



www.thecommunists.net

Issue Nr.150

October 2023

The Revival of the Syrian Revolution

- * Armenia-Azerbaijan: Reactionary Conflict
- * Russia: The Meaning of Prigozhin's Death
- * Syria: Mass Protests against Assad
- * Revival of the Syrian Revolution
- * Defend Niger against ECOWAS & France!
- * Niger: Mass Rallies against France
- * Coup in Gabon
- * Strike of U.S. Autoworkers
- * War Danger on the Korean Peninsula
- * Conflict between China, Philippines & US

Workers and Oppressed Unite!

English-Language Journal of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), No. 150, October 2023

Armenia-Azerbaijan: Another Outburst of the Reactionary Conflict	p.3
Russia: The Meaning of Prigozhin's Death	p.4
Syria: Full Solidarity with the Popular Protests against Al Assad	p.6
Syria: Mass Rally in Solidarity with the Revolution	p.7
The Meaning of the Revival of the Syrian Revolution	p.8
Defend Niger! Down with ECOWAS and France!	p.10
Niger: Mass Demonstrations against French Imperialism	p.12
On the Coup in Gabon	p.13
United States: Solidarity with the Striking Autoworkers!	p.15
War Danger on the Korean Peninsula	p.16
China-Philippines-US: The Conflict on the Ayungin Shoal & Inter-Imperialist Rivalry	p.18

Picture on the cover: Rally of the Syrian migrant community in Vienna on 27 August 2023

Revolutionary Communism is the monthly English-language journal published by the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT). The RCIT has sections and activists in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Russia, Nigeria, Britain, and Austria.

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

Armenia-Azerbaijan: Another Outburst of the Reactionary Conflict

For national self-determination! Drive all reactionary powers – Russia, U.S., EU, Israel, Iran and Türkiye – out of the Caucasus!

Statement of the RCIT, jointly issued by the International Bureau and Socialist Tendency (Russia), 20 September 2023

1. On 19 September, the Azerbaijani army launched a “local anti-terrorist operations aimed at restoring constitutional order” in Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku demands that “the illegal Armenian armed groups must raise the white flag, hand over all weapons, and the illegal regime must disband themselves. Otherwise, anti-terrorist measures will be continued until the end.”

2. This is another outburst of the long-standing reactionary conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia which did result in two wars in 1988-94 and 2020. Against the background on the complex ethnic composition of the region, both states have repeatedly tried to dominate each other. Nagorno-Karabakh is a region which officially belongs to Azerbaijan, but is populated by nearly 150,000 people – most of them Armenians. However, Yerevan has effectively controlled this region in the past decades since the first war. In addition, Armenian forces also occupied chunks of its Azeri-populated territory surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh albeit they lost most of these territories in the second war three years ago. In addition, Armenian forces continue to control the so-called “Zangezur Corridor” – a road which links Azerbaijan with its exclave of Nakhchivan but running through Armenian territory.

3. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and *Socialist Tendency* (RCIT Section in Russia) condemn the latest clashes as a *reactionary conflict on both sides*. Both states pursue reactionary goals of dominating sectors of the other population. Both sides are closely allied to imperialist and regional powers. Armenia is part of the Moscow-dominated CSTO alliance but its government of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan vacillates between the U.S., EU and Russia. Last week, the United States and Armenia held joint military drills. In addition, Yerevan has long-standing ties with the Mullah-regime in Iran. On the other hand, Azerbaijan’s government of President Ilham Aliyev has long-standing relations with both the semi-colonial regional power Turkey as well as imperialist Israel.

4. Russian imperialism has been the dominating force in the South Caucasus for a long time. It deployed about 2,000 troops to the Nagorno-Karabakh region as

so-called “peacekeepers” as a result of the Russia-brokered peace deal in autumn 2020. Traditionally, Moscow has been seen as an ally of Armenia. However, these ties have loosened in the past years since Pashinyan has tried to distance his country from Moscow’s influence. Furthermore, Russia’s military power has been fully consumed by its reactionary war against the Ukraine and Putin has tried to build closer relations with Baku. At the same time, Washington and Brussels attempt to fill the gap and deepen their relations with Yerevan.

5. The RCIT and *Socialist Tendency* condemn the war as a reactionary conflict on both sides. Socialists should oppose all forms of chauvinist oppression and defend the right of national self-determination. Such right of the Armeni and Azeri people can not be defended by siding with the bourgeois-chauvinist regimes in Baku or in Yerevan in this conflict. Likewise, the peoples of the Caucasus can not be free as long as imperialist and regional powers continue to interfere and to pursue their reactionary interests. We reiterate our support for the struggle of the oppressed peoples against Russian imperialism – in Chechnya, Syria and Ukraine. Likewise, we continue to support the oppressed peoples fighting against authoritarian regimes – like the Kurds in Türkiye or the peoples of Iran against the Mullah regime. The only way forward is to overthrow all capitalist regimes and to replace these by a workers and poor peasant government!

** Down with the reactionary war between Armenia and Azerbaijan!*

** No to all forms of chauvinism! For full national self-determination of the Armenian people in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as the Azeri people in Nakhchivan!*

** Drive all reactionary powers – Russia, U.S., EU, Israel, Iran and Türkiye – out of the Caucasus!*

** Defend the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion! Solidarity with the Chechen and the Syrian people! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

** For a workers and peasants republics in Armenia and Azerbaijan! For a socialist federation in the Caucasus!*

The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power

Three Pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

Order the pamphlet via our contact address: rcit@thecommunists.net

Russia: The Meaning of Prigozhin's Death

On the reasons why Putin tries to smash the war party of ultra-reactionary "patriots"

By Alexey Sedov, Denis Sokolov and Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 24.08.2023

Yesterday's air crash in Tver Oblast killed Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder Dmitry Utkin, and other commanders of that notorious mercenary force. It is almost certain that this was not an accident but the result of an explosion – either caused by a bomb on board or by missiles fired by Russian Air Defence. Likewise, it is open secret that this was an assassination ordered by Putin in retaliation for Prigozhin's coup attempt on 24 June.

Socialists have no reason to mourn about the deaths of the Wagner top leadership whose forces played a vanguard role in reactionary wars like that against the Ukrainian, the Syrian or the Libyan people. As the RCIT and *Socialist Tendency* (RCIT Section in Russia) stated at that time, Prigozhin's coup attempt was not a progressive act but rather a "reactionary rebellion against a reactionary regime" and a "quarrel between thieves." Consequently, we said: "The workers and oppressed have nothing to win by supporting one of these war criminals – both are worse!" This unprecedented event was the result of the domestic political crisis provoked by Putin's imperialist war against the Ukrainian people.¹

Despite its failure, the events of 24 June deeply shattered the bonapartist regime of Putin – who is in power since 1999 – and exposed its lack of support both among the popular masses as well as among the state apparatus. In fact, this coup attempt opened the period of the regime's death agony, and we expect further crisis and explosive events in the coming years.²

Against this background, the Kremlin needs to go to all lengths in order to reestablish its authority. As a result, we have seen in the past weeks a substantial intensification of state repression against all kind of critics from the left as well as from the right. A criminal case has been opened against Boris Kagarlitsky, who publicly criticised Putin's war against the Ukraine, accusing him of "supporting terrorism". Kagarlitsky is one of the most prominent left-wing

intellectuals in Russia whose works have been translated in various other languages.³

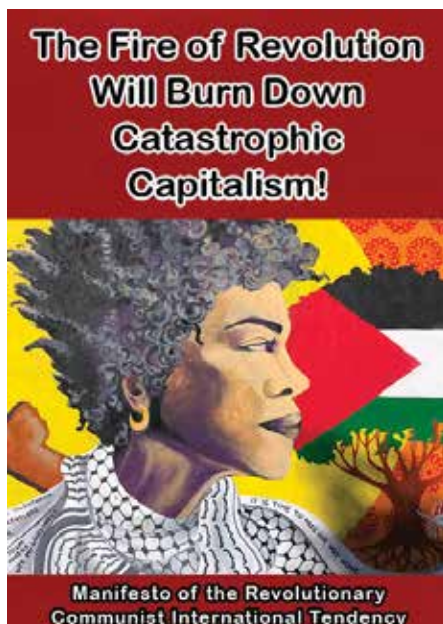
Likewise, the regime is purging the army and security forces. Several generals and commanders have been sacked. General Sergei Surovikin, the former commander of all Russian forces in Ukraine with close ties to Wagner, has been put under house arrest and was formally dismissed as commander of Russian Aerospace Forces – symbolically on the same day as Prigozhin's aircraft was shot down. Likewise, Igor Strelkov and other reactionary ultra-chauvinists have been arrested. All this shows that Putin's Bonapartist regime desperately fears disloyalty and criticism from all quarters.

Creating the basis for a sell-out?

However, it seems to us that there is also another reason for Putin's attempt to smash the war party of ultra-reactionary "patriots". These forces – a hotchpotch of hard-core "Ruskij Mir" chauvinists, sectors of the army and security services and so-called "milbloggers" – have repeatedly criticized the government and the army command for its refusal to impose a total mobilisation of the country in order to win the war against Ukraine.

Russia's failure to defeat the Ukraine and to impose its official goals of the war – the so-called "denazification" and "demilitarisation" – are an increasing embarrassment for the Putin regime. This is even more the case as the war puts enormous strains on the country's economy (e.g. shortage of labour force since many men are conscripted in the army, scarcity of hi-tech imports as a result of Western sanctions, lack of monetary stability).

Since Western powers also suffer from the economic and political consequences of the war, both sides are increasingly interested in the pacification of the war. In fact, as we did report, there are already ongoing secret negotiations



New Program of the RCIT

Manifesto for the Liberation Struggle

Adopted at the III. World Congress of the RCIT in April 2021

- * Introductory Note
- * A New Era of Counterrevolutionary Offensive and Revolutionary Upheavals
- * The Capitalist State Monster Attacks Democracy! Defeat Chauvinism and Bonapartism!
- * Great Power Rivalry and Imperialist Aggression in the South: Turn the Guns against the Lords of Power and Money!
- * Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership: How to Organize and How to Fight?

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

between Washington and Moscow since spring this year.⁴

It is clear that if the war finishes without achieving its official goals, the Kremlin might face a massive loss of political credibility or even a domestic political crisis (the same, by the way, is case in the Ukraine as well as in NATO countries). Hence, the Kremlin can not agree to a ceasefire and the opening of negotiations without first eliminating its domestic opposition of the war party of ultra-reactionary “patriots”. In other words, the elimination of Prigozhin and the de facto decapitation of the Wagner PMC could be part of a process where the Putin regime creates the pre-conditions for the sell-out of its official war goals.

We conclude by reiterating that the RCIT and *Socialist Tendency* continue to support the Ukraine’s just war of national defence against Russian imperialism. At the same time, we oppose all Great Powers – the U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe and Japan. The workers in Russia need to prepare for political explosions which could create the conditions for a revolutionary uprising to bring down the Bonapartist regime.⁵

Footnotes

1 See on this RCIT: Prigozhin’s Coup Attempt in Russia: A Quarrel between Thieves. Prigozhin, Shoigu and Putin – no support for any of these war criminals! Down with Russian imperialism and the Bonapartist regime! 24 June 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/prigozhin-s-coup-attempt-in-russia/>; Michael Pröbsting: Western Powers and the Prigozhin Coup in Russia. On the consequences of the attempted coup for U.S. and European imperialism and the Ukraine War, 26 June 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/western-powers-and-prigozhin-coup-in-russia/>; by the same author: Once Again on the Worries of Western Powers after the Prigozhin Coup in Russia, 29 June 2023, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/western-powers-and-prigozhin-coup-in-russia/#anker_4

2 See on this RCIT: Russia: The Death Agony of the Pu-

tin Regime and the Perspectives for the Class Struggle. On the tasks of socialists in the coming period of crisis of the Bonapartist regime and its imperialist war against the Ukrainian people, 6 July 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/russia-death-agony-of-putin-regime/>

3 See on this e.g. RCIT: Russia: Solidarity with Boris Kagarlitsky! 25 July 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/russia-solidarity-with-boris-kagarlitsky/>

4 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: NATO Official Suggests Ukraine Should Trade Territory for Membership. Western powers plan to sell-out the Ukraine’s national rights for a “grand bargain” with Putin, 16 August 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/nato-official-suggests-ukraine-should-trade-territory-for-membership/>; by the same author: Ukraine War: Secret Negotiations between U.S. and Russia Have Started. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with former U.S. diplomats to discuss about the pacification of the conflict, 8 July 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-secret-negotiations-between-u-s-and-russia-have-started/>; Ukraine War: What Does the U.S. Offer in its Secret Negotiations with Russia? Both imperialist camps want to pacify the war and impose a deal which would be a disaster for the Ukrainian people, 31 July 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-what-does-the-u-s-offer-in-its-secret-negotiations-with-russia/>.

5 We refer readers to a special page on our website where all RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and the current NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. In particular we refer to the RCIT Manifesto: Ukraine War: A Turning Point of World Historic Significance. Socialists must combine the revolutionary defense of the Ukraine against Putin’s invasion with the internationalist struggle against Russian as well as NATO and EU imperialism, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/>; see also: Manifesto on the First Anniversary of the Ukraine War. Victory to the heroic Ukrainian people! Defeat Russian imperialism! No support whatsoever for NATO imperialism! 10 February 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto-on-first-anniversary-of-ukraine-war/>



Publications of the RCIT

Ukraine: A Capitalist Semi-Colony

On the exploitation and deformation of Ukraine’s economy
by imperialist monopolies and oligarchs since capitalist restoration in 1991

By Michael Pröbsting, January 2023

Introduction * I. The Marxist Theory of Imperialism and the Concept of Semi-Colonies * II. The Dead-End of Bureaucratic Stalinism * III. The Devastating Social & Economic Consequences of Capitalist Restoration * IV. The Semi-Colonial Deformation of Ukrainian Capitalism since 1991 (1. Oligarchs: the creation of a comprador bourgeoisie; 2. A semi-colonial supplier of raw materials for the capitalist world market; 3. Deep in the trap of foreign debt; 4. Foreign investment: the imperialist plunder of the Ukraine; 5. Migration: the Ukraine provides cheap labour force) * V. Ukraine: A Dependent Country Torn between Great Powers in East & West * VI. Russia’s Push to Colonise the Ukraine since February 2022 and NATO’s Efforts to Increase its Influence * VII. The Way Forward: From National Liberation to Social Revolution * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 28 pages, A4 Format

Syria: Full Solidarity with the Popular Protests against Al Assad

*Joint Statement of the International Unity of Workers - Fourth International (ITU-FI)
and the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 17 September 2023*

16 September marked one month of popular protests in Syria. Protests began on 16 August in Al Suwayda, Syria because the government removed petrol and fuel oil subsidies, worsening living conditions.

The protests erupted after a 50 per cent devaluation of the currency, bringing the informal market rate to 15,000 Syrian pounds to one of the US dollars. The Syrian government removed gasoline subsidies, increasing fuel prices from 3,000 to 8,000 Syrian pounds per litre. Permanent power cuts compounded this, with their repercussions on daily life. This triggered protests that quickly took on a political dynamic of questioning the dictatorship.

The anti-cost-of-living protests began in Al Suwayda City and challenged the dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad. From there, the protests have spread to other cities and towns. Popular demonstrations have been taking place daily.

According to a new report by the well-informed *Institute for the Study of War* (ISW), a US think tank, protests have taken place across the country in about 8 provinces. Local media *Suwayda 24* reported that protests had spread to the southern city of Daraa and the town of Jableh, near the coastal city of Latakia, along with others in opposition-held areas in the north-western city of Idlib, the capital of the province of the same name, considered the last bastion of opposition to the dictator.

However, the protests were not limited to economic issues, but quickly took on a political dimension, calling for the fall of the Assad regime. People chant famous slogans that have become popular since the beginning of the Syrian Revolution in 2011. Demonstrators also wave 'Free Syria' flags.

On 14 September, demonstrators gathered in a central square in Al Suwayda, shouting slogans such as "Syria wants freedom" or "Go away Bashar, the enemy of humanity". The dictatorial government of Bashar al-Assad is cracking down to stop them. But, for now, the protests continue.

In March 2011, the Syrian people unleashed a revolutionary mobilisation with the slogan "Down with Al Assad". It was part of the revolution that began in January in Tunisia and spread across North Africa and the Middle East, toppling old dictators. Bashar-al-Assad, supported by Putin

and Russian troops, launched a genocidal repression with tanks and even bombing, massacring and destroying entire cities. Such suppression was also supported by Turkey, Iran, and the United States. Because of this, the regime could prevent its downfall despite years of civil war and heroic popular resistance.

Assad's dictatorship caused 6.7 million Syrians to flee the country and 5.6 million to become refugees in neighbouring countries and Europe. About 90 per cent of its population lives below the poverty line. Months ago, the earthquake devastated Turkey and the rebel region of Idlib. The genocidal Al Assad put all kinds of obstacles to the free flow of international aid.

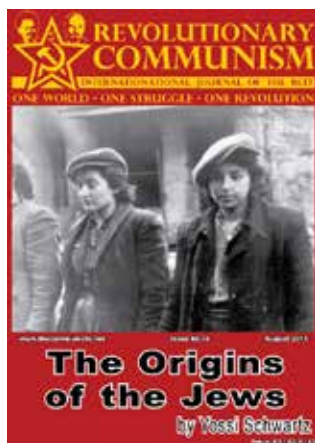
Now broad sectors of the Syrian people are once again going out to protest, taking up the banners of the revolution that began in 2011.

The *International Unity of Workers - Fourth International* (ITU-FI) and the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) strongly support the heroic Syrian people's mass protests and their demands.

We support these protests because the Syrian people can retake the path opened in the 2011 popular revolution to end the dictatorship and self-determination by achieving their government. As revolutionary socialists, we know that the definitive solution for the working class and the people of Syria will come from the hands of a workers' government and a socialist Syria, which respects the national and religious rights of all peoples.

From the IWU-FI and the RCIT, we call for full solidarity with the struggle of the Syrian people. They fight against economic austerity measures, freedom for prisoners, social justice and the rights of the oppressed. They fight to end Al Assad's dictatorship, for the withdrawal of the invading imperialist powers, Russia, the United States, and regional powers such as Turkey, Iran or Israel.

We call on workers and popular organisations, as well as left parties, to join forces for an international campaign of solidarity with the struggle of the Syrian people for Bashar al Assad out and all imperialist interventions and regional powers such as Turkey, Iran and Israel!



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

Syria: Mass Rally in Solidarity with the Revolution

Report (with Photos and Videos) from a Rally in Vienna on 27 August 2023, Austrian Section of the RCIT

Nearly 1.000 Syrian migrants demonstrated on 27 August in the centre of Vienna to show their support for the new wave of mass protests in Syria. It was an extraordinary and very enthusiastic demonstration, reflecting the electrifying spirit of the Syrian masses who are determined to bring down the tyranny of Assad. Comrade Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, was the sole speaker at the rally. He had to address the participants without a microphone since the demonstration was very lively and a bit chaotic with the result that the loudspeaker equipment was damaged. Despite this technical disadvantage, his speech was very well received by an enthusiastic crowd.

Michael sent greetings to the families of the unaccountable number of martyrs who had died in the heroic struggle against the regime in the past 12 years. He also welcomed the successful strike of freedom fighters in Idlib against

soldiers of Assad's army on the day before.

Michael emphasised that in order to win, we must learn from the past. Among such lessons are that the revolution must not become dependent on foreign powers. Another important was that there must not be uncontrollable and corrupt leaders but the people themselves must decide about the course of the struggle.

Furthermore, Michael stressed that the new wave of mass protests confirm one more how wrong all those demoralised renegades have been who told us that the Syrian Revolution would be dead. Sure, the revolution faced setbacks, but it was never defeated. And now, everyone can see that it is alive and kicking!

See photos and video clips here: https://www.the-communists.net/rcit/rcit-interventions-at-rallies-in-2023/#anker_17



Rally of the Syrian migrant community in Vienna on 27 July 2023; Michael Pröbsting speaks (below)

The Meaning of the Revival of the Syrian Revolution

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 26 August 2023

The wave of daily mass protests in Syria since 16 August is an event of extraordinary importance. It can only be welcomed by all socialists, democrats and supporters of the Great Arab Revolution which started in 2011!

It is the first serious offensive of the masses after the popular uprising suffered a series of setbacks and defeats following the tragic days in late 2016 when Assad's gangs – with the backing of Russian and Iranian forces – besieged and drowned in blood the liberated working-class districts in Aleppo city. In the last years, the Syrian Revolution managed to survive only due to the heroic resistance of the freedom fighters in the north-western province of Idlib and surrounding areas.

However, the last ten days indicate that the masses have recovered and are prepared to revive the revolutionary struggle. The centre of the uprising is currently in the south – in the provinces of Daraa and Suwayda. The former region is the famous place where the revolution started in March 2011 after the regime arrested and tortured 15 young students for writing anti-government graffiti. Suwayda is the only province in the country which has a Druze majority and where Assad used to have some support.

However, the uprising has already started to spread to other provinces which are under control either by the Assad regime or by the YPG-led forces resp. the American occupation troops. Among these are cities in the Rif Dimashq province, suburbs of Damascus, the town of Jableh – (near the coastal city of Latakia, a traditional stronghold of Assad), Raqqa, Hassakeh, and Deir Ezzor. Yesterday, many demonstrators held rallies in liberated areas – including Idlib, rural Aleppo, Azaz, Afrin and Al-Bab – to show their solidarity with the uprising.

In all places, people protest against the dramatic rise of living costs and combine this with chants for the downfall of the Assad tyranny. A statement of one of the protesters reflect the spirit of such solidarity: *"Today, Atarib, like other cities and towns, came out to call for freedom and the downfall of the regime. We say to Suweidah, we are with you to the death, to Daraa, we are with you to the death, to Aleppo, we are with you to the death!"*

Peculiar features

There are a few peculiar features of the new wave of mass protests which revolutionaries have to take into account. First, these protests include a number of people from religious minority groups – like the Druze and the Alawites – which did not play a significant role in the uprising in the years after 2011. Until now the main support for the liberation struggle have come from the Arab Sunni population which is discriminated – despite the fact that it constitutes the majority of the Syrian people and, in particular, of the workers and poor peasants.

It is crucial for Syrian revolutionaries to emphasise the *non-sectarian nature of the revolution*, i.e. that it strives to include all groups – Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Sunni, Shia, Druze, Alawites, Christians, etc. All forms of sectarian extremism must be fought without mercy!

Let's be clear: one reason – in addition to Russian Air

Force and Iranian troops – why the Assad regime could survive until now despite the heroic struggle of the Syrian people has been the fact that it could count on support among relatively privileged groups like the Alawites. The tyrant managed to solidify such support by instigating fears among these groups that a victorious revolution would result in a bloodbath among such minority groups. Hence, it is crucial that Syrian revolutionaries counter such fears by emphasising the non-sectarian nature of the revolution!

Furthermore, it is remarkable that women have played a prominent role at the demonstrations in Suwayda City – a highly welcomed development which needs to spread to other regions!

Another interesting feature is that some forces play a role in the protests in the Suwayda province which until now did not join the liberation struggle or which were even loyal to the regime. Among these are *Harakat Rijal al-Karama* ("Movement of the Men of Dignity") or *Faz'at Fakhr Faction* led by Abu Amir Osama 'Albi. While they still refrain from explicitly calling for the downfall of the regime, they support the protests and demand a *"change of government"*.

In fact, sectors of the masses in Suwayda are more advanced than such factions. And, naturally, revolutionaries have to reject such a conciliationist position and should advocate the strategy of armed insurrection to bring down the Assad tyranny. Still, it would be self-defeating if revolutionaries would refuse to collaborate with such conciliationist faction on practical issues in support of the protests.

The national and global relevance of the ongoing liberation struggle

It is, of course, possible that the current wave of mass protests will decline. However, the current revival of the liberation struggle is extraordinary remarkable. People outside of Syria and the Arab world often fail to recognise the unbelievable courage of the Syrian people. Since the beginning of the revolution in March 2011, the Assad regime has killed and tortured a vast number of people. It is estimated that until now more than 600,000 people have died and more than half of the total population has been either internally displaced or fled the country.

Still, despite so many unimaginable sacrifices, the Syrian people have not stopped to fight the barbaric dictatorship. Let's be clear: the heroism of the Syrian people is nearly without parallel in modern history – if we leave aside the great Palestinian people resisting the Zionist state or the brave Afghans expelling the American occupiers.

If the current protests continue and expand, they could open an existential crisis of the Assad regime and result in breaking up of the frozen front lines. This would transform the position of the Syrian Revolution from defensive to offensive and open the opportunity to achieve the revolutionary downfall of the regime.

Such a return to the revolutionary offensive would also have tremendous international consequences. We saw that already in 2011-13 when the Arab Revolution spread from one country to another and brought down several dictator-

ships like those of Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt or Gaddafi in Libya. The Yemeni dictator Saleh was also forced to resign as part of a mediated agreement. Add to this the heroic uprisings of the people in Iran against the Mullah regime or of the Sudanese people who brought down the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir in 2019. No doubt, the Arab Revolution also encouraged and strengthened the determination of the Palestinian people who defeated four attacks of the Zionist state against Gaza since 2008/09.

Unfortunately, various reactionary autocracies could strengthen or even consolidate their rule in the past years. General Sisi in Egypt, Kais Saied in Tunisia, Assad himself or the reactionary forces of al-Burhan and Hemedti in Sudan (who have fallen out a few months ago, opening a civil war) are the most prominent examples of this trend. However, a new upsurge of the Syrian Revolution could make the dictators tremble again! It could even have repercussions outside of the Arab and Muslim world.

Historic confirmation

Finally, we need to draw attention to some important lessons of the Syrian Revolution. First, the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) had repeatedly faced criticism by demoralised elements who rejected our insistence that the Syrian Revolution – despite its setbacks in the past years – had not been defeated. We have emphasised numerous times that the Syrian Revolution was down but not out and that the liberation struggle – which was mostly confined to Idlib – was still going on.

The new wave of mass protests is a historic confirmation of our insistence and puts all those renegades to shame who gave up their solidarity with the Syrian people! As we said in our statement one week ago, "the Assad regime only appears as strong. But in reality, it is weak and totally depends on the support by Putin and the Mullahs. If these protests continue and deepen, they could help to renew the revolutionary offensive to bring down the Assad tyranny."

The masses have made invaluable experience in the past decade of liberation struggle with all its advances and setbacks. This is something to build on and revolutionaries

must relate to such experience.

At this point, we want to emphasise a few lessons which seem to us of particular importance. First, it is crucial that forces of the liberation struggle do not depend on foreign powers. We have seen too many factions who became – against their initial intentions – servants of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye or other states. This was a dangerous development since such dependence inevitable results in subordinating the interests of the liberation struggle to the power-political interests of such states.

Another crucial lesson from the past decade is that pacifism is a dangerous and ridiculous ideology. Sure, armed struggle in itself is no guarantee for victory since without a correct strategy any struggle lacks direction. However, defeat is guaranteed if the masses don't take up arms and organise themselves in popular militias against the repression forces of the regime!

Furthermore, it is highly important that workers and poor peasant organise themselves in popular assemblies where they discuss and decide about the crucial issues of the struggle. It is such assemblies where leaders should be elected who are accountable to the masses and who can, if necessary, be replaced by alternative representatives. Such forms of direct democracy can help to avoid the emergence of authoritarian leaders who later become corrupted or ally themselves with foreign powers.

Finally, it is essential that the most advanced, politically conscious elements of the activists join forces in order to build a revolutionary leadership. Those who share the program of revolutionary overthrow of the Assad tyranny and of its replacement by a free and socialist Syria, should unite in a single organisation. The RCIT looks forward to collaborate with all activists dedicated to such a program!

Victory to the liberation struggle against the Assad tyranny and its imperialist masters!

For an international solidarity movement with the ongoing Syrian Revolution!

For a free Syria, a socialist Syria – a Syria which respects the national and religious rights of all people!

Long live the Arab Revolution!

Unity – Struggle – Victory!

Publications of the RCIT in Arab Language

Defend Niger!

Down with ECOWAS Military Intervention! End the Occupation of West Africa by Imperialist Troops!

Statement of the Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (RSV), Nigerian Section of the RCIT. 8th Aug. 2023

1. The Nigerien junta has announced the closure of Niger's airspace upon the expiration of ECOWAS' ultimatum for Mohamed Bazoum to be reinstated as president and claimed that "*forces of a foreign power are preparing an act of aggression against Niger and its people in coordination with ECOWAS and armed terrorist groups*". ECOWAS chairman, President Tinubu, faces increasing set backs for his largely unpopular plan to invade Niger. The Nigerian Senate has rejected his proposal to deploy Nigeria's military in Niger after a forum of northern senators denounced any military action in Niger. [1] Now Algeria following Chad has joined the list of countries that rejects the invasion of Niger by ECOWAS. All these have caused ECOWAS to stall opting rather for a summit on Thursday but with threats to take "*necessary action*" to bring Bazoum back to power.

2. Nevertheless, there are still ample prospects for an invasion. In 2017, former Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari could not secure the approval of the Senate before he deployed the country's military as part of a 7, 000 strong ECOWAS force to oust Yahaya Jammeh in Gambia after he refused to step down when he lost the December 2016 elections to Adama Barrow. [2] Add to this the backing of Western imperialism especially France which has categorically stated its readiness to openly aid the invasion.

3. Moreover, the Tinubu government, a fragile highly unpopular government, rocked by a sea of domestic crises, is petrified by the possibility of a coup in the country. This has been its motivation to wage war against the Nigerien junta since the news of the deposition of Bazoum broke. The Senegalese government has in like manner pledged to support ECOWAS' invasion of Niger in order to divert attention from the months-long uprising that have unsettled the regime. [3] Macky Sall can also use the pretext of a major war in the region to impose martial law in his country brutally crushing the uprising and extending his stay in office.

4. At this point, it is clear that any military intervention by the ECOWAS in Niger will be the invasion of a semi-colonial country by an imperialist proxy. Hence, revolutionaries must prepare for the military defence of Niger and the defeat of ECOWAS. Socialists must join all efforts to undermine the military intervention of ECOWAS and join the popular campaign for the evacuation of French and US troops from Niger without giving any political approval to the coupists.

5. While the intervention of Russian imperialism and/or its auxiliaries the Wagner Group on the side of Niger is possible as the junta continues attempts to enlist the help of the Kremlin and since it is surrounded by other military regimes like in Mali and Burkina Faso that already harbour Wagner mercenaries, the Tchiani junta is not yet a puppet of Russian imperialism and Wagner mercenaries are yet to play any decisive role in the country. If this happens socialists will be forced to review their stance and call for the defeat of both ECOWAS forces and the Nigerien junta.

6. The RCIT has emphasized that the war in Niger is likely to have a *dual character*, that is, a just war of national defence against imperialist aggression at the site of inter-imperialist power play for global hegemony. To this revolutionaries must apply the *dual tactic* — the defence of Niger from ECOWAS and French imperialism while opposing the strengthening of the hegemony of either Eastern (Russia and China) or Western (US/France) imperialism in the region.

7. This tactic has already been the stance of the RCIT and other Marxist revolutionaries in the Ukraine where Russian imperialism has waged a colonial war against the Ukraine which receives material support from the White House. To give one more example, during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70 the Biafran side received tacit support from French and Portuguese imperialism, but revolutionaries still stood by the secessionists because they never became proxies of the French nor the Portuguese. Again, this is without giving any political support to the reactionary Zelensky government in Ukraine or the Tchiani junta in Niger.

8. As has been said, war in the region is a recipe for crisis and would push all the countries involved nearer the precipice of cataclysm. However, Nigeria should be given special attention here since its dominance in the region puts it in a position to spear-head ECOWAS' attack of Niger. From the on-going Presidential Elections Tribunal to the growing resistance of the masses against Tinubu's anti-people economic attacks to the deepening massacres and secessionist unrest in different parts of the country, the stage seems to be set for the domino effect of coups through the Sahel to finally cascade into Nigeria.

9. The elite of northern Nigeria which is demographically contiguous with the population of Niger have rejected military intervention, [4] a factor that can metamorphose into further crises for the Tinubu regime should he carry on with the invasion as the northern nationalities constitute the largest group in Nigeria's military. Furthermore, there are millions of displaced Nigerians in Niger seeking refuge from terrorist groups who have ravaged the whole of Nigeria's North. The spokesperson of Niger's junta mentioned in his address "*armed terrorists*" as part of the invading foreign force. While this could be a slight to blackmail ECOWAS and the Nigerian Armed Forces it is not totally void of truth since the Nigerian ruling class have for years maintained close affinity with Salafist militias who operate on either side of the border. In Sudan, the Arab militias massacring Dafurians are sometimes indistinguishable from the Rapid Support Forces. Where there is a general tendency for insurgent groups to be strengthened in a war-torn region, whether this will be in tandem with advancing ECOWAS or Nigerian forces remains to be seen.

10. The war could be a kind of repetition of the Iraq-Iran war between 1980-88 where Iraq served as a proxy of

Western imperialism to wage a reactionary war on the new Mullah regime after the overthrow of the Shah in the Iranian revolution of 1979. The aftermath for Saddam's regime was disastrous such that he ventured into annexing Kuwait turning his Western allies against him in what was the beginning of the end of his regime. Tinubu's frenzied rush into the fray may lead to the collapse of his regime or of the power of the APC in Nigeria. The outcome of the war for him maybe exactly what he is trying to forestall — a military takeover. A military takeover in Nigeria can lead to a civil war.

11. Tinubu is likely to use the war as a pretext to further attack democratic freedoms as his tenure has already seen one workers' strike with more to follow (resident doctors embark on a strike come Wednesday). [5] Sall will most likely use the same schema in Senegal. Revolutionaries must monitor closely the situation in each country and the region as a whole and fight for the preservation of democratic freedoms. Socialists must identify the progressive, counterrevolutionary forces at every turn of this dynamic situation and formulate positions accordingly. For now, the main task is to stop the invasion of Niger.

Defend Niger Republic! Down With the France Backed ECOWAS Invasion of Niger! Drive All Imperialist Troops Out of Niger and West Africa! Lift All Sanctions on Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso!

Against US/France and Against Russian Imperialism! For A Workers' and Poor Peasant Government in Niger! For A West Africa Free from Imperialist Subjugation and Capitalist Exploitation!

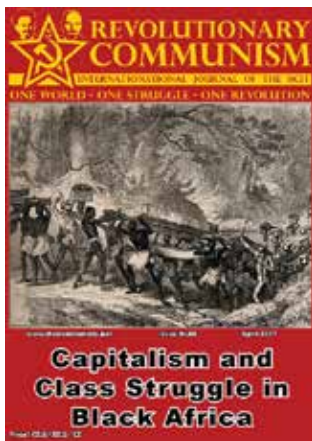
[1] <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/614494-breaking-niger-coup-nigerian-senators-reject-tinubu-request-for-troops-deployment.html> <https://punchng.com/senators-in-stormy-session-reject-military-invasion-of-niger/>

[2] <https://dailypost.ng/2017/01/19/senate-blasts-buhari-sending-military-gambia-without-approval/>

[3] <https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/03/senegal-says-its-troops-will-join-any-ecowas-intervention-in-niger/> <https://guardian.ng/news/senegal-says-its-troops-will-join-any-ecowas-intervention-in-niger/>

[4] <https://dailypost.ng/2023/08/05/military-action-in-niger-will-lead-to-mass-killings-cng-warns/> <https://www.arise.tv/nigerias-northern-senators-reject-military-intervention-in-niger/>

[5] https://newsexpressngr.com/api/news_detail.php?id=199347&title=resident-doctors-to-embark-on-nationwide-protest-wednesday



PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa

An Analysis of Imperialist Exploitation and Oppression and the Perspectives of the Liberation Struggle

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

Introduction * Some Background Notes on Black Africa's Modern History: How Colonial Plunder and Oppression Blocked Independent Development * Popular Struggles against Colonialism Led to Formal Independence * Formal Independence as Disguised Imperialist Dependency * The Reactionary Role of White Settlers * Is Capitalist Black Africa Rising? * Africa in the Grip of Imperialism * China as a new Imperialist Great Power Challenging the Western Domination * The Working Class and the Oppressed * Rising Class Struggle * Key Lessons for a Revolutionary Strategy in Black Africa * Imperialist Domination and Authoritarian Regimes Remain in Place despite Formal Changes * Breaking the Capitalist Chain – The Program of Permanent Revolution * The Revolutionary Struggle against Imperialism * Imperialist Chauvinism and the Anti-Imperialist Patriotism of the Oppressed * The Independence of the Working Class and the Struggle against the Popular Front * The Struggle for Pan-African Unity * The Revolutionary World Party and its African Sections * Footnotes

Niger: Mass Demonstrations against French Imperialism

Tens of thousands call for the expulsion of French troops

By Michael Pröbsting, *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*, 4 September 2023

Tens of thousands have demonstrated over the weekend against the ongoing presence of French troops in Niger. These rallies have lasted for three days and took place outside a military base near the Nigerien capital, Niamey, which houses about 1,500 French soldiers. The protests – with banners like “*French army, leave our country*” – were called by several organizations, most importantly the militant nationalist movement M62. Some demonstrators tried to break the barriers which were set up by the security forces and attempted to force their way into the base.

These protests have been triggered by the support of Paris for former President Mohamed Bazoum, a corrupted lackey of French imperialism who was ousted by a military coup on 26 July. In order to reinstall its puppet, the French Macron government has imposed sanctions on Niger and also declared its full support for military threats of ECOWAS. The latter is a pro-imperialist alliance of West African states led by Nigeria which has announced its determination to invade Niger by military force if the new junta does not resign.

The coup on 26 July was the result of an internal conflict within the regime as Bazoum wanted to oust General Tiani, the long-time commander of the Presidential Guard. However, faced with sanctions and threats by Western powers and regional regimes, the new junta has been forced to mobilize popular support. Hence, it advocates anti-imperialist rhetoric against France, since the country has been politically dominated and economically exploited by Paris for more than a century. In fact, Niger has been first a colony and later, after formal independence in 1960, a semi-colony of French imperialism. Such discourse won the new regime significant popular support since the masses in Niger deeply despise French troops as well as French corporations. The latter effectively control the country's substantial raw material resources – most importantly its uranium mines.

The continuing presence of French troops is particularly provocative as they ignore the fact that the new junta of General Tiani has terminated all treaties which formally allowed French military to stay in the country. Furthermore, Paris has also ignored the expulsion of its ambassador by the junta.

While the new junta tolerates the anti-French demonstrations, they are worried that they might get out its control. Petty-bourgeois nationalist movements like M62 exist already since some years and were brutally suppressed by the former Bazoum regime. Given the anti-imperialist rhetoric of the new junta, these nationalist forces have stated their support for the coup.

Nevertheless, organizations like M62 are not simple stooges of the junta. According to Al Jazeera, the demonstration on 2 September in front of the French military base was scheduled to begin about 3pm local time in the afternoon. However, thousands of demonstrators had already gathered by 10am, “*taking police and security forces by surprise.*” (1) Furthermore, the M62 opposes not only the

presence of the French but of all foreign troops.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* welcomes the popular mass protests in Niger against French imperialism. Since the country has been totally dominated by Paris for a long time and since the Macron government is the driving force behind the threats of military intervention, it is clear that anti-imperialist protests are primarily directed against France.

At the same time, the RCIT warns against any illusions in the junta of General Tiani. The leading forces of the new regime have collaborated for many years with imperialist powers. In addition, while it can currently rely on popular support, it is a bourgeois regime which has neither the desire to break with imperialism nor is it under control of the masses. Hence, socialists need to explain that the workers and poor peasants must rely on their own strength via mass mobilizations. Furthermore, the masses need to build their own, independent councils of action and popular militias. The only government which can open the road to real independence from the Great Powers is a workers and poor peasants government fighting for a socialist and anti-imperialist program.

The RCIT also warns against any attempts of Russia to gain influence in Niger – as it has already done with some success in Mali and Burkina Faso. Russia is no better than France. It is just another imperialist power which has slaughtered the Chechen people and currently occupies parts of Syria and the Ukraine.

We reiterate that socialists have the anti-imperialist duty to defend Niger against sanctions and military threats by ECOWAS, France and other Western powers. In case of an invasion by such forces, the RCIT calls for the military defense of Niger and the defeat of the imperialist aggressors and their proxies. (2)

Footnotes

1) Al Jazeera: Niger coup supporters call for French ambassador, troops to leave country, 2 September 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/2/niger-coup-supporters-call-for-france-ambassador-troops-to-leave-country>

2) We refer readers to several statements and articles on Niger which the RCIT and its section in Nigeria have published in the past weeks. They are compiled on a special website on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-coup-in-niger/>

On the Coup in Gabon

By Raimi Akegbejo, *Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (RSV), Nigerian Section of the RCIT, 4th September 2023*

The coup in Gabon sparked initial excitement amongst the polity including welcoming acclamations from the masses. However, it is now crystal clear that the coup was simply a political gambit by extended relatives of the Bongo family against the continued line of succession which is suspected to pass down from Ali Bongo to Nouredin Bongo his son. Albert Ondo Ossa, Bongo's main opposition candidate in the August 26th elections has alleged that the ouster was the result of an orchestration headed by Pascaline Bongo, Ali Bongo's sister.¹ Experts say "while there were legitimate grievances about the vote and Bongo's rule, his ousting is just a pretext for the junta to claim power for themselves ... "The timing of the coup, following the announcement of the implausible electoral results, and the speed with which the junta is moving suggests this was planned in advance," Joseph Siegle, director of research at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, said. "While there are many legitimate grievances about the vote and Bongo's rule, that has little to do with the coup attempt in Gabon. Raising those grievances is just a smokescreen."²

The motivation for the ouster is what you would expect from a dynasty whose rivals vie for more power and influence in which case all the cards are on the table:

*"Protesters set fire to the country's Parliament building after his reelection in 2016. Even then his main rival was his former brother-in-law, Jean Ping, a half-Chinese diplomat who recently held high ranking posts within the elder Bongo's cabinet. Ping had two children with Omar's daughter Pascaline, also a government minister. Many questioned Bongo's fitness to lead after a serious stroke in 2018. He wasn't seen publicly for nearly a year but he began making political changes after a failed coup attempt in 2019. He sacked his sister, Pascaline, from her role as high-representative to the head of state, and side-lined his half brother Frederic Bongo as head of state to military attache in South Africa. Bruce Laccruche Alianga, a high ranking French Gabonese was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison in 2021 in what Bongo framed as a crackdown on corruption. "Laccruche Alihanga used to be a very influential chief of staff but because he reportedly showed too much ambition during Ali Bongo's recovery period he was charged over corruption allegations and put in jail", explained Bovcon. After Laccruche's removal Bongo appointed his eldest son Nouredin as his aid with the title of coordinator of presidential affairs. The Bongo family stayed resilient to the military coups happening in West Africa by buying off opponents and moving relatives into strategic positions. Yet Bongo's attempt to coup-proof his cabinet might have helped hand power to Nguema. In 2009 when Bongo took over from his father he had dismissed Nguema was an assistant to the late president. But following the coup attempt Nguema, who had been serving as an attache to the Gabonese embassies in Morocco and Senegal was brought back and promoted to head of the Republican Guard. ... "Part of the Bongo clan is happy with the coup and maybe understood the wisdom of not having someone with the surname Bongo too closely involved"."*³

Bongo might also have strayed with his apparent veering away from French imperialism (He brokered the admission of Gabon into the British Commonwealth). Gabon is an oil rich country and "a member of the Opec oil cartel, with a production of 181,000 barrels of crude a day, making it the

*eight-largest producer of oil in sub-Saharan Africa". So that its small population of 2.5 million people affords it one of the top tier positions in the GDP per capita list for African countries yet "nearly 40% of Gabonese aged 15-24 were out of work in 2020, according to the World Bank."*⁴

Socialists oppose the coup; it is the product of in-fighting between a reactionary ruling dynasty that has had its grip on the Gabonese people for 56 years. Given the popular resentment towards the perennial rule of the Bongos and the neo-colonial regime they represent coupled with the outbreak of coups spreading throughout the continent. The different filial groups of the same dynasty saw the opportunity to eliminate a target. We also oppose any "return to democracy" where Ali Bongo — the utterly corrupt lackey of Western imperialism — is reinstated as president.

Many Pan-Africanists unwittingly heap praise on the coup-plotters, like other members of the intelligentsia, career activists, and mainstream media they declare the end of the Bongo dynasty. Some even go as far as advocating for new coups in other African countries and paint the coups as "revolution" etc. This is due to the chronic susceptibility of this milieu to populism as a result of their undying attachment to petty-bourgeois orientation which can take many forms. For the Pan-Africanists it is the preservation of a colonial template disguised as "unity" even though they claim to fight for freedom for the continent. Such glamorization of the coup leaves a dangerous precedent as the civil war in Sudan that has led to the genocide of the people of Dafur demonstrates. The coups can lead to wars whether through a fall out between the plotters or when other ruling class factions resist. To add another example to this category, the junta in Burkina Faso overthrew General Damiba only months after he staged his own coup. In cases where the legitimate resistance of the masses ensues the past praise of the previous coups can lead to confusion. Worse still, this can lead to a fruitless dissipation of the revolutionary energy of the masses. No, brothers and sisters, the Bongo dynasty is not dead, it has only shape-shifted.

Despite the suspension of Gabon by the African Union, Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and international condemnation by the World Powers, the Gabon coup lacks any revolutionary content or potential unlike the coups that preceded it in Niger, Mali and other parts of West Africa that bore or at least bolstered hostile sentiments against Western imperialism. By executing the coup minutes after the election results were announced, analysts have accused the coupists of preempting a popular revolt which was to be more massive than that of the post-2016 elections. Thus, the coup was not only reactionary but also counter-revolutionary.

The coup in Gabon was the indirect result of armed insurgency in other African countries and this shows that the coups are bound to spread irrespective of the disparities in African states which are basically neo-colonies. The comprador bourgeoisie know it and are spooked by this reality so they frantically find ways to shore up their power. That is why Paul Biya in Cameroon and Paul Kagame in Rwanda have retired senior military officers replacing

them with those who should be loyalists yet all this is an attempt in futility since, for example, General Nguema was reappointed as head of the praetorian guard by Bongo to avert future coups after the failed coup of 2019. The spread of military takeover across the continent is not found in the military brass but the decay of the capitalist system which is reflected as the decline of the hegemony of US/Western imperialism cum liberal capitalism and the rise of Russian/Chinese imperialism cum bonapartist capitalism.

Of course, this is only the political overview of the current and rather perpetual capitalist decay, the economic facet is national insolvency; inflation and over the roof levels of unemployment. Under such vapid conditions the lackeys of imperialism in the semi-colonial countries like the countries of Africa must employ more brute force and see to the acute shrinking of the democratic space if the vacuum pump system which siphons mineral, natural and even human resources to the imperialist countries must remain functional. At any rate then, autocratic administrations become normalised preparing grounds for mass complaisance in the advent of a military coup.

Moreso, these shifts in imperialist influence and capitalist models give the varying factions of the comprador bourgeoisie — the lackeys of imperialism — more room to maneuver against their rivals as there now exists new imperialist powers — Russia and China — who want to trade backing any local regime for increased geopolitical influence. The push-back of French/Western imperialism against the coup plotters in Gabon is bound to be mild since, first and foremost, it does not have any revolutionary prospects but most importantly because they wish not to scare away their stooges into the arms of their imperialist rivals like the example of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger show. This has been the main reason the US State Department delayed characterising the coup in Niger has a military takeover.

Nguema may preside over a short transition period and transfer power to another member of the family inner circle that covertly backed the coup. Or he may remain the

face of the dynasty for a more protracted period. In one of our recent statements on the Niger coup “socialists must identify the progressive, counterrevolutionary forces at every turn of this dynamic situation and formulate positions accordingly. For now the main task is to stop the invasion of Niger.”⁵ In Gabon revolutionaries must begin a campaign for the removal of the 400 French troops in the country. They must show solidarity with the protests for French, UN and all imperialist troops to leave Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo (which has been bloodily put down) and for their military bases to be closed.

We call for a campaign to shut down all operations of French and all multinationals in Gabon coupled with the nationalisation of the mining sectors of the country under public control. Socialists must take the bull by the horn now and join the wave of anti-imperialist campaigns going on across the continent. If neo-colonialism must end in Africa, its mother capitalism must die. For this we advocate for a workers and poor peasant government which will fight for the liberation of African nations and genuine independence of its people as steps towards the cause of complete decolonisation.

[1] <https://apnews.com/article/gabon-mutiny-president-bongo-bf34a2f16ab2a3a406270b3a735ef78f>

[2] ‘Family affair’: Gabon opposition lambasts coup, claims election victory <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/1/family-affair-gabon-opposition-lambasts-coup-claims-election-victory>

[3] Has Gabon’s ‘all-powerful’ Bongo dynasty really lost its 55-year grip? <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/9/1/has-gabons-all-powerful-bongo-dynasty-really-lost-its-55-year-grip>

[4] <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/30/gabon-coup-military-takeover-gabonese-election-disputed>

[5] See on this: Defend Niger! Down With ECOWAS Military Intervention! End the Occupation of West Africa by Imperialist Troops! Statement of the Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (RSV), Nigerian Section of the RCIT. 8th Aug. 2023. <https://communism4africa.wordpress.com/2023/08/08/defend-niger/>



RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

Adopted at the 2nd World Congress of the RCIT in November 2017

Introduction * Foreign Exploiters – Out of Africa! * The Wealth to Those Who Create It! Economic Freedom Now! * Down with the Capitalist Dictatorships and Corrupt Pseudo-Democracies! * Organize the Workers and Oppressed for the Mass Struggle! * For a Government of Workers and Poor Peasants! For a Socialist Revolution! * For Pan-African Unity! For the United Socialist States of Africa! * For a United Front of Struggle! Overcome the Crisis of Leadership – Build a Revolutionary Party Nationally and Internationally! * Appendix

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

United States: Solidarity with the Striking Autoworkers!

For an all-out strike! Don't trust the UAW bureaucracy - organise the rank & file workers!

Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19 September 2023

1. Since midnight on September 14, workers at the Big Three automakers – General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis – have been on strike at targeted locations. All in all, the strike involves 146,000 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) – one of the most powerful trade unions in the United States.

2. The workers demand a new contract which include important improvements in job security, restoring cost-of-living adjustments, which tie wages to inflation, or the introduction of a 32-hour workweek at 40 hours' pay. Most importantly, the union demands that since the multimillionaire CEOs of GM, Ford and Stellantis have gotten an average raise of 40% of their incomes over the past four years, so should the autoworkers see an increase of their wages by 46% over the course of the four-year contract. Such a wage increase is all the more urgent since wages haven't kept up with inflation in the last 20 years and, in many cases, went backwards to \$10 an hour.

3. The UAW strike could become one of the most important working-class actions in recent years. This is the case because the UAW is one of the country's strongest unions and because the auto industry is a key sector of the U.S. economy, representing 3% of the nearly \$26 trillion

GDP.

4. The new UAW leadership around President Shawn Fain, which succeeded two corrupted former leadership cliques, presents itself as militant and rank & file-orientated. However, it is already clear that it tries to avoid militant tactics based on the mobilization of the full power of the working class. Rather than launching an all-out strike of all its members, the union bureaucracy has opted to target only three factories for now.

5. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) stands in full solidarity with the U.S. autoworkers and its legitimate demands. It is crucial to transform the strike into an all-out-strike in order to bring the bosses to their knees. Workers should not trust the trade union leadership and build independent strike committees in all workplaces involved. Such rank & file committees should meet regularly and discuss about the course of the strike. They should elect delegates to coordinate their activities. They should control the trade union leadership, force it to take militant actions or, if necessary, take the struggle in their own hands.

International Bureau of the RCIT



Publications of the RCIT

Marxism and Artificial Intelligence

What Is AI? Who benefits?

A Critical Marxist Approach

By Medina Avdagić and Michael Pröbsting, June 2023

- 1) Artificial Intelligence: A Leviathan Monster Serving the Ruling Class (Theses)
- 2) Why ChatGPT and similar technologies are more dangerous than you might think
- 3) Artificial Intelligence and the Marxist Understanding of Productive Forces

*Introduction * An example of pseudo-Marxist AI advocacy * What are productive forces? * Commodity fetishism and technology fetishism * The relationship between productive forces and the relations of productions * Transformation of productive forces into destructive forces * Consequences of AI for the capitalist economy * The liberation of productive forces from the fetters of obsolete capitalist relations of production – what does this mean? * Productive forces, alienation and way of life under capitalism * Conclusions * Footnotes*

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

War Danger on the Korean Peninsula

**Defend North Korea against the imperialist powers U.S., Japan and South Korea!
Down with the inter-imperialist rivalry between Western powers, China and Russia!
No political support for the Stalinist-capitalist Kim Regime!**

Statement of the RCIT and the Workers' Revolutionary Party (Preparation Group) [RCIT Section in South Korea], 17.8.2023

1. War danger is increasing on the Korean Peninsula. Years of draconic sanctions against North Korea imposed by the United Nations – an imperialist institution dominated by Great Powers – have resulted in food shortage and dire living conditions of the population. The South Korean government expressed its desire in January this year to get nuclear weapons. In April, South Korean President Yoon and U.S. President Joe Biden announced the “Washington Declaration”. This agreement involves the creation of an advisory group on issues in the nuclear sphere and greater frequency of the appearance of American strategic weapons, as well as the deployment of US nuclear-armed submarines to South Korea – reintroducing US nuclear weapons to South Korea for the first time in more than 40 years. In addition, the U.S. has several military bases in South Korea – including the THAAD missile defense system – and deploys 28,000 troops on its soil.

2. In response, North Korea is also advancing its military capabilities. Within the first five months of 2023, the country has launched six short-range ballistic missile tests, three cruise missile tests and three intercontinental ballistic missile tests. The country already possesses about 30 nuclear warheads.

3. These developments go hand in hand with an acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers. Washington works hard on creating a trilateral alliance with Japan and South Korea directed not only against North Korea but also, and even more importantly, against China (and Russia). To that effect, these three states have expanded their military exercises in the recent period. Add to this Washington's efforts to strengthen its military presence in the region via deepening its alliances with Taiwan and the Philippines as well its regular naval patrols close to China's coast.

4. Likewise, China and Russia – the new Eastern imperialist powers – have intensified their collaboration in the recent period. In early August, a combined naval patrol of 11 Chinese and Russian warships operated near Alaska – the largest such flotilla to approach US territory. In addition, China and Russia have deepened their ties with the North Korean regime. The three-day state visit in late July by Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu to Pyongyang is the first-ever such high-level visit from Moscow in the post-Soviet era. The Putin regime – engaged in

a reactionary war of aggression against the Ukraine – is looking for arms supplies since North Korea's Soviet-style weapons and munitions are compatible with the Russian army's systems. And the recent visit by Li Hongzhong, vice chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, signalled that Russia and China “stand close” to North Korea – as the *Global Times*, Beijing English-language mouthpiece, emphasised.

5. These tensions between North and South Korea respectively between the Great Powers have provoked the greatest war danger in Northeast Asia since the Korea War in 1950-53 – a devastating conflict which resulted in 2-3 million civilian deaths and the wholesale destruction of Korean cities (in particular those in the North which faced large-scale bombardment by the U.S. Air Force, including 32,557 tons of napalm).

6. In order to determine the character of a possible military conflict on the Korean Peninsula, Marxists need to examine the *class character of all parties involved and by the totality of their interests as they evolve in the course of the war*. The RCIT and the Workers' Revolutionary Party (Preparation Group) [RCIT Section in South Korea] have explained in a number of documents that *U.S., China, Japan and Russia are imperialist Great Powers*. Hence, in any conflict between these powers, we advocate a *revolutionary defeatist* position against all of them since all Great Powers are enemies of the workers and oppressed. This means that socialists must equally oppose all imperialist Great Powers and reject all forms of sanctions, protectionism and imperialist armament.

7. Contrary to the view of various Stalinists, South Korea is not a “semi-colonial country oppressed by the U.S.” While Seoul is certainly a junior partner to Washington (similar to various Western European imperialist states), it is an *imperialist state in its own rights*. As the RCIT and WRP-PG have explained, South Korea's economy is the fourth-largest in Asia and the 12th largest in the world. Its *chaebols* play a prominent role among the worlds' leading corporations (only beaten by countries like the U.S., China, Japan or Germany). President Yoon's drive to militarism does not result from a reluctant subordination to Biden's dictates but is primarily motivated by Seoul's desire to build South Korea as a self-reliant imperialist power not only in economic but also in military terms. In

Comunismo Revolucionario
Spanish-language Journal of the RCIT

Order the journal via our contact address: rcit@thecommunists.net

fact, Yoon comments about his country acquiring nuclear weapons, his foreign policy concept of making South Korea a “global pivotal state”, his “Strategy for Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region” – all these reflects the desire of Seoul to make South Korea a strong political and military imperialist power.

8. In contrast, North Korea is a former Stalinist degenerated workers state which has transformed into a *capitalist semi-colony*. While it possesses a substantial military force, it is a poor country in social and economic terms. Contrary to the so-called “national liberation” tendency – a Stalinist current in South Korea which supports the North Korean regime – the dictatorship of Kim Jong Un has nothing to do with socialism. It is a Stalinist-capitalist regime which bases itself on the *Donju* – the local capitalist class – and the military bureaucracy. While it has long-standing relations with China and Russia, it would be mistaken to view North Korea simply as their “proxy”. Throughout its history Pyongyang has repeatedly demonstrated its independence, including from Moscow and Beijing.

9. While socialists take a revolutionary defeatist position against all Great Powers in an inter-imperialist conflict, *we defend North Korea in a conflict with South Korea and/or the U.S.* However, such a stance *does not imply any political support* for the Stalinist-capitalist Kim Regime. It is likely that in such a conflict, Pyongyang would receive military aid from Russia and China. However, this does not make it automatically a “proxy” of Beijing and Moscow. There have been a number of conflicts where a (semi-)colonial country waging a national liberation struggle

against an imperialist state received aid from one or several Great Powers (e.g. German aid for Irish rebels in 1914-18, U.S. aid for China during its war with Japan in 1937-45, Western aid for the Ukraine in its war against Russia since February 2022). Of course, in the context of an all-out war between the Western and Eastern imperialist power, a conflict on the Korean Peninsula could become a subordinated element and in such a case socialists might be obligated to apply a general defeatist position also in this region (similar to the situation during World War I where the Austrian war against Serbia was a subordinated element).

10. It is crucial for socialists to recognise that capitalism in its historic period of decay provokes acceleration of three lines of contradictions – the struggle between the working class and the popular masses against the bourgeoisie, the struggle of (semi-)colonial countries against imperialist domination and the conflict between imperialist powers. These distinct lines of contradictions often overlap with each other but are not identical. Socialists who ignore one of these lines of contradictions, who fail to take the side of the oppressed or who lend support to one or the other imperialist power are betraying the cause of the proletarian liberation struggle!

11. The RCIT and the WRP-PG state that there can be no lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula without the destruction of all imperialist Great Powers and without the overthrow of the ruling class in North as well as in the South via a socialist revolution of the working class and the oppressed. *For the revolutionary unification of the Korean peninsula! For a Korean Workers’ and Peasant Republic!*

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

China - Philippines - US: The Conflict on the Ayungin Shoal and Inter-Imperialist Rivalry

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 11 August 2023

1. Tensions between China and the Philippines have significantly increased in the past days. On 6 August 2023, Chinese Coast Guard used water cannon to block a Philippine military boat from delivering supplies to troops garrisoned on a decommissioned warship grounded on the Ayungin Shoal. The ship – the BRP *Sierra Madre* – was grounded by the Philippines navy in 1999 as an outpost with a small garrison. In response, the Philippines summoned Beijing's envoy in Manila to lodge a formal protest and a spokesman for the Philippine National Security Council said that “*the Philippines will never abandon our post in Ayungin Shoal.*” Washington stated its support for the Philippines' position.

2. On the other hand, China considers the Philippines' actions as “*illegal*” as it claims that the shoal – which Beijing calls Ren'ai Reef – is part of China's Nansha Islands. It has urged the Philippines to immediately tow away the grounded ship. *Global Times* – the English-language mouthpiece of the Stalinist-capitalist regime – quoted a military expert saying that “*China reserves the right to remove the grounded warship.*”

3. The Ayungin Shoal is an atoll in the eastern part of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. It is currently controlled by the Philippines. However, China lay claim to all the Spratly Islands and has occupied a number of these in the past decades, despite the fact that the area lies off the coasts of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. (See Map 1 below) Beijing has also turned seven of the reefs in the South China Sea into missile-protected military bases.

4. From the point of view of national rights, there is no doubt that the Ayungin Shoal are part of the Philippines and not of China. It is located about 200 km from the Philippine island of Palawan and more than 1,000 km from China's nearest major landmass of Hainan Island. (Usually, the area of the sea in which a sovereign state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources – the “*Exclusive Economic Zone*” – stretches to 200 nautical miles (370 km) from the coast of the state in question.)

5. In fact, China's position is a result of its so-called “*Nine-dash line*” which claims control of nearly the whole South China Sea with all the islands in it. Beijing justifies its claims referring to historical records dating to the Xia dynasty, nearly 4,000 years ago. (Such a pseudo-historic approach would allow Iceland to lay claim on parts of North America, Mongolia on large parts of Western Asia and Eastern Europe or Muslim countries on parts of Spain, Portugal and Italy) This position has also been supported by Taiwan since its foundation by the reactionary Kuomintang dictatorship after World War II. Thereby, Beijing (and Taipei) effectively denies the rights of all other neighbouring countries like the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Brunei. (See Map 2 below) In other words, China's claims on the Ayungin Shoal are a result of its attempts to expand its spheres of influence as an imperialist Great Power.

6. However, the conflict about the Ayungin Shoal

respectively the Spratly Islands is overshadowed by the accelerating rivalry between the two largest imperialist powers – China and the U.S. Control of the South China Sea is essential for both since it is the most important maritime route for world trade. 60% of global maritime trade and more than 22% of total global trade passes through the South China Sea.

7. Furthermore, the Philippines are the closest ally of the U.S. in Southeast Asia (aside from Taiwan) since many decades. It is home of several U.S. military bases, and the Pentagon has close and long-standing ties with the Philippine army under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. In May 2023, the US made an explicit commitment to defend the Philippines if it came under attack in the South China Sea. Hence, it is clear that the Philippines tough approach against Beijing is coordinated with Washington and is based on the knowledge that the U.S. would support it in any confrontation with Chinese forces.

8. While the Philippines are – in contrast to the U.S. and China – a capitalist semi-colony, it is clear that in this conflict, it acts as a stooge of U.S. imperialism. Therefore, the conflict about the Spratly Islands is part of the rivalry between imperialist Great Powers in which the Philippines do not play an independent role.

9. In any confrontation – between the U.S. (and its allies) and China or between China and a proxy of the U.S. (like the Philippines) – socialists can not support either camp. Hence, the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* advocates a *revolutionary defeatist* position on both sides. This means that socialists must equally oppose all imperialist Great Powers and their proxies. They need to fight against all forms of imperialist chauvinism and militarism, against all forms of sanctions, protectionism and imperialist armament. They must educate the workers vanguard to identify “*their*” imperialist state (as well as all others) as the main enemy. In case of a war between the Great Powers, revolutionaries are obligated to follow the principles of Lenin and Liebknecht expressed in the famous slogans “*The main enemy is at home*” and “*Transform the imperialist war into a civil war against the ruling class*”.

10. The RCIT calls all authentic socialists to unite in the struggle against all imperialist powers on the basis of the program of revolutionary defeatism. Socialists need to resolutely oppose any form of political adaption by “*progressive*” parties to one or the other imperialist power. It is urgent to jointly build a new *Revolutionary World Party* which combats the reactionary influence of social-imperialist supporters of one or another Great Power within the workers and popular mass organizations.

*Down with Great Power chauvinism and warmongering!
Expel all U.S. forces from the Philippines! No to China's occupation of the Spratly Islands and its building of military bases!
In any conflict between the China and the Philippines resp. the U.S. – no support for either camp!*

International Bureau of the RCIT



China and Taiwan Malaysia Vietnam Brunei Philippines



