwar Congress of the London Bureau (1936), in: Documents of the Fourth International, New York 1973, p. 99

14 We refer in this context to an interesting article by an Ukrainian comrade of the RCIT in which he critically discusses the support of "Social Movement" for a military UN intervention: Ингмар Вштырский: Заметка про ООН и позиции левых о миротворцах в Украине, 24 Января 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/home/%D1%83%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9/un-and-positions-of-the-left-about-peacekeepers-in-ukraine/>

15 Communist International: Conditions of Admission to the Communist International. Approved by the Second Comintern Congress (1920), in: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents Selected and Edited by Jane Degras, Vol. I 1919-1922, p. 41

16 Communist International: Conditions of Admission to the Communist International. Approved by the Second Comintern Congress (1920), in: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents Selected and Edited by Jane Degras, Vol. I 1919-1922, p. 170



## 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

## Only 6 out of 16

### On the shameful capitulation of the Finnish “Left Alliance” in face of the parliamentary vote about NATO membership

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19 May 2022

The voting behaviour of the Finnish *Vasemmistoliitto* (Left Alliance) about the country’s application for NATO membership is highly instructive. As is known, the Finnish parliament voted on 17 May about joining the Western military alliance. In a historic vote, 188 deputies supported the respective motion and only 8 opposed (and 3 abstained).<sup>1</sup>

What is even more remarkable is the approach of *Vasemmistoliitto* – a member of the “Party of the European Left” (PEL). The latter is the federation of various left-reformist, ex-Stalinist parties with a presence in national as well as the European parliament. The most prominent of these parties are the LINKE (Germany), PCF (France), PCE and IU (Spain) and SYRIZA (Greece). These forces are known for their verbal opposition to the military alliance NATO and for their empty pacifist program.

However, *Vasemmistoliitto* hypocritical opposition against imperialist militarism collapsed within a few weeks. During the parliamentary vote about NATO membership, only 6 out of the party’s 16 deputies managed to raise their hand against the motion! Nine *Vasemmistoliitto* deputies even voted in favour of it!<sup>2</sup>

Equally remarkable is the fact that even before this parliamentary vote did take place, *Vasemmistoliitto*’s leadership decided that it would continue its participation in the government coalition *even if* this government applies for NATO membership. This decision was taken at a joint meeting of the party council and the parliamentary group with 52 members voting in favour and 10 against.<sup>3</sup>

As is well known, social democratic parties in Europe politically collapsed with the beginning of World War I. After raising the banner of anti-militarism and peace for many years, the reformist bureaucrats in Germany, France, and many other countries forgot their oath of allegiance and voted for war credits in August 1914.

However, at that time these reformist traitors could at least refer to the war at their countries borders and the supposedly immediate danger for their “fatherland”. In the case of *Vasemmistoliitto* even such hypocritical excuses do not work as no shots are fired at their border and no serious person could claim that Russia would intend to attack Finland in the foreseeable future.

#### The shift within the ruling class

How can the political and moral collapse of *Vasemmistoliitto* be explained? Obviously, the objective background is the massive change in Finland’s public opinion. This has been provoked by a dramatic shift within the ruling class in the last few months caused by Putin’s brutal aggression the Ukraine and the escalation of tensions between the imperialist Great Powers. In the light of these developments, Finland’s (as well as Sweden’s) political elite have arrived at the conclusion that the dramatic acceleration of the rivalry between the NATO and Russia makes it necessary for them to drop the country’s long-time neutrality status.

The near unanimity among Finland’s monopoly bourgeoisie about the new foreign policy and the corresponding media campaign resulted in a massive shift in polls. According to a recent poll for Finland’s state broadcaster Yle, 76% of Finns supported Finland joining NATO; 12% were against and 11% undecided. This is compared to a similar poll conducted in 2017, when only 19% of Finns were pro-NATO membership.<sup>4</sup>

Naturally, this development went hand in hand with a corresponding shift in the position of all political parties represented in parliament as they express themselves in favour of the country’s NATO membership.

As a reformist party, *Vasemmistoliitto* does not want to isolate itself from the bourgeois public opinion. It is not possible to be part of a government of a capitalist state without accepting the pillars of the political orientation of the ruling class. We have seen this numerous times in the past when “socialist” parties joined the government and – officially or de facto – dropped those principles which were incompatible with the interests of the bourgeoisie.

To take an actual example: Spain’s left-reformist parties Podemos, PCE and IU (the latter two are members of PEL like *Vasemmistoliitto*) have joined the government coalition in January 2020. As a member state of NATO, Spain has supported the Western imperialist policy against Russia since the beginning of the current crisis. Surely, the left-reformist leaders of Podemos, PCE and IU are not happy about this as it is in full contradiction to all programmatic statements of these parties in the last years. But they have seen no reason to leave the coalition because of such “small differences”.

The same is true for the Finnish *Left Alliance*. It is a member of the government coalition since December 2019 and holds two ministerial posts. The leaders of this parties observe the same line of conduct as all reformist bureaucrats: “*dear are my principles, but government positions are dearer*” – to paraphrase the well-known dictum of Aristotle. To put it in less philosophical terms, one can characterize the policy of these parties as *social-imperialism* – socialist in words, pro-imperialist in deeds.

For such reformists, it doesn’t matter that NATO is a long-standing military alliance which represents the interests of American and European imperialism. It doesn’t matter that the powers which dominate NATO have waged a series of reactionary wars of aggression in the past decades – the Korea War (1950-53), the Vietnam War (1965-73), more recently the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, the French military intervention in Sahel – to name only the most prominent examples.

#### The nature of reformism

The blatant capitulation to the *Vasemmistoliitto* leadership to its own ruling class and the public opinion is the result of the political nature of reformism. It is a policy which represents the interests of sectors of the labour bureaucra-



cy, the middle class and the privileged upper strata of the working class. These layers are integrated in the political and social structures of the imperialist system (Let us not forget: Finland and Sweden are small, but rich imperialist states – similar to Swiss and Austria).

Such integration is not limited to potential government position. It also includes positions in the state structure on regional and local level, higher positions in state-owned corporations and public service, the role of leading trade union bureaucrats and shop stewards in high positions of well-financed social and health service, etc. As a result, the labour bureaucracy is a wide-ranging social stratum with their own material interests – interests which link them inextricably with the continuing existence of the privileged position of “their” imperialist state.

It is therefore only “natural” that the labour bureaucracy supports the monopoly bourgeoisie – the master of the political and social system in capitalism. Hence, when there is a shift within the ruling class on an important domestic or foreign policy issue, one can take it for granted that the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class” – as the American socialist Daniel DeLeon once called this stratum – will follow suit.

The Marxists classics have always pointed out that the reformist, social-imperialist policy of such parties can only be understood by recognizing their economic basis. Such, Lenin wrote in 1920 in a preface for his book on imperialism:

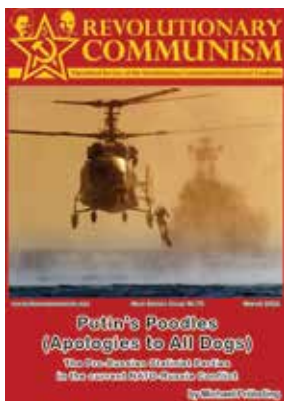
*“Obviously, out of such enormous superprofits (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their “own” country) it is possible to bribe the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the “advanced” countries are doing: they are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert. This stratum of workers-turned-bourgeois, or the labour aristocracy, who are quite*

*philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and in our days, the principal social (not military) prop of the bourgeoisie. For they are the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real vehicles of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie, the “Versaillese” against the “Communards”. Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problem of the communist movement and of the impending social revolution.”<sup>5</sup>*

And in another document Lenin stated: *„Opportunism, or reformism, inevitably had to grow into a phenomenon of worldwide importance, socialist-imperialism, or social-chauvinism, because imperialism brought to the fore a handful of very rich, advanced nations, engaged in plundering the whole world, and thereby enabled the bourgeoisie of those countries, out of their monopolist superprofits (imperialism is monopoly capitalism), to bribe the upper strata of the working class.”<sup>6</sup>*

### Social-Imperialist Servants

The history of Europe’s social democracy as well as of the ex-Stalinist members of the “Party of the European Left” (PEL) is ample proof of this old Marxist truth. While the social democratic parties have been in European governments for a large part of the time since 1945, this has been less the case with the Stalinist and ex-Stalinist parties. However, whenever these parties were relevant enough and when the ruling class had use for them, the (ex-)Stalinists have been prepared to serve their master in government positions. And they continued to stay in such positions even in times of war. The PCF, for example, was part



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# Putin’s Poodles (Apologies to All Dogs)

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

*by Michael Pröbsting, February 2022*

**Introduction** \* 1. NATO is the sole aggressor! Really? \* Is it relevant for Marxists who is the aggressor?  
\* What is causing the escalation of tensions between Great Powers: the party of warmongers or the imperialist system? \* Can socialists defend “legitimate spheres of influence” of Great Powers? \* Putin and Great Russian Chauvinism claim that the Ukraine is not an independent nation \* Stalinism versus Bolshevism: The Ukraine and the right of national self-determination \* From Kazakhstan to Syria: Stalinism is siding with the counterrevolution \* Is Russian imperialism a “force of social progress”?  
**Discussion of a remarkable Stalinist document** \* Stalinism and social-imperialism: concluding remarks  
\* Footnotes

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format*

of the French government during the NATO wars against Yugoslavia in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2001.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to recognize that reformist social-imperialism is a phenomenon which is not limited to the Western countries. Just take the Russian KPRF led by Gennady Zyuganov – Putin’s Poodles – which has been a staunch supporter of the Kremlin’s invasion of the Ukraine from the very beginning. Worse, this Stalinist party even played a key role in the political and ideological preparation of this war.<sup>8</sup> Other parties do not support Putin’s invasion as such but, nevertheless, they strongly oppose the Ukrainian resistance and preach accommodation to Russian imperialism.<sup>9</sup>

All this demonstrates once more that also the left-reformist, (ex-)Stalinist forces are social-imperialist lackeys of the ruling class – “socialists” in words but servants of imperialist states in deeds.

We shall note in passing that not only reformists, but also various pseudo-Trotskyist centrist parties have opportunistically adapted themselves to one or the other imperialist Great Power in the past decade. In the light of the acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry,<sup>10</sup> a number of these claim that Russia and China are not imperialist power and should therefore be supported against the long-standing Western hegemons.<sup>11</sup> Others are adapting to NATO, particularly in the past months.<sup>12</sup>

### **Socialists must oppose NATO membership without lending support to Russian imperialism**

As the RCIT stated in a recently published statement, socialists in Finland and Sweden – as well as all other countries – must unambiguously oppose membership in the NATO alliance.<sup>13</sup> Such a principled stance must be combined with equal hostility against Russian imperialism – something which the Putinista “left” has always been incapable of. Furthermore, socialists must support the oppressed people which are under attack of one or the other imperialist power.

Today, this means that socialists need to recognize the *dual character* of the current conflict and must therefore advocate a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist policy adapted to these conditions. Hence, the RCIT recognizes the progressive and legitimate character of the national war of defence of the Ukrainian people and, therefore, we support their resistance against the invasion of imperialist Russia. At the same time, we also recognize the reactionary character of the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers and, therefore, we oppose *both* camps – Russia as well as NATO. We summarized our position in the following slogans:<sup>14</sup>

*\* Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Russian imperialism! International popular solidarity with the Ukrainian national resistance – independent of any imperialist influence!*

*\* Down with all imperialist powers – NATO and EU as well as Russia! In all conflicts between these powers, revolutionaries oppose against both camps!*

It is crucial for socialists to combat the reactionary influence of social-imperialist parties within the workers and popular movement. It is important that authentic socialists join forces for this purpose!

### **Footnotes**

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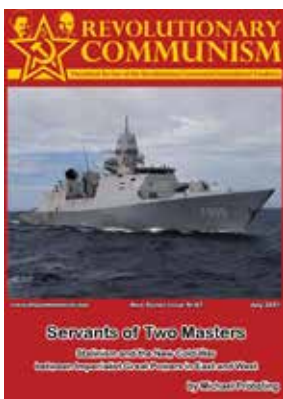
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14 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 60 RCIT documents on the current NATO-Russia conflict and the Ukraine War are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. The most important documents are: RCIT

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## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# Servants of Two Masters

*Stalinism and the New Cold War  
between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West*

*by Michael Pröbsting*

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*

**Introduction \* The New Inter-Imperialist Cold War \* A View on the Military Strength of the Great Powers \* The Main Point of both Statements: Siding with Chinese and Russian Imperialism \* Stalinist Fantasies Shredded in the Light of Reality: The Rise of Chinese Imperialism \* The KKE's "criticism" and its fraternal bonds with the Chinese CP \* Beside the Servants of Assad the Butcher - Who Signed the KKE-initiated Joint Statement? \* The Xi Fan Club: Signatories of the CPUSA-initiated Joint Statement \* The Concept of Multilateralism and Peaceful Coexistence: A Reactionary Illusion \* "Socialism in One Country": The Historical Roots of the Stalinist Concept of "Peaceful Coexistence" \* Serving Two Masters: The Eastern Imperialists as well as Sectors of the Domestic Bourgeoisie \* A Note on the tight-lipped "Trotskyists" (CWI, IMT, ISA) \* Conclusions \* Footnotes**

