



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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## The Global Meaning of the Niger Conflict in West Africa

Wages, Productivity & Rate of Exploitation

Ukraine War: Secret Negotiations between U.S. & Russia

## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.94, September 2023

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Picture on the cover: Senegalese armed forces prepare for ECOWAS military intervention in Gambia in January 2017  
(Source: [www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vostok-2018\\_military\\_manoeuvres\\_\(2018-09-13\)\\_23.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vostok-2018_military_manoeuvres_(2018-09-13)_23.jpg))

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# Wages, Productivity and the Rate of Exploitation: Some Concrete Examples

## Revealing figures in the latest edition of the ILO's "Global Wage Report"

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

The latest edition of the ILO's *Global Wage Report* contains a number of interesting figures which demonstrate how the bosses are offloading the consequences of the capitalist crisis on the shoulders of the working class. The study shows, among others, that the real wages are more or less stagnating while the capitalists force the workers to produce more and more commodities.<sup>1</sup>

Karl Marx explained in *Capital* Vol. 1 that the working day of a worker can basically be divided in two parts. One portion which he calls "necessary labour time" is "that portion of the working day during that portion of his day's labour in which he produces the value of his labour power." This is the labour time necessary to create the equivalent to buy food, pay the rent etc. – in other words to reproduce the living conditions of the workers and his or her family.

The other portion of the working day which Marx calls "surplus labour time" is that portion of the working day in which the worker "expends labour power; but his labour, being no longer necessary labour, he creates no value for himself. He creates surplus value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of a creation out of nothing."<sup>2</sup>

From this, Marx concluded that the relationship between necessary labour and surplus labour creates the basis for the "rate of surplus value", i.e. it reflects the share which the capitalist can appropriate from the worker. "Since, on the one hand, the values of the variable capital and of the labour power purchased by that capital are equal, and the value of this labour power determines the necessary portion of the working day; and since, on the other hand, the surplus value is determined by the surplus portion of the working day, it follows that surplus value bears the same ratio to variable capital, that surplus labour does to necessary labour, or in other words, the rate of surplus value"<sup>3</sup>

From this follows that such relationship between neces-

sary labour and surplus labour reflects the degree of capitalist exploitation. "The rate of surplus value is therefore an exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, or of the labourer by the capitalist."<sup>4</sup>

### Stagnation of wages

It is hardly surprising that bourgeois economists are not interested in producing statistics which allow precise insight in the economic process of capitalist exploitation. However, this does not mean that such statistics are not useful to provide an understanding of the fundamental dynamic of capitalist economy.

The above-mentioned ILO report is useful to show the dire situation of the global working class. The authors emphasise that the economic slump in 2020 (which they wrongly attribute to the COVID-19 pandemic) destroyed many jobs. "According to ILO estimates, although the COVID-19 crisis destroyed many wage and salaried jobs during the first full year of the pandemic, with global wage employment dropping from 1.75 billion in 2019 to 1.69 billion in 2020."

As a result, in nearly all countries around the world, wages have basically stagnated in the past years since the beginning of the Great Depression in late 1929.<sup>5</sup> In Table 1 we show the average real monthly wage growth for global wage labourers both with as well as without China.

It is important to note that these figures do not fully reflect the development of real wages for the mass of the global proletariat. This is for several reasons. First, the ILO includes into the category of wage labourers not only the working class but also sectors which are part of the waged middle class.

Secondly, such average figures do not reflect the increasing inequality within the wage earners. As we pointed

**Table 1. Annual Average Real Monthly Wage Growth, Global, 2020-22 (in Percentage)<sup>7</sup>**

	2020	2021	2022
Global	1.5%	1.8%	-0.9%
Global (without China)	0.9%	0.9%	-1.4%

**Table 2. Annual Average Real Wage Growth, by Region, 2020-22 (in Percentage)<sup>8</sup>**

Region	2020	2021	2022
Africa	-10.5%	-1.4%	-0.5%
Arab States	0.8%	0.5%	1.2%
Eastern Europe	4.0%	3.3%	-3.3%
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	0.0%	0.9%	-1.9%
Northern America	4.3%	0.0%	-3.2%
Asia and Pacific	1.0%	3.5%	1.3%
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.3%	-1.4%	-1.7%

out somewhere else, there is an increasing gap between the upper strata of the working class – the privileged and bribed strata of the *labor aristocracy* – and the mass of the proletariat.<sup>6</sup> Still, however, these figures reflect a clear general dynamic – the impoverishment of the world working class.

In Table 2 we show the dynamic of real wage growth in 2020-22 in various regions. While certain differences exist – the massive decline in workers income in Africa is particularly striking – there is a general trend of stagnation of even decline.

### The gap between productivity and real wages in increasing

The ILO study also provides interesting figures which helps to get an understanding of the long-term development of the degree of exploitation of the working class. Concretely, the authors show data for the years 1999-2022 which compare the development of labour productivity with that of real wages.

Unfortunately, the ILO presents such figures only for the so-called “high-income countries” which are mostly imperialist countries in Europe, North America, Japan, South Korea and Australia. Hence, the report leaves out that part of the world where the large majority of the global working class is living – China and the semi-colonial countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

However, even if the data are limited to the working class living in the imperialist countries, they provide a useful indicator of the increasing rate of exploitation. Concretely, the authors compare the development the labour productivity – which they calculate as GDP (the mainstream

category for annual output) per worker – with that of real wages. They take the year 1999 as the starting point (1999 = 100). Again, one needs to take into account the limitations of these categories which we already pointed out above.

As Figure 1 shows, the gap between labour productivity and real wages has continuously increased since 1999. The ILO states “that, in real terms, labour productivity has increased more rapidly than wages over the past 22 years, with the former growing by 1.2 per cent annually and the latter by around 0.6 per cent annually.”

This shows that average wages of workers in the imperialist countries increased only by meagre 0.6% per annum since the beginning of the century.

Furthermore, this shows that workers have produced an additional amount of capitalist value of which they received compensation only for half of it. The other half of this additional value was appropriated by the capitalists which they partly used for business expenditures and partly for their personal luxury. These figures provide a genuine impression about the massive increase of capitalist exploitation in the past quarter of a century!

Add to all this that workers represent the overwhelming majority of people in the labour process while the capitalists are only a numerically insignificant minority (usually only 1-3%). Still, this extremely tiny minority of parasites appropriates as much additional value as all workers in total!

Such process of exploitation will continue as long as the capitalists own the means of production. Hence, the working class must expropriate them and replace the profit system with that of a democratically planned economy in the service of the society.

**Figure 1. Average Real Wages and Labour Productivity in High-Income Countries, 1999-2022 (1999 = 100)**<sup>9</sup>





## Footnotes

1 Global Wage Report 2022–23: The impact of inflation and COVID-19 on wages and purchasing power. Geneva: International Labour Office, 2022. All figures and quotes are from this report if not indicated otherwise.

2 Karl Marx: Capital. A Critique of Political Economy, Vol.1, in: MECW Vol. 35, p. 226

3 Ibid, p. 227

4 Ibid

5 The RCIT has analysed the crisis of the capitalist world economy in much detail. The latest documents are compiled on a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-great-depression/>. See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: “Markets are wild”: Banks and Stock Markets Teeter on the Brink. Some notes on the nature of the crisis and its political and economic consequences, 15 March 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/banks-and-stock-markets-teeter-on-the-brink/>; by the same author: World Economy: “The Next Decade Will Be Very Painful”. A revealing internal memorandum by China’s Huawei Founder Ren Zhengfei on the Great Depression, 26 August 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/world-economy-the-next-decade-will-be-very-painful/>; World Economy: It’s Official – the Recession has Begun, 30 July 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/world-economy-it-s-official-the-recession-has-begun/>; World Economy: The Second Slump Has Begun, 28 November 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/world-economy-the-second-slump-has-begun/>; World Economy: Heading towards a Second Slump? 2 October 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/world-economy-heading-towards-a-second-slump/>; see Chapter I and II in RCIT: World Perspectives 2021-22: Entering a Pre-Revolu-

tionary Global Situation, 22 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2021-22/>; see Chapter I and II in Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>; by the same author: Another Great Recession of the Capitalist World Economy Has Begun. The economic crisis is an important factor in the current dramatic shift in the world situation, 19 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/another-great-recession-of-the-capitalist-world-economy-hasbegun/>.

6 On the RCIT’s analysis of the labor aristocracy see e.g. chapter III in Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today. The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the present Period, RCIT Books, Vienna 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/book-united-front/>; by the same author: 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/>, pp. 180-182; Income Inequality Within the Working Class – Globally and in China. New data from the ILO report confirms the Marxist thesis on the labor aristocracy, 13 July 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/income-inequality-within-the-working-class-globally-and-in-china/>.

7 ILO: Global Wage Report 2022–23, p. 37

8 Ibid, pp. 45-46

9 Ibid, p. 53

## Books of the RCIT

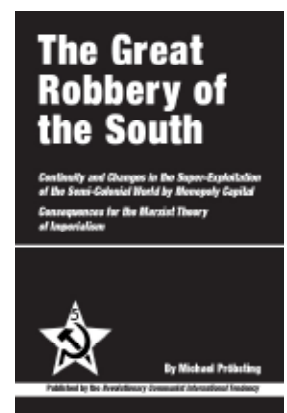
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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



# 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**

*By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 31 July 2023*

A few weeks ago, we reported about secret negotiations between the U.S. and Russia with the goal to pacify the Ukraine War. The two camps hope to strike a deal Powers and impose it on the Ukrainian people. These negotiations involve, from the Russian side, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and other leading foreign policy experts close to Putin; the U.S. negotiation team side, which is closely coordinating with the Biden Administration, includes former high-ranking diplomats and experts like Richard Haass, Charles Kupchan, Thomas Graham and others. <sup>1</sup>

Some days ago, the *Moscow Times* published an article in which "a former U.S. official directly involved in the talks" reports about the current state of these secret negotiations. The *Moscow Times* is an independent, reputable English- and Russian-speaking online newsletter with long-standing relations with leading Western publications like the *International Herald Tribune*. It has been banned from publishing in Russia after the beginning of Putin's invasion of the Ukraine. <sup>2</sup>

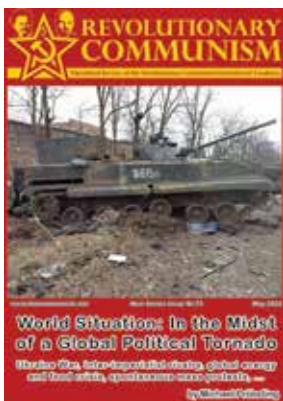
For these reasons, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the newspaper's report. Of course, one has to be clear about the character of such revelations. If an official agrees to speak to the media on condition of anonymity, he or she usually does not only provide some insider information (which can be later denied if necessary) but also attempts to create an impression in public (by presenting the other

side as weaker or more insecure as it is). Still, such insider reports can be useful to get a better picture.

According to this participant of the U.S. negotiation team, "meetings between the U.S. and officials in the Kremlin have been taking place at least twice a month." He stressed that the American side takes Russia seriously as a Great Power and wants to find a modus vivendi. "It was here that we made clear that the U.S. was prepared to work constructively with Russian national security concerns. (...) An attempt to isolate and cripple Russia to the point of humiliation or collapse would make negotiating almost impossible."

The American negotiator expounded the policy which is the majority point of view of the ruling class: that Washington's policy (for the foreseeable future) is not to destroy its Eastern rival (since this is an impossible goal). The White House rather wants to weaken Russia but, at the same time, engage it in global relations as a Great Power rival and partner. "In fact, we emphasized that the U.S. needs, and will continue to need, a strong enough Russia to create stability along its periphery. The U.S. wants a Russia with strategic autonomy in order for the U.S. to advance diplomatic opportunities in Central Asia. We in the U.S. have to recognize that total victory in Europe could harm our interests in other areas of the world. Russian power is not necessarily a bad thing." <sup>3</sup>

By recognizing Russia as an important Great Power, the White House hopes to weaken the Kremlin's strategic alliance with China – the most important imperialist rival of



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

### 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*

*by Michael Pröbsting, April 2022*

**Introduction \* On the Causes and the Nature of the Ukraine War \* The patriotic resistance of the Ukrainian people which Putin didn't expect \* Continuity and transformation of the bonapartist Putin regime \* On the dramatic acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry \* A massive shift in the foreign policy of U.S. imperialism \* Challenges of EU imperialism \* Cracks in the capitalist world economy \* Russia's resilience against Western sanctions \* Who blinks first? \* The threat to the global financial order dominated by the US-Dollar \* At the beginning of a new global wave of mass uprisings \* The crisis of revolutionary leadership and the struggle against social-imperialism, social-pacifism and imperialist economism \* Conclusions \* Footnotes**

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format*

the U.S. In order to achieve this, the Biden Administration must be ready to make certain concessions since *“suffering a humiliating defeat is not an option for these [Russian, Ed.] guys.”*

To advance the institutionalisation of such bargaining policy between the Great Powers, Washington proposes the creation of several negotiation channels with the one between the U.S. and Russia as the most important *“as these are the only two countries powerful enough to negotiate security in Europe”*. *“We suggested setting up a number of diplomatic channels in order to satisfy the desires of all the parties involved. There firstly needs to be a serious U.S.-Russia channel, as these are the only two countries powerful enough to negotiate security in Europe. There must of course be a channel between Ukraine and Russia, another between Russia and the EU; and one between Russia and the Global South.”*

The official is aware that such an approach might provoke resentment among the Ukraine as well as European governments. Hence, he diplomatically adds: *“This does not mean we are abandoning Ukraine or Europe. Rather, we want to find ways of guaranteeing Ukraine’s independence while bringing Russia back as a more creative player in European security.”*

However, as we have warned for some time, the White House is fully prepared to accept Russia’s occupation of Ukrainian territory in order to pacify the war. The *Moscow Times* reports: *“During the discussions, it became evident that Ukraine’s chances of regaining its occupied territories were extremely slim. Crimea remains a particularly contentious issue, as Ukraine asserts its intent to reclaim the region which Russia annexed in 2014. “If Russia thought it might lose Crimea,” the ex-official said, “it would almost certainly resort to [using] tactical nuclear weapons.” He noted that Washington had also offered to help conduct fair referendums in the Russian-occupied territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, in which residents would vote on whether they wished to be part of Ukraine or Russia. Russia apparently declined this offer.”*

Michael McFaul, a former U.S. Ambassador to Russia who leans rather to the hard-core cold warriors, commented in outrage about such concessions concerning Ukrainian territory *“that is a Putin position!”*<sup>4</sup> However, as a former diplomat McFaul should be accustomed to the thoroughly hypocritical and cynical nature of bourgeois diplomacy!

Despite such concessions, the Kremlin – according to the “former U.S. official” – seems currently reluctant to strike a deal with Washington. *“The problem was less with the Russian elite as a whole than it was with Putin specifically, he explained. “Putin is the major block to all progress,” he said. “The U.S. administration has made at least one attempt to speak with the Kremlin but Putin himself refused.”*

### The Kissinger line

The approach of the U.S. negotiation team shows that the White House has adopted the Kissinger line. As we did already explain somewhere else, Henry Kissinger – the “wise old man” of U.S. imperialism – has repeatedly argued for a foreign policy which recognises Russia as an important Great Power and takes its interest into account. With such an approach, Washington would try to deescalate the tensions with Moscow and to pacify the Ukraine War. In order to achieve this, the U.S. would work hard to force the Ukraine that it accepts Russia’s occupation of the Southern and Eastern parts of its territories.

Such Kissinger line is not motivated by any Russophilia but rather by the realistic recognition that the U.S. is no longer the hegemonic power in the world.<sup>5</sup> Hence it must make compromises and try to divide its rivals. Hence, the “wise old man” of U.S. imperialism suggests to pull Moscow away from its alliance with China by making important concessions.<sup>6</sup>

The *Moscow Times* interview with the “former U.S. official” about the ongoing secret negotiations between the U.S. and Russia strongly confirms the RCIT’s analysis of the interests of Western powers and, in particular, of the U.S. in the Ukraine War. We did already warn in November 2022 *“that the Ukrainian liberation struggle is threatened by a Great Power deal aimed at the pacification of the war. Such a deal would mean, at least temporary, the consolidation of the Russian occupation of significant parts of the Ukraine’s territory. In other words, the Ukrainian people face the danger of a sell-out by Western imperialism. Washington and Brussels might push for such a pacification of the war before it destabilises the imperialist world order too much and provokes mass unrests or even revolutionary crises in Russia, Europe or in other parts of the world.”*<sup>7</sup>

As part of such an approach, the U.S. tries to fully subordinate the Ukraine so that it serves Western goals as a subordinated agent. Washington wants the Ukraine to fight against Russia if it has an interest in escalating tensions with Moscow; and if it is interested in a “grand bargain” with Putin, Washington wants the Ukraine to shut up and restrain. This is the purpose of Biden’s policy of limited support for Kyiv via weapons deliveries, offering some kind of relationship with NATO and, at the same time, trying to impose a policy of territorial concessions.<sup>8</sup>

### The Ukraine must break with Western imperialism!

Washington’s approach in the ongoing secret negotiations with Russia demonstrates that U.S. imperialism is no friend of the Ukraine but rather a Great Power bully which does not hesitate to exchange the national interests of the Ukraine for some concessions from Putin in global politics.

Hence, we reiterate that the Ukrainian people must resist any subordination to the plans of U.S. imperialism. Such subordination would disable the Ukrainian people to oppose a Great Power deal which would leave a substantial part of Ukrainian territory in the hands of the Russian occupiers.

Furthermore, the decisive issue in the Ukraine’s just war of national defence against Russia is not how many long-range missiles it possesses. It is rather if the Ukraine and its supporters can undermine the Putin regime by appealing to the Russian workers and the oppressed nations. The Prigozhin coup has demonstrated how fragile the regime has become – in fact, as the RCIT explained somewhere else, it has entered a period of its death agony.<sup>9</sup>

It is well known that – as Clausewitz said – *“war is the continuation of politics.”* Hence, the outcome of a war is determined much more by politics than by weapons. Zelensky’s reactionary policy is a decisive obstacle for the victory of the Ukrainian people against Russian imperialism. His neoliberal reforms attack the working class at home in order to increase the profits of domestic and foreign capitalist oligarchs. And his pro-NATO orientation weakens



global support for Ukraine's resistance as large sectors of the international working class and oppressed despise Western imperialism. In particular, the more the Ukraine appears as an agent of NATO, the easier it will become for the Putin regime to present its war as a defence struggle against its Western rivals. In contrast, the Ukraine must appeal to the people in Russia and break them away from the Bonapartist regime.

In order to expel the invaders and to gain full national self-determination, the Ukraine must be independent of the interests of any Great Power! This will be possible only if the workers and popular masses replace the pro-NATO Zelensky regime by a *workers and popular government!*<sup>10</sup>

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

### Footnotes

1 Michael Pröbsting: 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/>

2 Cameron Manley: Former U.S. Official Shares Details of Secret 'Track 1.5' Diplomacy With Moscow, Moscow Times, July 27, 2023, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/07/26/former-us-official-shares-details-of-secret-track-15-diplomacy-with-moscow-a81972>. All quotes about that meeting are from this article if not indicated otherwise.

3 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. The most important ones are several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: *The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory*, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; by the same author: *Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia's Imperialist Character*, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; *Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics*, 18 March 2014 (this pamphlet contains a document written in 2001 in which we established for the first time our characterisation of Russia as imperialist), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; see also the following essays by the same author: 'Empire-ism' vs a Marxist analysis of imperialism: Continuing the debate with Argentinian economist Claudio Katz on Great Power rivalry, Russian imperialism and the Ukraine War, 3 March 2023, <https://links.org.au/empire-ism-vs-marxist-analysis-imperialism-continuing-debate-argentinian-economist-claudio-katz/>; *Russia: An Imperialist Power or a "Non-Hegemonic Empire in Gestation"?* A reply to the Argentinian economist Claudio Katz, in: *New Politics*, 11 August 2022, at <https://newpol.org/russia-an-imperialist-power-or-a-non-hegemonic-empire-in-gestation-a-reply-to-the-argentinian-economist-claudio-katz-an-essay-with-8-tables/>; *Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies*, in: *New Politics Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022*, [https://newpol.org/issue\\_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/](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/>.

4 Michael McFaul: The Negative Consequences of Track 1.5 Diplomacy to End the War in Ukraine, July 29, 2023, [\[aelmcfaul.substack.com/p/the-negative-consequences-of-track\]\(https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-secret-negotiations-between-u-s-and-russia-have-started/\)](https://mich-</a></p>
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# Supporting Ukraine without Dual Tactic Leads to Social-Imperialism

## A critical comment on a joint statement on the Ukraine War issued by five Scandinavian “green left” parties

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19 July 2023

Five left-reformist parties, which have deputies in their respective national parliaments, have signed a joint statement on the Ukraine War. These parties are *Enhedslisten* (Red-Green Alliance, Denmark), the *Vänsterpartiet* (Left Party, Sweden), *Vasemmistoliitto* (Left Alliance, Finland) and *Sosialistisk venstreparti* (Socialist Left Party, Norway) and *Rødt* (Red Party, Norway).<sup>1</sup>

In their statements the signatories state their “solidarity with the rightful resistance of the Ukrainian people and emphasize the sole responsibility of the Russian regime for initiating this illegal invasion.” Likewise, they “welcome anti-war resistance and democratic opposition in Russia and Belarus.” Furthermore, the Nordic parties “recognize that arms support is necessary to give Ukraine the ability to defend itself.”

In addition, the “green left” parties “express our concern about persistent attacks on labour rights and trade unions by the Ukrainian government” and warn against “the dangers of imposing neoliberal policies of austerity and privatisation in the interest of Western or domestic capital during the post-war rebuilding of Ukraine.” They also “call for the cancellation of Ukraine’s foreign debt.”

Finally, the signatories pledge their “support to the Ukrainian labour movement, *Sotsialnyi Rukh*, and other progressive forces fighting for a just future and a strong social welfare state.”

The statement is drafted in reformist language and ends with an appeal to the global left to “work towards a more democratic world order.” A “more democratic world order” is a phrase which doesn’t mean anything respectively it means a more just imperialist world order – a total illusion, particularly in a period of capitalist decay and inter-imperialist rivalry. We should also add that it is not accidental that Stalinist supporters of Russia and China similarly call for a “more democratic world order” or a “multi-polar world order”.<sup>2</sup>

However, such language is certainly not the main weakness of that declaration. The problem is not what it says but rather what it does not say. Surely, socialists wholeheartedly agree with the above-mentioned statements about the need for international solidarity with the Ukraine resisting Putin’s invasion.

The RCIT – and its comrades in *Socialist Tendency* (Russia) – have supported the Ukraine’s just war of national defence since the beginning.<sup>3</sup> We consider the Ukraine’s efforts to get weapons from wherever possible as absolutely legitimate. At the same time, we lend no political support to the bourgeois and pro-NATO Zelensky government.

It has been in this spirit that the RCIT as well as other socialists have practically contributed to the resistance

## 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.

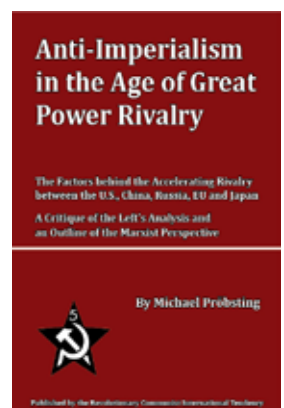
*Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is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



struggle of the Ukrainian people by organising solidarity convoys bringing material aid.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, we have always recognised the specific *dual character* of the conflict. On one hand, it represents a reactionary war of oppression by the Putin regime against the Ukrainian people. On the other hand, it has been combined with the accelerating inter-imperialist rivalry between NATO and Russia. Hence, we have advocated a *dual tactic* where we combine support for Ukraine's war of national defence with revolutionary defeatist opposition against both imperialist camps.

Hence, we oppose Western sanctions against Russia and call for workers boycott actions in solidarity with the Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> We reject Great Power chauvinism and call the workers movement to oppose all forms of imperialist armament. We have summarised such an approach in the slogan: *For a Popular War to defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! No subordination of Ukraine to NATO and EU! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*

It is exactly this second aspect – the accelerating rivalry between the Great Powers and its practical consequences – on which the joint statement of the Nordic green left stays completely silent. This is absurd and inexcusable because Western countries (including all Scandinavian states) have imposed sanctions against Russia and are accelerating armament (under the pretext of the Ukraine War). Furthermore, the Ukraine War has been utilised by the governments of Sweden and Finland to join NATO.

On all these crucial issues for socialists in Scandinavian countries, the statement does not say a single word! In fact, this is no accident since signatories are left-reformist parties which have wavered on these issues or even supported such imperialist provisions. The Finnish *Vasemmistoliitto*, for example, was part of the previous government which applied for NATO membership and several of its parliamentary deputies voted even in favour of it.<sup>6</sup>

In short, these Nordic "green-left" parties, situated in European countries which are part of the EU, NATO or both, are only anti-imperialist against Putin's reactionary war of aggression. But they dare not to take an anti-imperialist stance against their own ruling class!

In conclusion, while we welcome their support for the Ukraine, one also has to say that such support without applying a clear opposition against Western imperialism is unworthy of socialists! Supporting Ukraine without a dual tactic leads to capitulation to imperialism, i.e. it represents a policy of social-imperialism!

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## The Ukraine War and the Inter-Imperialist Rivalry

Check out more than 170 documents of the RCIT in English as well as many other languages on a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>

## The Pro-Bourgeois Opportunism of LIS/MST (Part 1)

### Oleg Vernik – the LIS's man of dirty politics in the Ukraine

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

The MST (Argentina) is the leading force of the *International Socialist League* (ISL or LIS by its Spanish-language acronym), an international Trotskyist organization. It is part of FITu for four years – an alliance of four Trotskyist parties which was founded in 2011 and which has a number of deputies in national and regional parliaments.

Currently, the MST leadership is engaged, jointly with PO, in a vicious struggle against the PTS and IS for domination of FITu. While the PTS is the largest force within the alliance and the leading section of the *Fracción Trotskista* (FT), IS is the leading section of *Unidad Internacional de los Trabajadores – Cuarta Internacional* (UIT-CI).

While there is certainly an element of bureaucratic in-fighting involved in this conflict, it also has an important political component. PTS and IS want to keep the character of FITu which is, despite significant centrist weaknesses of its leadership's policy, a political expression of the radicalisation of the Argentinean workers vanguard.

In contrast, PO and MST try to push FITu to the right. In essence, their goal is to transform FITu's character from a force of class independence into a broad alliance including (petty-)bourgeois populist and Stalinist forces.

This is why our comrades in *Convergencia Socialista* (RCIT section in Argentina) support the campaign of PTS and

IS, despite the political criticism which they have of these organisations. Our comrades will also stand candidates on their list for the upcoming national election in October 2023. <sup>1</sup>

Our Argentinean comrades have already published several articles in which they criticise the political project behind the campaign of PO/MST. <sup>2</sup>

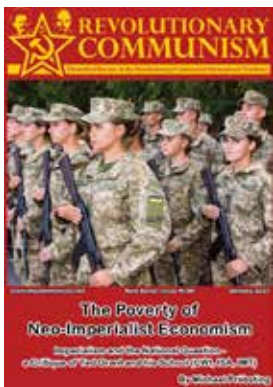
Such a push of the MST towards (petty-)bourgeois populism is not surprising. It has a long history of collaborating not only with petty-bourgeois but even with outright bourgeois figures, including at elections. <sup>3</sup>

#### The criminal past of Oleg Vernik

In this article, we will show that such an extreme opportunism is a profound characteristic of the MST and its international organisation. This can be seen not only by its practice in Argentina but also in other countries. In this part, we will look at the LIS/MST affiliates in the Ukraine.

As we did already show somewhere else, the Ukrainian section of LIS is well-known for its outrageous practice. Its dominating figure is Oleg Vernik – a notorious figure in international Trotskyism.

He was the key figure behind a criminal enterprise in 2000-03. At that time, he and his co-conspirators contact-



### Publications of the RCIT

## The Poverty of Neo-Imperialist Economism

Imperialism and the National Question -  
a Critique of Ted Grant and his School (CWI, ISA, IMT)

By Michael Pröbsting, January 2023

**Introduction** \* Part I. The Grantites' main flaws on imperialism and national oppression \* 1. Confusion on imperialism and the class character of states \* 2. Failure to recognise the nature of national oppression \* 3. Refusal to support liberation struggles as they take place \* Part II. The class basis and the theoretical tradition of Grantite revisionism \* 4. Strategic orientation to the labour bureaucracy, Sanders, Chavez, etc. \* 5. The Grantites' utopia: reforming the capitalist state and the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism \* 6. Are the police "workers in uniform"? \* 7. Woods against Lenin's concept of revolutionary defeatism \* 8. The Marxist theory of antagonistic contradictions and the inevitability of their violent explosion (and their gradualist distortion by Grantism) \* 9. Excuse: Comparing imperialist economism in the past and present (Bukharin/Pjatakov/Radek versus Grant/Woods/Taaffe) \* Part III. Some objections and Marxist answers \* 10. Undermining the unity of the working class? \* 11. "The workers would not understand this" \* 12. "But the national question can not be solved under capitalism!" \* 13. Are national liberation wars doomed to become "proxy wars" in the age of inter-imperialist Cold War? \* **Conclusions** \* **Footnotes**

A RCIT Pamphlet, 28 pages, A4 Format



ed about a dozen international Trotskyist organisations as well as a group of supporters of Gaddafi – the late long-time dictator in Libya. They pretended to be the respective section of all these groups (of course under different names so that the latter don't find out the fraud).

In this way, they succeeded to steal thousands of dollars from well-meaning left-wing people in Western countries by faking the existence of various socialist "organizations" in the Ukraine. There exists even a separate Wikipedia entry about this fraud.<sup>4</sup>

### Unprincipled alliances with bourgeois reformists and fear of contact with fascists

Today Vernik and his group are members of LIS. However, they continue to act in a completely unprincipled and outrageous manner. Such, Vernik and his "trade union" are members of the bourgeois-reformist "*Progressive International*".<sup>5</sup> This is an international organisation whose most prominent representatives are Brazil's President Lula, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders and Yanis Varoufakis, a member of the Greek Parliament and former finance minister.<sup>6</sup>

One important reason for Vernik's collaboration with bourgeois-reformist parties is obviously his ongoing desire to get money from wherever he can. Hence, he is publishing appeals – on the websites both of LIS as well as PI – asking people to send him money.<sup>7</sup>

Another way of getting money is Vernik's participation in negotiations with representatives of the Ukrainian government about financial support from them or from the EU.<sup>8</sup>

Another outrageous practice of Vernik is his readiness to collaborate with fascist figures. Last years, he joined a show of Oles Vakhniy, a notorious Ukrainian fascist.<sup>9</sup> Vakhniy has been a well-known Nazi for three decades. According to Wikipedia (Ukraine), he "*is considered as one of the leaders of Ukrainian skinheads*".<sup>10</sup> Vakhniy has been, among others, the founder/leader of the Nazi organization "*White Hammer*" and spent several years in prison. According to Wikipedia, during a "*March Against Racism*" press conference, Vakhniy threw a bunch of bananas at Sunday Adelaja, a black-skinned pastor. In short, Vakhniy is not only an ultra-reactionary and anti-communist nationalist but also a white supremacist Nazi-Skinhead.

It is telling that during the show with Oleg Vernik, Vakhniy wears a T-Shirt which has the symbol of the extreme right-wing "*Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists*".<sup>11</sup> Obviously, all this was of no concern for the LIS's man of dirty politics!

Oleg Vernik is not an accidental figure in LIS/MST. He rather represents – one could also say personifies – the extreme unprincipled and opportunist character of this organisation. He perfectly fits to its extraordinary right-wing centrist politics.

In the second part of this article, we will deal with the Pakistani section of LIS/MST which follows a different but equally shameful policy of pro-bourgeois opportunism.

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# The Looming War against Niger and its Global Meaning

## On the potential consequences of an ECOWAS invasion for West Africa, Europe and the global rivalry between the Great Powers

By Michael Pröbsting, *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*, 5 August 2023

The aggression against Niger by Western powers and their local allies could provoke a major war within the next days. Such a conflict would have massive consequences not only for West Africa but also for the whole northern half of the continent. Furthermore, it would have important ramifications for European imperialism. And, finally, such a war would inevitably intersect with the global rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers of East and West.

This is all the more explosive since there exists already another ongoing major conflict of global relevance which combines a national liberation war with inter-imperialist rivalry – the Ukraine War. For all these reasons, the looming war against Niger deserves utmost attention by revolutionary socialists and anti-imperialist activists in Africa as well as globally.

Before dwelling on why we consider this conflict as regionally and globally important, we shall first summarise the latest developments. In this context, we shall also briefly explain the RCIT's position on the coup in Niger and on a possible war against the new junta which we did elaborate in two statements.<sup>1</sup>

### An escalating conflict

In our view, socialists could not lend any support to the military coup which the Presidential Guard carried out on 26 July, resulting in the detention of President Bazoum and the appointment of General Tiani as the new leader. The coup was triggered by a power struggle between Bazoum and the head of the presidential guard, General Tchiani. The latter has been close to former Nigerien president Issoufou, who stepped down in 2021 after a decade in office. When Bazoum tried to replace Tchiani, the Presidential Guard responded with a putsch.<sup>2</sup>

In itself, a military coup which brings the army to power strengthens the bonapartist power of the capitalist state apparatus. And while putschist officers might seek popular support on one or the other occasion, they have no interest to hand power to the masses. Naturally, socialists could also not side with Bazoum, an utterly corrupted lackey of Western imperialism.

Nevertheless, one must not ignore that this coup – similar to other coups in Mali and in Burkina Faso in the past three years – has received support from sectors of the masses as it intersected with wide-spread popular hatred against Western imperialism, most importantly against the former colonial power France. This has become obvious in the past days which saw mass demonstrations in Niamey and other Nigerien cities on 30 July and on 3 August. Thousands of people chanted slogans against France and attacked the French embassy. The social movement M62 – which was repressed by the Bazoum government – even called for detaining European civilians until all foreign troops leave Niger.

It was therefore not surprising that France, the EU and

the U.S. as well as their local allies – the alliance ECOWAS which is dominated by Nigeria – immediately denounced the coup and demanded the reinstatement of their puppet Bazoum. They imposed sanctions against Niger and set an ultimatum (until 6 August) after which ECOWAS threatens to invade Niger. Western powers would certainly support the ECOWAS invasion against Niger, as French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna already indicated.<sup>3</sup>

Against this background, the junta of General Tiani said it was terminating the military agreements and protocols signed with France and announced the end of functions for Niger's ambassadors to France, the United States, Togo and Nigeria.

A military attack of ECOWAS against Niger has the potential to provoke a regional conflict since Bamako and Ouagadougou declared: "*Any military intervention against Niger would be tantamount to a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali.*" Hence, we could see a war between several West African states in the next weeks.

In other words, a coup – triggered by a vulgar power struggle between two sectors of the capitalist state apparatus – has provoked a major confrontation between Western imperialist powers and their local allies against a poor semi-colonial country. Hence, the Western aggression as well as the anti-French intervention of the masses in Niger which pushed the new junta to take a confrontational approach against the Western powers have opened a political process characterized by an *anti-imperialist dynamic*.

In such a situation, it would be criminal for socialists to stand aside. It is the foremost duty of revolutionaries and anti-imperialists to defend Niger against the aggression by imperialist powers and their local proxies. Hence, we stated in the RCIT statement: "*We call for an immediate end of sanctions. In case of a military intervention by ECOWAS troops (which will be directly or indirectly supported by Western powers), we call for the military defence of Niger and for the defeat of the pro-imperialist invaders. Likewise, socialists demand the expulsion of US/European troops from Niger.*"

### Regional and global ramifications

Without understanding the anti-imperialist character of this process, it is impossible to understand the regional and global relevance of the current events in Niger.

This is even more the case as Africa is a rapidly growing continent of 1.4 billion people. While it is home to a wide range of natural resources, it is also the world's poorest and least-developed continent – a result of centuries of imperialist oppression and super-exploitation. Social misery and political instability have massively increased since the beginning of a new historic period in 2008 with the Great Recession and the acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry (with the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers). This process deepened even more with the Great Depression and the COVID Counterrevolution in 2019/20. Hence it is no accident that Africa experienced 13 coup attempts

– 10 of them successful – since 2020.

The coup in Niger has special relevance for Western imperialism because the country is home to some of the world's largest uranium deposit which is of crucial importance for Europe's nuclear energy industry. One in three lightbulbs in France are powered by uranium from Niger. However, typical for Niger's position as a capitalist semi-colony, its uranium industry is owned by a so-called "joint venture" between Niger and France called Société des mines de l'Air (Somaïr). 85% of Somaïr is owned by France's Atomic Energy Commission and two French companies, while only 15% is owned by Niger's government.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, after their expulsion from Mali and Burkina Faso, Niger is the last country where France and the U.S. have major military bases – including a huge drone base in the northern region of Agadez as well as a combined military force of 2,600 troops. Loosing Niger would mean for European and U.S. imperialism to lose a crucial foothold to control West Africa.

The Western powers and their local allies – most importantly the Nigerian government of Bola Tinubu which recently came to power via electoral fraud – fear that if they don't crush the new junta in Niger, other countries might follow. In February, the junta of Burkina Faso had hosted a meeting with representatives of Mali and Guinea where they discussed the creation of a new federation of these states. After the recent events, it is likely that Niger will be invited to join such a project.<sup>5</sup>

Such development is worrying European governments not only because of the threat of losing political influence and economic gains but also because they fear another wave of migration. As we pointed out in the past, Brussels invests large sums and cultivates close relations with dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt in order to safeguard the imperialist fortress Europe.<sup>6</sup>

### **The military juntas are no progressive regimes!**

Socialists have no reason to glorify the new military juntas in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger. These are not progressive or even socialist regimes. Usually, they involve military figures who participated in the past years in the "anti-terror" operations led by France and the U.S.

In the case of Niger, we did already mention that General Tchiani has been a close confidant of former President Issoufou who made Niger a key military foothold of French and U.S. imperialism. Another key figure of the putschists is Brigadier General Moussa Salaou Barmou, who is the chief of the special operations forces in Niger. He was trained in the United States at Fort Benning, and he's been a darling of the U.S. government for many years.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the junta leaders don't have (and can not have) a socialist program of building a country ruled by the workers and poor peasants, expropriating foreign corporations and breaking with imperialism. They rather build a capitalist bonapartist regime which tends to look for collaboration with other imperialist powers like Russia and China.

We have seen this already in Mali where the junta basically replaced the French troops with Wagner mercenaries. And Captain Ibrahim Traoré has strongly expressed Burkina Faso's support for Putin and Russian imperialism at the recently held Russia-Africa Summit.

### **Understanding confused consciousness of the masses in historical context**

Nevertheless, one has to understand every development in its context since, as Lenin once noted, "*the individual exists only in the connection that leads to the universal.*"<sup>8</sup> To judge developments like the current events in Niger, one must start from the country's history as a (semi-)colony of French imperialism. If sectors of the masses praise Putin or have illusions in Russia, this is primarily a reflection of their hatred for the old colonial master. They hate what they know and hope for something which they don't know.

Likewise, one has to analyse the developments carefully. Countries like Niger have been under control of French imperialism for more than a century. When a process of mass struggle for anti-colonial emancipation starts – even if it is combined with pro-Russian sympathies – it does not mean that the country has become a (semi-)colony of Russia. True, this could be the result of such a process if it takes place under the leadership of a bourgeois regime and if the masses don't intervene against such degeneration. But the *possible* outcome must not be confused with the *reality today*, with the process as it currently evolves. The task of socialists is to intervene in such a process and to work towards its evolution in an *anti-imperialist* – and not only anti-French or anti-Western – direction.

Furthermore, to assess the situation in Niger it is not sufficient to look only to the top figures of the new junta but also to the developments among the masses. And here it is evident that the recent events, including the escalation of tensions with France and Nigeria, have provoked massive anti-French sentiments – something which socialists can not but recognise as a progressive, anti-imperialist development.

It is true that such progressive dynamic of resistance against the long-term colonial master goes hand in hand with some misplaced illusions in another imperialist master – Russia – with which the masses have no experience. This is an unfortunate development and socialists have to explain that Russian imperialism is no less an imperialist butcher than Western powers. Russia's role in the brutal occupation of Chechnya and the Ukraine, its decisive support for the tyranny of Assad in Syria, its close relations with the arch-reactionary putschists in Sudan or with General Haftar in Libya – all that shows that authentic socialists oppose Russian imperialism no less than its Western rivals. Hence, the RCIT calls for the *expulsion* not only of Western troops but also of *all Wagner mercenaries from Africa!*<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, as materialists we understand that the masses – entering the struggle with illusions and confusion – hate the oppressor they know much more than the oppressor they only now from TV screens. We have seen similar developments in Bosnia in 1992-95, in Kosovo 1997-99 or, currently, in the Ukraine. In these cases, people entertained massive illusions in Western powers. The task of socialists is the same as it has been in case of Bosnia, Kosovo and the Ukraine: to patiently explain why the workers and poor peasants need to *oppose all imperialist powers*. But it would be reactionary and sectarian to stand aside from a just war of national defence because the masses have backward illusions or because an imperialist power tries to utilise such a conflict for its own advantage.



### A war with a dual character?

If the conflict in West Africa escalates and a war starts, it is likely that it will not only involve European and American imperialism directly or indirectly but also – sooner or later – their Eastern rivals. It is clear that Russia – currently in the middle of a major war against the Ukraine as well as in a global conflict with NATO – would try to exploit the weaknesses of its rivals. The Kremlin has already its footholds in Mali and Burkina Faso (as well as in the Central African Republic, Sudan and in the Libyan territories under control of General Haftar). It is likely that sooner or later the new junta in Niger, which is already closely collaborating with these two neighbouring states – would also turn towards Moscow for support.<sup>10</sup>

Hence, a war in Niger respectively West Africa where Western and Eastern Great Powers support opposing sides would automatically give the conflict a global dimension. Without ignoring important possible differences, it could assume a *dual character* similar to the Ukraine War, i.e. it could be a just war of national defence by Niger combined with a global conflict between imperialist powers.<sup>11</sup>

In such a situation, socialists would have the duty to apply what the RCIT calls a *dual tactic*. This means supporting Niger's struggle against the invasion of ECOWAS/France and advocating the defeat of the pro-Western forces. Naturally, such a defence would be limited to the practical resistance and does not involve any political support for the new junta in Niamey. At the same time, socialists must not lend support to any Great Power – neither France, the EU, U.S. nor Russia (or China) – and must warn against any interference of Russia in Niger.

The next days and weeks will show if the conflict in West

Africa transform into a major war. In it deserves utmost attention by revolutionary socialists and anti-imperialist activists in Africa as well as globally!

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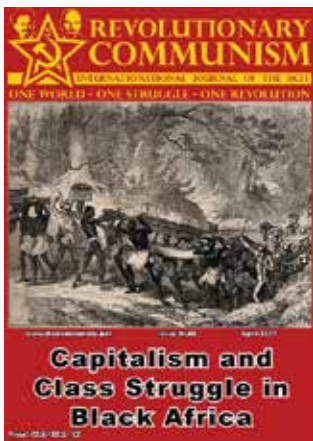
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*An Analysis of Imperialist Exploitation and Oppression and the Perspectives of the Liberation Struggle*

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**

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## RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

# Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

*Adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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*

# Niger: Pacifism is an Impotent Instrument against Imperialist War

## Critical comments on the statements of the Grantite CWI and ISA about the crisis in West Africa

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 9 August 2023

Meanwhile, it should be clear to everyone that the coup in Niger and the looming war by ECOWAS and its imperialist masters is relevant not only for West Africa but for the world situation. These events have provoked a rise of nationalist zeal amongst the popular masses against domination by French imperialism. In fact, both the region's pro-Western governments as well as its domination by the Western Great Powers are seriously threatened. In other words, we are likely moving towards a period of war, revolution and counterrevolution in the region.

Furthermore, these events will most likely trigger the expansion of influence by Russian (and Chinese) imperialism and, hence, accelerate the rivalry between the Western and Eastern Great Powers. Bourgeois analysts like Andreas Kluth warn in the *Washington Post* that the situation in Niger could escalate to become "another proxy war, and another step closer to World War III."<sup>1</sup>

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and its Nigerian section did neither support the coup in Niger nor did we defend the government of President Bazoum – a corrupted lackey of Western imperialism. However, we recognize that the draconic response by Western imperialism and its local allies – imposing wide-ranging sanctions, cutting electricity supply, and the threat of military invasion – has provoked an anti-imperialist dynamic which revolutionaries can not but support. We oppose all sanctions against Niger. In case of a military intervention by ECOWAS troops (which will be directly or indirectly supported by Western powers), we call for the *military defence of Niger* and for the *defeat of the pro-imperialist invaders*. Likewise, socialists demand the *expulsion of US/European troops from Niger*. At the same time, we also oppose Russian (and Chinese) imperialism.<sup>2</sup>

### Defending Niger or not?

It is only natural that the dramatic events in West Africa have also provoked articles and statements by other socialist organisations. In this article we shall deal with the statements of two international organisations which have a presence in the region – the CWI (with the DSM in Nigeria) and the ISA (with Militant CI in Ivory Coast).<sup>3</sup>

Both organisations correctly refuse to support the coup but equally oppose sanctions and threats of military intervention by ECOWAS and its Western masters. However, their stance against the looming war has a pacifist character and not a revolutionary, anti-imperialist. Sure, socialists oppose sanctions as well as war against Niger. But this is not enough. The decisive question is: should socialists defend Niger or not?

Let us explain. Socialists oppose any military aggression of NATO against Russia (or vice versa). But this does not mean that we would side in such a conflict with Russia

(resp. NATO). No, the RCIT and all authentic anti-imperialists oppose all Great Powers and take a revolutionary defeatist position against both camps.

But things are different in the case of Nigeria. As we explained in our documents, Niger is a poor semi-colonial country. And while ECOWAS does not consist of imperialist states, its masters – the U.S., France and the EU – certainly are. Hence, we determine the character of a war by ECOWAS troops against Niger as imperialist and the resistance against it as *anti-imperialist*.

This means that while socialists have no interest in NATO winning against Russia (or vice versa), we definitely are interested in a defeat of ECOWAS/France and a victory of the forces defending Niger. This is why the RCIT and all authentic socialists raise the call for the defence of Niger. Hence, we call workers and popular organisations to organise actions which aid the Nigerien resistance and which weaken and sabotage the aggression of France, the EU, the U.S., as well as of Nigeria, Senegal, and other ECOWAS war-mongers.

### Marxist classics

This has always been the method of Marxists. As we explained somewhere else, revolutionary socialists have always supported oppressed nations against their oppressor – even if non-revolutionary or even reactionary forces stood led the oppressed.<sup>4</sup>

For example, the Fourth International defended Ethiopia against Italy in 1935-36, despite the fact that the former had an absolutist monarchy led by Emperor Haile Selassie. „Of course, we are for the defeat of Italy and the victory of Ethiopia, and therefore we must do everything possible to hinder by all available means support to Italian imperialism by the other imperialist powers, and at the same time facilitate the delivery of armaments, etc., to Ethiopia as best we can.“<sup>5</sup>

And in China, where the national liberation war against Japanese imperialism was led by the reactionary General Chiang Kai-shek who had slaughtered tens of thousands of communist workers in 1927, the Trotskyists advocated also support for such anti-colonial resistance. „Quite so: as against imperialism it is obligatory to help even the hangmen of Chiang Kai-shek.“<sup>6</sup>

Today, socialists need to advocate the formation of action councils and popular militias in Niger in order to organise the workers and poor peasants. There is no reason to trust the new junta led by General Tiani. However, in case of a military conflict we would side with the forces of the junta against ECOWAS troops, without lending political support for the junta.



### Decades-old method

Unfortunately, the comrades of the CWI and the ISA do not draw such conclusions. They are “against the war” but do not support one camp (Niger) against the other (ECOWAS). Marxists are against the imperialist war against Niger, but we support Niger’s war against ECOWAS! In other words, we are not against war as such. We only oppose reactionary wars but support progressive, anti-imperialist wars.

The failure of the CWI and ISA comrades to take such a stance gives their opposition to the war a rather pacifist character, not an anti-imperialist one. This is no accident. It is rather based on the decades-old method of Grantism – named after Ted Grant, the founder of the common tendency out of which, after a process of splits, the CWI, the ISA and also the IMT emerged.)<sup>7</sup>

It has always been the method of Marxists to lend critical but unconditional support to the struggles of (semi-)colonial countries or nationally oppressed people led by (petty-)bourgeois forces. The RCIT (resp. its predecessor organisation) did take such an approach on numerous occasions: in Argentina during the Malvinas War against Britain in 1982, despite the fact that it was led by a reactionary military regime; in Iraq in the two wars 1991 and 2003 (and the subsequent occupation) against U.S. imperialism and its allies, despite the fact that the resistance was led by (petty-)bourgeois Baathist and Islamist forces; the Taliban-led resistance in Afghanistan against the imperialist occupiers in 2001-21; the Irish resistance, led by Sinn Fein / IRA, against the British occupiers; the Palestinian resistance led by Hamas and other nationalist and Islamist organisations; or the resistance of the Ukrainian people, led by the pro-Western Zelensky government, against the Russian invasion.<sup>8</sup>

Grantite organisations like the CWI, the ISA or the IMT have failed to take such an approach. Like pacifists, they are “against the war” but do not defend the oppressed. They offer the packet soup of pacifism when principled anti-imperialism is necessary. No, comrades, pacifism is an impotent instrument against imperialist war. You need to break with such a method in order to help the struggle of the Nigerien people!

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6 Leon Trotsky: The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition (1929); in: Writings 1929, p. 262

7 See our pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: The Poverty of Neo-Imperialist Economism. Imperialism and the national question - a critique of Ted Grant and his school (CWI, ISA, IMT), January 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/grantism-imperialism-and-national-question/>; by the same author: Anti-Imperialism: The “Right to Resist” ... and the Duty of Marxists. The centrist sophistry of CWI, IMT and ISA, 26 November 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/cwi-anti-imperialism-and-the-right-to-resist/>

8 For an overview about our history of support for anti-imperialist struggles in the past four decades (with links to documents, pictures and videos) see e.g. an essay by Michael Pröbsting: The Struggle of Revolutionaries in Imperialist Heartlands against Wars of their “Own” Ruling Class. Examples from the history of the RCIT and its predecessor organisation in the last four decades, 2 September 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-struggle-of-revolutionaries-in-imperialist-heartlands-against-wars-of-their-own-ruling-class/>

# Comunismo Revolucionario

## Spanish-language Journal of the RCIT

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# What the RCIT Stands for

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) is a fighting organisation for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. It has national sections in various countries. The working class is the class of all those (and their families) who are forced to sell their labour power as wage earners to the capitalists. The RCIT stands on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers' movement associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Capitalism endangers our lives and the future of humanity. Unemployment, war, environmental disasters, hunger, exploitation, are part of everyday life under capitalism as are the national oppression of migrants and nations and the oppression of women, young people and homosexuals. Therefore, we want to eliminate capitalism.

The liberation of the working class and all oppressed is possible only in a classless society without exploitation and oppression. Such a society can only be established internationally.

Therefore, the RCIT is fighting for a socialist revolution at home and around the world.

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for she is the only class that has nothing to lose but their chains.

The revolution can not proceed peacefully because never before has a ruling class voluntarily surrendered their power. The road to liberation includes necessarily the armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasant republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in rank and file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods and schools – in councils. These councils elect and control the government and all other authorities and can always replace them.

Real socialism and communism has nothing to do with the so-called "real existing socialism" in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba or Eastern Europe. In these countries, a bureaucracy dominated and oppressed the proletariat.

The RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of workers and the oppressed. We combine this with a perspective of the overthrow of capitalism.

We work inside the trade unions and advocate class struggle, socialism and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is a layer which is connected with the state and capital via jobs and privileges. It is far from the interests and

living circumstances of the members. This bureaucracy's basis rests mainly on the top, privileged layers of the working class - the workers' aristocracy. The struggle for the liberation of the working class must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their upper strata.

The RCIT strives for unity in action with other organizations. However, we are aware that the policy of social democracy and the pseudo-revolutionary groups is dangerous and they ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class.

We fight for the expropriation of the big land owners as well as for the nationalisation of the land and its distribution to the poor and landless peasants. We fight for the independent organisation of the rural workers.

We support national liberation movements against oppression. We also support the anti-imperialist struggles of oppressed peoples against the great powers. Within these movements we advocate a revolutionary leadership as an alternative to nationalist or reformist forces.

In a war between imperialist states (e.g. U.S., China, EU, Russia, Japan) we take a revolutionary defeatist position, i.e. we don't support neither side and advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class. In a war between an imperialist power (or its stooge) and a semi-colonial country we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed country.

The struggle against national and social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) must be led by the working class. We fight for revolutionary movements of the oppressed (women, youth, migrants etc.) based on the working class. We oppose the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism etc.) and strive to replace them by a revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class win. The construction of such a party and the conduct of a successful revolution as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia are a model for the revolutionary parties and revolutions also in the 21 Century.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries! For a 5<sup>th</sup> Workers International on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*

