



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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War and Revolution in the Middle East

Middle East Trade & Israel * Ukraine War & PO (Argentina)

Mexico: DEA Investigation of AMLO * Milano Conference

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Picture on the cover: PFLP fighters in Gaza (Source: Quds-Press, Telegram)

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.

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A Period of Catastrophes, Wars, and Revolutions Requires Unity of Revolutionaries!

*Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) for the Conference in Milano on 17/18.02.2024 **

Since the beginning of the current historic period in 2008 and even more so since 2019, we are living in a world characterised by a dramatic acceleration of contradictions between classes and states. We see social and ecological catastrophes, imperialist wars, rivalry between Great Powers and bonapartist attacks on democratic rights. At the same time, there has been a dramatic upswing of mass struggles of the workers and the oppressed peoples – from the Arab Revolution, the national liberation struggles of the Palestinian and the Ukrainian peoples, the Black Lives Matters movement in the U.S., to general strikes in France, India and other countries.

In such a period, it is the task of Marxists to elaborate a clear analysis of the world situation, to advocate a revolutionary program and to intervene in the mass struggles. The fundamental challenge in the current period is neither a lack of class struggles nor a “backward” consciousness of the masses but rather the weakness and “backwardness” of socialist forces. In other words, we continue to face the *crisis of revolutionary leadership*.

Many progressive organisations are confused about the nature of the current conflicts, adapt to this or that imperialist power and/or fail to take a consistent proletarian line in the class struggles. Hence, it is all the more important that authentic revolutionaries join forces and start a serious process of discussion and collaboration in order to overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) – a Trotskyist organisation with sections and activists in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Russia, Nigeria, Britain, and Austria – has always strived for unity with other organisations not on the basis of abstract principles but by applying the general principles of revolutionary strategy to the concrete conditions of the global class struggle in the current period. In our view, broad agreement on the following issues should serve as the basis for rapprochement of authentic revolutionaries.

We are living in historic period of capitalist decay

The RCIT characterises the historic period since 2008 as one of capitalist decay, full of economic crisis, political instability and revolutionary and counterrevolutionary explosions. These features of accelerating contradictions have even intensified in the past few years with an increasing number of wars and Great Power rivalry, the ecological crisis and various civilization threats as well as revolutionary situations.

Marxists, in contrast to feeble opportunists, do not approach the challenges of the current period with despair and demoralisation but rather with revolutionary optimism. In fact, recognising such decline of capitalism and its revolutionising potential for class struggle (without ignoring the reactionary dangers) is the fundamental prerequisite for a revolutionary approach to the coming years full of tumultuous events, massive struggles, and great opportunities.

Accelerating inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers (U.S., Western Europe, Japan, China and Russia)

Another key feature of the current historic period is the decline of the old imperialist powers in the West and the *emergence of new imperialist states* – in particular China and Russia. Hence, we have seen an acceleration of the Great Power rivalry as well as the end of the unipolar world order and globalisation.

Numerous Stalinists and Bolivarians view China (and also Russia to a certain degree) as progressive factors in world politics and, consequentially, lend support to these powers. Others don't go that far but still fail to recognise the imperialist nature of these new Eastern powers – a gross mistake which condemns them to political confusion and disorientation in crucial events of world politics.

The only correct consequence of recognising the imperialist nature of all Great Powers is the policy of *revolutionary defeatism* as it had been elaborated by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. No support for any Great Powers (neither their “own” nor any other) in inter-imperialist conflicts; against their chauvinist policy; for an orientation to utilise every conflict to advance the class struggle against imperialist governments and to transform it into a civil war – these are the principles which must guide socialists in conflicts between NATO and Russia or between the U.S. and China.

Consistent support for the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples

Another feature of the current period is the intensification of the oppression of nations by imperialist powers (respectively their proxies). To name only the most important examples, we refer to Israel's current genocidal war in Gaza – a culmination of its 75 years long oppression of the Palestinian people –, Russia's war against the Ukraine, against the Chechen or against the Syrian people, the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan or Eastern Syria, its military intervention in Somalia, France's intervention in Western Africa, etc. In all such conflicts, socialists are obligated to *side with the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations* without lending political support to their (petty-) bourgeois leadership.

At the same, socialists have to recognise that the parallel process of increasing imperialist aggression against oppressed nations and the accelerating Great Power rivalry can result in *wars with a dual character*. Such contradictory conflicts combine both a progressive war of liberation as well as an element of inter-imperialist rivalry. It is the duty of socialists to concretely analyse such conflicts and to decide which of the two elements is dominating. The Ukraine War (where the U.S. and Western Europe support Moscow's opponent), the American aggression against North Korea or the conflicts between the U.S. and Israel versus Iran (with China and Russia supporting Washington's opponents) – all these are examples for such conflicts with contradictory character where socialists take the side

of the victims of imperialist powers without supporting any of the Great Power.

Many self-proclaimed socialists fail to consistently support the oppressed nations against the imperialist aggressor. Various Stalinists, social democrats and populists side – directly or indirectly – with one or the other Great Power and, consequently, aid the imperialist aggressor (e.g. with Russia against the Ukraine; or by defending Israel’s “right of self-defence”). Others, who recognise the imperialist character of the Western as well as the Eastern powers, make the mistake and degrade the struggle of oppressed nations (like e.g. of the Ukrainian people against Putin’s invasion) to a mere “proxy war” in the service of imperialist powers. Consequently, they refuse to support legitimate liberation struggles and, instead, take a reactionary abstentionist position of neutrality.

We have seen a similar phenomenon during the process of the Arab Revolution which started in January 2011. This was the greatest revolutionary wave since the beginning of the current historic period fifteen years ago which shock – and partially overthrew – reactionary dictatorships in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and other countries. This process faced important setbacks and defeats – most importantly the bloody coup of General Sisi in Egypt in July 2013 – but also experienced important new waves like the popular uprisings in Sudan, Iraq and Algeria in 2018/19 or the mass protests in the south of Syria in autumn 2023.

Here too, all kind of Stalinists and Bolivarian sided with “anti-imperialist” dictators like Assad or Gaddafi against their own people. And much too many “socialists” turned their back to the popular insurrections soon after their beginning – shamefully denouncing the masses as “proxies” of NATO. In contrast, authentic socialists have always supported legitimate popular uprisings against reactionary dictatorships without lending any support to one or the other Great Power. They combined such support with advocating a socialist program with the creation of self-governing organs (popular councils and militias) and a workers and peasants government at its centre.

Fighting against right-wing populists but without supporting liberals or popular fronts

Another result of the current crisis of revolutionary leadership has been the ability of right-wing populist forces to partly gain – in a reactionary way – from the growing disillusionment of sectors of the masses with the capitalist system. This has provoked many “socialists” to bemoan a regressive trend and a domination of reactionary ideas in the political consciousness of the masses.

Of course, authentic socialists take the threat of right-wing populist forces – like Trump, Milei, Le Pen, Meloni, Bolsonaro – seriously. But we refute the idea that the dominant feature of the current phase would be that “the masses go the right”. No, the dominant feature is rather an acceleration of the class struggle! True, some sectors of the masses support reactionary forces at elections. But many workers and poor have entered the class struggle in the past years as numerous mass strikes have spectacularly demonstrated (e.g. the unprecedented pro-Palestine solidarity mobilisations which resembles the anti-war movement during the Vietnam or the Iraq wars; the Black Live Matters movement and the strike wave in the U.S.; the popular

uprisings in Chile, Ecuador or Peru; the above-mentioned examples of the revival of the Arab Revolution, the Yellow Vests and the general strikes against the pension reform in France; the popular rebellion in Hong Kong in 2019, the anti-French mass protests in Niger, etc.).

The danger of right-wing populism must be fought on the streets – with the instruments of class struggle (action committees, self-defence, united front tactic). It must not and can not be fought via support for openly bourgeois parties (like Massa in Argentina, the U.S. Democrats or Macron in France) or for a popular front (e.g. Lula in Brazil).

The overcoming of crisis of revolutionary leadership does not happen by itself!

The key challenge of the current period is the huge discrepancy between the enormous revolutionary potential of the mass struggles and the weak state of revolutionary forces. However, the solution to this problem is not demoralised defeatism or retreat. No, all authentic socialists have the duty to take energetic initiatives in order to reduce and eventually close this gap by helping to rebuild a *World Party of Socialist Revolution*.

Of course, such a process will not be successful from one day to another. It will take time and it will face challenges and setbacks. But it can be done – by all those who understand the necessity of such efforts and who agree on the main principles of such a task!

It would be ultimistic to suppose that the alternative is all or nothing. This process has to be advanced as energetically as possible but without hasty organizational maneuvers resulting in superficial agreement which would not stand the test of the class struggle.

The RCIT believes that authentic socialists should open a process of serious discussion and collaboration between each other. We are aware that a process of rapprochement is unlikely to see each and every difference removed within a short period of time. But this is no problem – as long as we start making steps forward and don’t lose time! Let’s get to work, comrades, and address the great tasks of the liberation struggle!

* * * * *

We refer to our Manifesto which was adopted by the IV. RCIT Congress in September 2023: *The Revolutionary Struggle in the Era of Capitalist Collapse*, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto-2023/>

* This statement is supported by *Spalakh* (Ukraine).

The statement can be read in various languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, French, Italian, German and Korean) at this link: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/rcit-statement-for-milano-conference-february-2024/>

Mexico: The DEA Investigation of AMLO

Serious errors in how the left-wing press interprets Yankee interventionism in Mexico

By Jorge Arboleda, RCIT México, Mexican section of the RCIT, 7 February 2024

On February 30, the well-known Mexican journalist Anabel Hernández published an article in which she claims that, according to information from the DEA and the State of New York, AMLO had financing from the Sinaloa Cartel in 2006, when he was his first attempt to be president. *"The United States government verified that the money was delivered by Arturo Beltrán Leyva to members of AMLO's campaign team during the 2006 electoral process on behalf of the Sinaloa Cartel. In exchange, the criminal organization requested protection and the right to participate in the appointment of the Attorney General of the Republic if López Obrador won the election."*¹

On the same day, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Tim Golden published information related to the same case. *"According to more than a dozen interviews with U.S. and Mexican officials and government documents reviewed by Pro-Publica, the money was given to campaign advisers in 2006 in exchange for the promise that a López Obrador administration would facilitate traffickers' criminal operations."*²

Also, that day Steven Dudley wrote an article about this research. *"DEA agents believed that, during the 2006 presidential election, Soto had worked as a campaign coordinator and, among other tasks, had funneled millions of dollars from a Mexican drug trafficking organization to AMLO's campaign."*³

Although the information that was made public explains that this investigation was dismissed in 2011, it cannot be a coincidence that three simultaneous articles appeared with confidential information from the DEA in which the current president of Mexico was being investigated. Some AMLO followers claim, in a completely delusional manner, that this is an effort by US imperialism to carry out a coup against the Obrador administration... who ends his term in December of this year.

We at the CCRI have emphasized that the AMLO government has been completely subservient to Washington's interests, giving as an example projects such as the Interoceanic Corridor (which splits Mexico in two, facilitating the passage of goods from east to west of the United States), the Mayan Train (a communal land dispossession project disguised as a tourism project), the "nationalization" of lithium (a way of expelling Chinese companies from the lithium extraction industry to allow North American companies to take their place), the immigration policy of preventing poor people from Central America from crossing into the United States at all costs, and the continuation of the war on drugs that began in 2007⁴. AMLO even stated in one of his conferences that he promoted the creation of a Free Trade Agreement for the entire American continent, with the aim of "stopping Asia"⁵. However, we cannot ignore that this information has an intention on the part of the DEA.

The role that the DEA has played in the drug war in Mexico has been central, however, it is not the only United States institution involved. The CIA has also been an important part in this war, and there have been episodes in which both institutions have clashed strongly. One of these occasions was in 1984, when a DEA agent was mur-

dered on the orders of a CIA agent, this because the former discovered an agreement that existed between the United States government, the then Secretary of the Interior of Mexico, Manuel Bartlett (who is now director of the Federal Electricity Commission in the Obrador government), and the Guadalajara Cartel to finance counterinsurgency groups in Nicaragua.

However, a more recent episode is in which the DEA arrested retired general Salvador Cienfuegos on drug trafficking charges in 2020, being one of the most important setbacks of the AMLO administration, as this arrest resulted in the Mexican government using all the resources at their disposal to request that a trial against Cienfuegos be stopped, bring him back to Mexico, and in a few weeks declare him innocent without any investigation involved. According to some researchers such as Jesús Esquivel, this strange phenomenon occurred because the Mexican army, another central actor in the war on drugs, demanded that the Mexican government prevent any type of complicity of Cienfuegos with drug trafficking from becoming known, because it would tarnish its reputation.⁶

The Mexican army has been a protagonist of the Obrador government, acquiring large infrastructure projects, such as the construction and administration of the Felipe Ángeles International Airport (the second airport in Mexico City), the administration of the Cancún airport, Guaymas, Ciudad Obregón, Palenque and Campeche, the administration and part of the construction of the Mayan Train and the Interoceanic Corridor, the new airline "Mexicana de Aviación", the construction of the Dos Bocas Refinery in Tabasco, and new private concessions to provide transportation services. All of these powers were given after the arrival of the AMLO government, and not counting those given to the navy, which is part of the armed forces, but which has a secretariat independent of the Secretariat of National Defense. The army has also enjoyed the complete defense of AMLO in the face of allegations with verifiable evidence that he uses Israeli technology to spy on activists and journalists, of his involvement in the forced disappearance of activists defending the territory, and specifically of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa, and laws have been modified to prevent the army from being held accountable for any type of accusation against them, disregarding the hundreds of thousands of victims of violence and forced disappearance in this country.

It is obvious that the army plays a central role in the government of Mexico, either because it is a very large de facto power that grew during the PRI Bonapartism that governed after the Mexican revolution until the end of the 20th century, and that has been maintained throughout of what is known as the neoliberal period, or because as an institution of the bourgeois state it plays an important role in the political relationship with the imperialist country that dominates us, but above all, the role it has played in the war on drugs has been ambiguous, but always reactionary. The reasons why the DEA decided to proceed against a retired general are unknown, but it can be pre-

sumed an attempt to have greater control by the anti-drug agency over the Mexican armed forces, which it often directs to carry out operations. However, this episode was the beginning of a bad relationship between the Mexican government and the DEA that is now public, even though the war vs. drugs policy has not changed at all after that incident.

So why is the DEA releasing this now? Journalists like Julio Astillero⁷ and Oswaldo Zavala⁸ conclude that it is for electoral interests in Mexico. We believe that this is absurd, since although the DEA has a long history of incompetence, as an institution it knows very well that the 2024 Mexican federal elections are already resolved, since the polls place Morena's candidate, Claudia Sheinbaum, far above his closest opponent, Xóchitl Gálvez. There is no way something like this information can reverse the election result. On the other hand, why would the DEA want to affect someone who has operated the war on drugs in a way so obedient to Washington? Obrador has accelerated militarization in a way that Calderón and Peña could only dream of. To find the answer we must see the entire forest and not just the trees.

First of all, works such as those by Oswaldo Zavala⁹ and Dawn Marie Paley¹⁰ have helped us understand that the famous "drug lords" are not as rich and powerful as the media makes us believe, because how can we explain that people accused of accumulating exorbitant amounts of money, large properties and having all the authorities bought off, they flee from the bush, defenseless and hidden in sewers or in the mountains, and are exhibited as illiterate people who cannot use a cell phone properly (as shown in Sean Penn's interview with "El Chapo" Guzmán¹¹). That is to say, drug trafficking groups do not really have enough economic power to buy an election, or financially support a presidential campaign, which requires hundreds of millions of dollars to sustain itself, and the supposed two million dollars that would have been given to the campaign of AMLO in 2006 would really mean nothing.

Secondly, of course this is about interventionism, but not only because an imperialist agency investigates a Mexican politician or the president himself, but because the war on drugs is a form of imperialist interventionism in itself. The nooks and crannies involved in this intervention are secondary, and should not divert attention from the real problem: that Mexico has been living a war against the poor population for 17 years under the pretext of fighting drug trafficking, in which the army, gringo agencies, state and municipal police are involved, as well as extremely bloodthirsty paramilitary groups that have strong ties with the local and national bourgeoisie, as well as Mexican politicians.

If the Sinaloa cartel or any other criminal organization has ties to the Mexican government, it is not through the financing of electoral campaigns¹², but rather under mechanisms that already operate once this or that politician is installed in the public administration, or by inheriting commitments of those who preceded them. In any case, within the parties that operate in Mexican bourgeois politics, it has been shown that all of them have some ties with organized crime, and that all have as part of their agenda the continuation of militarization and the war against drugs as such as gringo imperialism dictates.

The ways in which the US government can use this type of information are many, but looking at the full picture, it is one more way to feed a narrative that Yankee imperialism has built about how drug trafficking operates in Latin America, and adds to other stories, such as trying to link the drug cartels with their narrative of terrorism, making up nonsenses such as an alleged alliance between the Sinaloa Cartel with Hamas¹³ and ISIS¹⁴, or that the fentanyl that reaches the United States is sent from China¹⁵. This narrative has been part of the support that American imperialism has built to maintain its intervention in security issues in Mexico and in general in the Latin American region, so it is important to know how to differentiate what is real from what is fictitious in order to build an alternative that helps us to overcome this war that has cost the lives of almost half a million poor Mexicans.

In the RCIT we have been in favor of the construction of self-defense groups that are governed by the assembly method, such as those that exist in Michoacán and Guerrero, which have been very effective in the expulsion of criminal and paramilitary groups, despite the limited of their resources.¹⁶

Stop the war against the Mexican people disguised as a war against drugs!

For the construction of self-defense groups at a national level to combat paramilitary groups!

Footnotes

1 Anabel Hernández El Cartel de Sinaloa financió la campaña presidencial de AMLO en 2006, January 30, 2024, <https://www.dw.com/es/el-cartel-de-sinaloa-financi%C3%B3-la-campa%C3%B1a-presidencial-de-amlo-en-2006-i/a-68121426>

2 Tim Golden: Did Drug Traffickers Funnel Millions of Dollars to Mexican President López Obrador's First Campaign? January 30, 2024, <https://www.propublica.org/article/mexico-amlo-lopez-obrador-campaign-drug-cartels>

3 Steven Dudley: 'Operación Polanco': cómo la DEA investigó la campaña presidencial de AMLO de 2006, January 30, 2024, <https://insightcrime.org/es/operacion-polanco-dea-investigacion-campa%C3%B1a-presidencial-amlo-2006/>

4 We have addressed this topic in several articles, see, for example, Jorge Arboleda: Pedro y el Lobo. Los delirios del "golpe blando" y las lecciones de Perú, January 23, de 2023, <https://ccrimexico.blogspot.com/2023/06/pedro-y-el-lobo-los-delirios-del-golpe.html>; from the same author, Mexico: The "Bottle Caps" and the Perspective of the 4T after AMLO, 20 June 2023, https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/mexico-bottle-caps-and-perspective-of-4t-after-amlo/#anker_1; also see Mexico: Narco vs Morena in Guerrero – a False Dichotomy, July 31, 2023, https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/mexico-narco-vs-morena-in-guerrero/#anker_1. See also the article by Rubén Jaramillo and Héctor A. Rivera: Between fact and fiction. A critique of Mexico's "Fourth Transformation", October 1, 2023, <https://www.tempestmag.org/2023/10/between-fact-and-fiction/>.

5 Aristegui Noticias: Planteará AMLO tres propuestas a Biden para unificar América (video), December 22, 2022, <https://aristeginoticias.com/2212/mexico/planteara-amlo-tres-propuestas-a-biden-para-unificar-america-enterate/?fbclid=IwAR1bjrFiPnAnFDWt8sgNhHw2QV5Vgii4D8hoRxFjmpTfFiLgMOu3d4AyPO>

6 Jesús Esquivel: A sus órdenes, mi general' documenta la historia detrás del caso Salvador Cienfuegos, 3 de marzo de 2023, <https://la-lista.com/mexico/2023/03/03/a-sus-ordenes-mi-general-documenta-la-historia-detras-del-caso>

[salvador-cienfuegos](#). This complete investigation is found in his book: "A sus Órdenes, Mi General", ed. Grijalbo, February 2023). See also in Enrique López Magallón: México: Cienfuegos exonerado y la corrupción a salvo, January 15, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/es/m%C3%A9xico-cienfuegos-exonerado-y-la-corrupci%C3%B3n-a-salvo/a-56238018>.

7 Julio Hernández López: DEA se enoja; oposición aprovecha, February 1, 2024, <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2024/02/01/opinion/008o1pol>

8 Oswaldo Zavala: El dictado de la DEA, February 6, 2024, <https://www.sinembargo.mx/06-02-2024/4463034>

9 See the books by Oswaldo Zavala, *Cartels do not exist*, Vanderbilt University Press, 2018 and *La Guerra en las Palabras*, Ed. Debate, 2022

10 See the books by Dawn Marie Paley, *Drug War Capitalism*, AK Press, 2014, and *Guerra Neoliberal*, Ed. Libertad Bajo Palabra, 2020.

11 Sean Penn: El Chapo speaks, January 10, 2026, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/el-chapo-speaks-40784/>

12 In Mexico, electoral campaigns are financed mainly through a public fund that the National Electoral Institute assigns to each party or coalition, although they can legally be financed from other sources, as long as they do not exceed a campaign spending limit. Never in the history of bourgeois elections in Mexico have these spending limits been respected, and there have always been failures to make financing sources transparent, but without real consequences.

13 See Jesús Hernández: Hamas y el Cártel de Sinaloa, ¿narcos mexicanos tienen nexos con los terroristas palestinos?, October 13, 2023, [https://vanguardia.com.mx/noticias/hamas-y-el-cartel-de-sinaloa-narcos-mexicanos-tienen-nexos-con-los-](https://vanguardia.com.mx/noticias/hamas-y-el-cartel-de-sinaloa-narcos-mexicanos-tienen-nexos-con-los-terroristas-palestinos-EG9594547/)

[terroristas-palestinos-EG9594547](#); see also, Baruc Mayen: Así es como el Cártel de Sinaloa negoció con Hamas para construir túneles en Tijuana, december 13, 2023, <https://www.infobae.com/mexico/2023/12/13/el-mayo-zambada-habria-negociado-con-hamas-para-construir-tuneles-en-tijuana/>.

Regarding Hamas, the RCIT has many articles on the Palestinian liberation struggle, and in this regard our position has been critical support for Hamas, since this organization is not terrorist, but rather petty-bourgeois nationalist, which leads through the facts, the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist occupation. You can see several of these articles in various languages at this link: <https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/compilation-of-articles-on-the-gaza-uprising-2023/>

14 Emequis: Es China, tenemos pruebas de que fentanilo proviene de ese país: AMLO, 5 de mayo de 2023, <https://m-x.com.mx/al-dia/es-china-tenemos-pruebas-de-que-fentanilo-proviene-de-ese-pais-amlo/>. This narrative is something that cannot be easily refuted, but it certainly aligns with the interests of the United States to have a reason to elevate its rivalry with Chinese imperialism.

15 Pablo Ximénez de Sandoval: Estados Unidos cree que los cárteles mexicanos colaboran con ISIS, 16 de junio de 2017, https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/06/16/actualidad/1497572939_207670.html

16 On this topic we share an article prepared by the Socialist Struggle Group, former Mexican section of the CCRI, which addresses the issue of violence in Mexico and a program to confront it, see Rubén Jaramillo: La crisis de seguridad y violencia de la 4T ¿Cómo la enfrentamos?, December 19, 2019, <https://ccri-mexico.blogspot.com/2024/02/la-crisis-de-seguridad-y-violencia-de.html>

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.

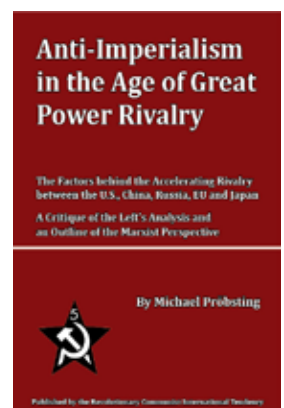
Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is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



Ukraine War: Reply to another ill-considered Polemic of PO (Argentina)

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 15 February 2024

The Argentinean *Partido Obrero* has published another ill-considered polemic against the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its Ukrainian comrades in *Spalakh*. Once more, they criticise our support for the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the imperialist invasion of Putin.¹

The article meets the usual PO standards of seriousness or rather the lack of it. The sub-title of the polemic is already telling: “RCIT: “Trotskyist” advice to maximize NATO’s finances in the war in Ukraine.”

The author wrongly claims that the RCIT resp. its Ukrainian comrades would advocate “the increase of the military budget”, i.e. that we would support the military budget of a capitalist state. Unsurprisingly, the PO article can not provide a single quote from the RCIT (or *Spalakh*) to prove such a hilarious claim.

In the real world, our article does not say anything like this. Our comrades rather attack “Zelenskyi’s predatory neoliberal government”, advocate the necessity “to nationalize strategic enterprises under workers control” as well as the establishment of “a planned economy”. “When the key sectors of the economy are nationalised and under control of the working people, they can produce according to the needs of the country and its population – and not in the interests of oligarchs and corrupted bureaucrats!” Likewise, our comrades in *Spalakh* call for “the transformation of the national liberation war into a people’s war.”

Furthermore, the PO article wrongly claims that the RCIT “does not propose ending Zelensky’s government.” In a joint statement with *Spalakh*, published in November last year, we wrote: “We denounce the Zelensky government for its neoliberal policy which results in the sell-out of the country’s people and resources to foreign and local oligarchs. Likewise, we denounce its pro-NATO and pro-EU policy. This policy could only result in the subordination to the foreign policy interests of U.S. and European imperialism. As a result, the country is getting now under pressure from Western powers to negotiate with Russia and to accept the occupation of the South and the East. The only way forward is a popular war against Russian imperialism independent of any Great Powers – similar to the resistance forces in Iraq and Afghanistan which expelled the American occupiers. The Ukrainian workers and peasants need to organise themselves independently. They need their own government – a workers and poor peasant government – in order to take their fate in their own hands and to remove any influence of oligarchs and foreign imperialists.”²

PO refuses to defend the Ukraine against Russian occupation

However, the polemic of PO against the RCIT is not caused by a misunderstanding. It is rather based on fundamental differences in the analysis of the class character of the Ukraine War and the states involved. Consequently, we advocate very different strategies for the war.³

Since the beginning of the invasion two years ago, the RCIT – like the comrades of *Socialist Tendency* which be-

came our Russian section in summer 2022 – has emphasised the imperialist character of Russia’s war against the Ukraine.⁴ At the same time, we explained that the conflict has a “dual character” as it relates to the inter-imperialist rivalry between NATO and Russia. Based on such an analysis of the War’s contradictory character, we elaborated a dual tactic which we summarised – in a Manifesto, published a few days after the beginning of the war – in the following slogans: “Defend the Ukraine! Defeat Russian imperialism! International popular solidarity with the Ukrainian national resistance – independent of any imperialist influence! Down with all imperialist powers – NATO and EU as well as Russia! In all conflicts between these powers, revolutionaries fight against both camps!”⁵

Based on such a characterisation, we made clear that socialists have to support military aid for the Ukraine. At the same time, we oppose economic sanctions against Russia by NATO (and vice versa). Furthermore, while we support the Ukraine’s just war of national defence, we refuse to lend any political support for the bourgeois and pro-NATO government of Zelensky.⁶

Unfortunately, the PO has not the slightest idea about the character of the war or of the participating states. They deny the imperialist character of Russia’s war against the Ukraine. This is the logical result of their stubborn refusal to recognise the imperialist character of the Russian state.⁷

Worse, they distinguish themselves from nearly all socialist forces around the world by sensationally claiming that capitalist restoration supposedly is still not being completed in Russia – nearly 33 years after the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1991!⁸

“What determines the character of war in the 21st century is the encirclement of Russia and China by US imperialism, in alliance with its subordinate allies of European and Japanese imperialism, in order to integrate the former countries into the imperialist world system in unrestrained fashion by bringing the process of capitalist restoration in these countries to its completion.”⁹

Blinded by such revisionist jumble of confusion, PO is completely incapable to recognise the true class character of the war – an aggression of Russia, an imperialist power, against the Ukraine which is a capitalist semi-colony.¹⁰

As a result, the PO leaders turns the character of the Ukraine War on its head. It is not Russia, which is invading the Ukraine, no, the war represents the attempt of NATO imperialism to colonise Russia! (Putin and Medvedev have told us this story already since many years!) Such states the PO in its latest polemic against us: “This is not a war of national liberation led by Zelensky (as imperialism tries to present), but rather the people of Ukraine serve as cannon fodder for imperialist plans to break into Russia and other countries in this area and advance thoroughly in the capitalist colonization of these vast territories.”

It is not difficult to see that a blindfolded blunderbuss has got hopelessly lost in the field of world politics!

The poverty of national-Trotskyism

If NATO imperialism tries to conquer Russia with the help of the Ukraine, if Russia is not an imperialist power and even not a fully capitalist country, why on earth does PO not support Moscow but rather states that “*socialist revolutionaries cannot be in either camp*”? Clearly, if the PO leaders would attempt to combine their theory with tactic, they could not but call for the defence of Russia against “*capitalist colonization*” by NATO and the Ukraine.

The reason for such inconsistency can not be found in the PO’s limited arsenal of theory but rather in the pragmatic needs of its realpolitik in Argentina. Since many years, PO is part of FITu – an electoral alliance of four Trotskyist parties. As part of this alliance, PO has some deputies in national and regional parliaments – something which provides these parties with significant financial resources. If the PO leaders would have openly sided with Russian imperialism, it would have brought them in full confrontation with the other three parties of this alliance. PTS (the leading party of the international tendency called *Trotskyist Fraction*) takes a neutral position in the Ukraine War, while IS and the MST (leading parties of the international tendencies *UIT-CI* resp. *LIS-ISL*) support the Ukraine.¹¹

In fact, it is not surprising that PO derives its international policy from the practical considerations of its national policy. It is, and has always been, a national-Trotskyist party which never seriously tried to build an international organisation. True, there were periods in which they joined a formal alliance with parties in other countries. In 2004, it held a conference founding the “*Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International*” (CRCI) together with other forces. However, this conference was to be the first and last one and after a few years, its international leading bodies did not even formally meet anymore.¹² Later, after the split of the PO between its historic founder Jorge Altamira and his followers with the rest of the party, the CRCI collapsed even formally.¹³

Opportunist adaption to Stalinism and pro-Russian social-imperialism

What is the objective character of PO’s anti-Ukrainian approach, its grotesque denial of Russia’s capitalist and imperialist character and its claim that it is exclusive the U.S. and its allies which would pursue an imperialist policy? It is opportunist adaption to Stalinism and pro-Russian social-imperialism.

It is no accident that some years ago the PO leaders closely collaborated with the *United Communist Party* (OKP) – a Stalinist party in Russia which is led by Darya Mitina. The latter participated in person at a large congress of PO and its allies in April 2018.¹⁴

The OKP agrees with PO about the thesis that the enemy is a “*single imperialist center (the countries of the Anglo-Saxon world, the EU, Japan)*” which would threaten Russia.¹⁵ Consequently, the OKP shares Putin’s notorious concept of “*denazification of Ukraine*” – the ideological basis for his invasion. Unsurprisingly, the OKP has been a loyal supporter of Great Russian imperialism since the beginning of its existence and supported Moscow’s military intervention in the Ukraine already in 2014. In fact, Mitina – with whom the PO leaders warmly held hands at the above-mentioned congress – was an official representative of the “*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Donetsk People’s Republic*” in Moscow at that time.¹⁶ Logically, the OKP sides with Russian imperialism also today in the current war!¹⁷

One could object that the PO’s political alliance with Russian Stalinists might not last long. It is true that as national Trotskyists, the PO has never entered a stable political relationship with anyone but rather limited itself to engage with temporary partners. A few years ago, they were friends with the Greek EEK and the Turkish DIP. Today, it is SEP in Türkiye and tomorrow ... who knows?! In the calculation of the PO leadership, these are just friends whose main benefit is to help camouflaging its national-centeredness.



Publications of the RCIT

The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

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

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

Nevertheless, such political affairs are not accidental but the necessary result of the PO's long-standing denial of Russia's imperialist character and its consequential replacement of consistent anti-imperialism with vulgar Anti-Americanism.

It is to be hoped that comrades in PO and its international allies draw the necessary conclusions and break with such opportunist and social-imperialist conceptions!

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War and Revolution in the Middle East

The transformation of the Zionist War on Gaza into an Israeli-American war against Arab peoples brings the region as well as the world closer to revolutionary explosions

By Michael Pröbsting, *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*, 1 February 2024

The steadfastness of the heroic Palestinian resistance

Day by day, the Middle East comes closer to a full-blown regional war between the imperialist warlords – Israel and the U.S. – and the Palestinian and other Arab resistance forces. In a recently published RCIT statement, we noted that one “*can therefore speak about the transformation of the conflict from a Zionist War on Gaza to an Israeli-American War against Arab peoples.*”¹

The most important element in this chain of conflicts is, of course, the ongoing war in Gaza. This is an unprecedented war resembling the biblical duel between David and Goliath. The Israeli army, which has been considered as the fourth-strongest army in the world, invaded Gaza in October last year in order to expel the Palestinian population and to exterminate the resistance forces.

These resistance forces represent a coalition of petty-bourgeois Islamist (mainly *Hamas* and *Palestinian Islamic Jihad*), nationalist (mainly the *Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade* and the *Popular Resistance Committee*) as well as left-wing organisations (mainly the *Popular* respectively the *Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine*). These organisations together have no more than several ten thousand lightly armed fighters, usually with joggers but without any protective gear. And according to video footage, a number of these fighters possess only sandals.

They are clearly outnumbered by the Israeli army which mobilised about half a million soldiers for this war, possesses high-tech air force, navy, tanks, artillery, satellites, surveillance technologies as well as about 200 nuclear bombs.

However, despite its numerically and technologically superiority, Israel – after more than 115 days of war – has only succeeded in slaughtering tens of thousands of civilians, destroying most of the buildings in Gaza and to make nearly all of the 2.3 million Palestinians refugees. Sure, the Zionists have also managed to kill several thousand resistance fighters. But they managed to conquer not more than half of Gaza until now, despite the fact that this strip is geographically smaller than the city of Vienna or Berlin. Not only this, contrary to their bragging announcements in early December of having “*degraded*” or even “*destroyed*” *Hamas*,² the armed resistance is “*continuing to conduct attacks against Israeli forces in the northern Gaza Strip as they infiltrate previously cleared areas*”, as the *Institute for the Study of War* – a U.S. professional military publication with strong pro-Israel leanings – stated with regret in its latest report.³

Initially, the Netanyahu government thought that the war would last only for a few weeks or about three months or so. Now Israeli minister Benny Gantz – a member of the war cabinet – says that “*this war could last a year, ten years, or even an entire generation*”!⁴

Clearly, the Zionists are having a tough time with the steadfastness of the heroic Palestinian resistance!

Revolutionaries unconditionally support these resistance

forces defending their homeland against overpowering invading forces!⁵

The Red Sea under control of the “goat herders in Yemen”

The second most important hotspot of this evolving Israeli-American war is the Red Sea. As we did already point out in past statements, the courageous solidarity actions of *Ansar Allah* (popularly known as Houthis) – which is the de facto government of Yemen as it controls most of the populous regions – against Israeli-linked cargo ships have proven to be highly effective. This is even more the case because the Houthis have started – after the Western powers sent their navy to the Red Sea – to attack also U.S. and British cargo and war ships.⁶

These strikes which have damaged several ships (plus one cargo vessel being hijacked by the Houthis) without injuring anyone. However, the U.S. and Britain – staunch supporters of Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza – not only sent warships to the Red Sea but also launched a number of military strikes against Houthis, resulting in a number of deaths.

Irrespective of these shameful attacks of Western imperialists, the solidarity actions of *Ansar Allah* are continuing to cause severe damage to Israel’s economy as well as to world trade as such. According to the Israeli outlet *Calcalist*, Israel’s maritime trade in the Red Sea has substantially decreased and revenues of Israel’s port of Eilat dropped by more than 80%.⁷ Since Asia accounts for 27% of Israel’s imports – which transit mainly via the Red Sea – it is evident that the blockade of *Ansar Allah* has major repercussions for Israel’s economy.⁸

These actions have also damaged the capitalist world economy which is already in the midst of a Great Depression since late 2019. The Suez Canal resp. the Red Sea is a vital link for international shipping and accounts for between 12-15% of global trade and about 20% of container trade. About 30% of the maritime transportation of crude oil and 20% of the maritime transportation of liquefied gas pass through the strait. As a group of bourgeois economists noted: “*So any partial closure will lead to a significant disruption to the world market*”. The UNCTAD’s head of trade logistics, Jan Hoffmann, reports that weekly container ship transits have already plummeted by 67%.⁹

As a consequence, four of the five biggest shipping companies have decided to pause their operations through the Red Sea. An increasing number of companies have stopped doing business with Israel and many ships entering the Red Sea are using the phrase “*We have no relation to Israel*” on automatic identification systems to avoid attacks from the Houthis.

Such shipping disruptions are already hitting global manufacturing. Europe, in particular, experiences major repercussions since 40% of its trade with Asia and the Middle East passes through the Red Sea – including 40% of Europe’s imported clothes and 50% of shoes which take this

route.

As a result, the cost of shipping a standard 40-foot container from Asia to northern Europe has surged from less than \$1,500 in mid-December to nearly \$5,500. Getting Asian cargoes to the Mediterranean is even costlier: almost \$6,800, up from \$2,400 in mid-December.¹⁰

According to Japan's *Nikkei* – the world's largest financial newspaper – major car producers in Europe have been forced to suspend some production due to a shortage of components after many ships were rerouted around the southern tip of Africa (around 70% of components in the European automotive sector imported from Asia come through the Red Sea). Among these corporations are Tesla, Volvo Car as well as Suzuki Motor.¹¹

The U.S./UK air strikes against Ansar Allah have deterred them not in the least. Quite the opposite, their solidarity actions with the heroic Palestinian people have massively increased the Houthis popularity – both in Yemen as well as in the Arab and Muslim world.

Mohamed al-Atifi, Defense Minister of Yemen's armed forces, stressed that the Houthis are ready for a "long-term confrontation" with the Western imperialist. "We are prepared for a long-term confrontation with the forces of tyranny. The Americans, the British, and those who coordinated with them must realize the power of the sovereign Yemeni decision and that there is no debate or dispute over it."¹²

The arrogant Western imperialists could not imagine that the Houthis are able to hurt them so easily and painfully. U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, a Republican bumpkin from Arkansas, derided the Houthis as "a bunch of goat herders in Yemen".¹³ Indeed, Yankee, the "goat herders" are kicking your ass pretty good!

Naturally, revolutionaries fully support these solidarity actions of Ansar Allah against Israel and their Western backers.

Lebanon and Iraq: On the verge of escalation

Until now, the conflict between Israel and *Hezbollah* has remained within certain boundaries. There are regular clashes at Israel's northern front but these have not become a full-blown war. However, the conflict has substantially escalated in the last two weeks as Israel targeted and killed two high-ranking commanders of the Lebanese militia.

A particular important factor for this recent escalation is the domestic crisis of the Netanyahu government. It is under enormous pressure from all sides. The families of the Israeli hostages are staging increasingly aggressive protests with support of the political opposition parties. In addition, the (semi-)fascist forces within his government are pushing Netanyahu to go for a long-term conquest of Gaza with the goal of rebuilding the Zionist settlements in the strip. At the same time, Israel's allies in the U.S. and Europe – on which the Zionist state totally depends economically and military – push more and more for an end of the Gaza War as they consider it as unwinnable.

Trapped in this web of contradictory interests, Netanyahu – an experienced politician – knows that he can only stay in power as long as he keeps the war going. He therefore wants not only to continue the genocidal war in Gaza but even considers the opening of a second front in the north. His Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said recently that Israeli soldiers will be moved from Gaza and redeployed to the

northern border with Lebanon. "They will very soon go into action... so the forces in the north are reinforced." Earlier this month, Israel's army chief of staff Herzi Halevi said the likelihood of a war breaking out in the north in the coming months was "much higher than it was in the past".¹⁴

At the same time, U.S. forces are facing an increasing number of attacks on their military bases in Iraq and Syria by Iraqi militias which protest against Washington's support for the genocide in Gaza. Until now, American troops and their bases have drawn more than 150 missile and drone attacks. Scores of U.S. personnel have received minor injuries including traumatic brain injuries during the attacks. In response, the U.S. killed a commander of the Harakat al Nujaba group. This has intensified Iraq's opposition to the presence of U.S. troops in the country and Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani promptly announced that his government would end the presence of American troops in Iraq and close all US military bases.¹⁵

On 28 January, the Iraqi militias managed to launch a particularly successful drone attack on a U.S. military base on the Jordanian-Syrian border which killed three US soldiers and injured more than 40. This attack has provoked outrage among U.S. politicians. President Joe Biden has vowed to "respond" and several US Senators called for direct strikes on Iran. Texas senator John Cornyn wrote on X: "Target Tehran." And South Carolina senator Lindsey Graham – a highly influential figure in the Republican establishment – posted on X: "Hit Iran now. Hit them hard".¹⁶

The White House is in a lose-lose situation. If it responds "weak" it will be mercilessly denounced by the Republican opposition and loses authority among its allies. If it hits back hard it risks becoming involved in a full-blown regional war. This would be a disaster for Biden as he faces election this year and one of his key promises was to end America's involvement in "endless wars in the Middle East". Furthermore, such involvement would be diametrically opposed to Washington's long-term interests of focusing on a confrontation with its most important imperialist rival – China.¹⁷

The death agony of the Zionist state

In summary, Israel and the Western imperialists are in a cul-de-sac. They seem to fail defeating neither Hamas nor the Houthis or other resistance forces. But they also can not retreat since a ceasefire now would represent a huge victory for the Palestinian resistance as well as all forces supporting them. It would be a major blow for Israel – most likely resulting in a collapse of the Netanyahu government and the opening a huge domestic crisis. Likewise, it would substantially weaken American and European influence in the Middle East.

At the same time, massive pressure from all sides is increasing. It is obvious that global sympathy is shifting towards the Palestinian people and away from the Zionist state. This is visible not only in the growing strength of the pro-Palestine solidarity mass movement around the globe but also in the humiliating defeats for Israel and the U.S. in votes at the UN General Assembly about a ceasefire as well as the recent ruling of the International Court of Justice on South Africa's genocide case against Israel.¹⁸

Naturally, it is not possible to foresee the concrete developments in the near future. However, it seems likely to us

that the war – with its ups and downs, temporary cease-fires, low-intensity warfare or full-blown military confrontation – will continue for some time in one way or another. Such a development will inevitably destabilise the whole Middle East and, at least to a certain degree, also the imperialist world order. Israel is in the midst of the longest war in its history which is a gigantic burden on its economy. The country is deeply divided between the extreme right-wing resp. fascist (pro-)settlers forces and the liberals. They are united in their hatred for the Palestinians but split on the issue which kind of Zionist state they want to live in.

If Israel fails to achieve its war aims of annihilating Hamas, it will constitute the worst blow this settler state has ever suffered throughout its existence. It is a well-known truth that imperialist states which suffer defeat in a war often face (pre-)revolutionary crisis at home. Given the specific nature of Israel – it is not only an imperialist but also a settler state – things are more complicated. Here it might be a more realistic that, on one hand, the right-wing settlers radicalise even more and try to impose another Nakba in against the Arab population in Israel or in parts of the West Bank. The liberal Zionists, on the other hand, might tend to leave the country since it does no longer offer them their privileged life, and many can easily enter Western imperialist countries (or even have already a dual citizenship).

However, in such a situation of defeat it is also possible that a minority of Israeli workers might be open to reconsider their loyalty to the settler state. Such a situation could create circumstances in which it is possible to split such Jewish workers away from Zionism and to make them allies of the Palestinians and the Arab masses in the struggle against domination by Great Powers and monopolies. Needless to say, that socialists have to work towards such a development as it would hasten the downfall of Zionism and imperialism in the Middle East.

For all these reasons we strongly agree with our comrades in Israel / Occupied Palestine who rightly view the crisis of the Zionist state as existential and consider it as doubtful if this settler state can last for much more than a decade.¹⁹

Towards a revolutionary situation in the Middle East

Likewise, the Arab regimes are also facing a dangerous crisis. The popular masses are with Palestine and support the armed resistance led by Hamas. According to a recently published poll, 69% of Arabs stand with the people of Gaza and Hamas. A further 23% stand with Gazans but oppose Hamas.²⁰ In such a situation, the Arab regimes must be very careful in pursuing a policy of normalisation with Israel – for which the Western imperialists are pushing. Such a move would dramatically undermine the last remnants of the Arab leaders' legitimacy in the eyes of the masses. It would rather represent a major factor in provoking a new wave of Arab Revolutions in the near future.

Of course, we are not in a position to make predication about the timescale of this looming revolutionary process. But it is beyond doubt that the Gaza War is the most important political event in the Middle East at least since the Iraq War in 2003 – an event which was followed by the Lebanon War in 2006, the four Gaza Wars from 2008/09 onwards and, finally, the wave of Arab Revolutions since

2011.

But the situation now is different from that in the 2000s or even the 2010s insofar that a) the geopolitical situation is very different today and b) the masses have already made the experience of the Arab Revolution.

In the 2000s, the global hegemony of U.S. imperialism was still unchallenged and, hence, it was still the dominating power in the Middle East. Today, this is no longer the case. Washington's influence has substantially declined while that of its Eastern rivals has increased. China's strategic partnership with Iran, its role in the reconciliation of Saudi Arabia and Iran, Russia's role in Syria and Russia, Moscow's coordination with Saudi Arabia and the UAE in circumventing Western sanctions or determining the oil price, Erdoğan's careful balancing between the Western and Eastern powers – these are only a few examples of this development.

Washington's decline has also been revealed in the Gaza War. Not only by its defeats at the UN General Assemblies and the ICJ but also by the embarrassing refusal of all European and Arab allies (except Britain) to send warships to the Red Sea when the U.S. asked them to participate in their *Operation Prosperity Guardian*. Several allies limited themselves either to send only a few naval officers – in some cases only a single one! – or to promise to send a warship in the future.

In other words, there is not a single power which dominates the Middle East today. The region is rather a place where several power rival for influence and where the masses have repeatedly revolted and put their mark on political developments.

In case of Israel's failure to crush Hamas, we can expect a massive encouraging of the Palestinian and the Arab and Muslim masses to intensify their struggle against tyranny. The events on 7 October and the ongoing heroic struggle of the Palestinian resistance did already destroy the image of Israel's "invincibility" and freed the Arab masses from fear from the Zionist monster. A full victory against Israel would dramatically accelerate this process! In such a situation, the negotiations between the Iraqi government and the U.S. about ending the presence of American troops in the country will be only the beginning!

This will put the Arab regimes all the more in a difficult situation as they can not "normalize" their relations with Israel without provoking the popular masses at home. Taking a hostile stance against the Zionist state, on the other hand, will keep the region in a pre- or semi-war situation with Israel and will also deteriorate their relations with the American and European imperialists. Such a highly instable and explosive situation – when Israel is regularly launching military strikes or even starting another war and, at the same, when the masses are passionately hating the Zionist monster and its Western backer – is prone to result in new liberation wars and revolutionary uprisings! This is why we think that the Middle East is heading towards a revolutionary situation.

Of course, it would be a mistake to exclude the possibility of an Israeli victory and a U.S.-led counterrevolutionary settlement of the "Palestine question" – with a Palestinian "mini-state" which would be a kind of Bantustan controlled by the Zionists and imperialists – resulting in a so-called "normalisation" process between the Arab countries and the settler state.

However, this would be only a superficially and short-term “solution”. Israel has created a new generation of traumatised Palestinians thirsting for revenge who are eager to wage war against the Zionist monster as soon as possible. It is impossible to imagine a long-term pacification of the situation in Palestine. Such an Israeli victory could neither destroy the idea of national liberation nor could it liquidate the armed resistance – it would rather transform Hamas and other resistance forces in Gaza from an army into a guerilla movement. More generally, one must bear in mind that the war has already taught the Arab masses to hate the Zionist and imperialist tyrants more than ever. A “normalization” imposed by Israel, the U.S. and Arab dictatorships would certainly not change this!

Hence, Arab regimes which pursue “normalisation” with Israel after its genocidal war in Gaza and against the unanimous opposition of their own population, will dramatically lose legitimacy and lay the foundation for revolutionary explosions in the not-so-distant future.

History is accelerating: what are the global consequences?

What are the possible global consequences of the evolving Israeli-American War in the Middle East? Again, we have to limit ourselves to outline several possible lines of development.

First, whatever will be the outcome of the war in the next months, it seems highly likely that the Western imperialists are massively losing influence – both globally as well as at home. Israel’s genocide in Gaza – with American weapons and money – is the final nail in the coffin of the Western concept of a “rule-based international order”. Of course, this was always a hypocritical ideological construct. However, this war has now absolutely confirmed this truth in the eyes of world public and one could see this in the UN votes on a ceasefire as well as the ICJ ruling.

This development will also embolden other nations which are directly or indirectly dominated by Western imperialists to stand up for their rights and to challenge the long-time rulers. We did already see such a rebellion in Niger only a few months ago which resulted in the expulsion of the French troops.²¹ Other countries could follow this example.

Furthermore, it seems likely that the U.S. will further lose its global influence while the Eastern rivals will be able to strengthen their position. Hence, we can expect a further acceleration of the inter-imperialist rivalry.

Of course, no one should have any illusion that Russian²² or Chinese imperialism²³ would be any better than the old Western hegemony. Just think about Putin’s invasion of the Ukraine,²⁴ his murderous wars in Chechnya and Syria²⁵ or China’s domestic dictatorship and the national oppression of the Uigurs in East-Turkestan (Xinjiang).

In addition, the successful blockade of the Red Sea and Iran’s grip of the Strait of Hormuz could have long-term consequences for the capitalist world economy and trade. We did already mention above the immediate effects which the solidarity actions of the Houthis have on global trade and production. This development is worsened by the fact that maritime trade in the Black Sea has suffered from the consequences of Putin’s war against the Ukraine. In addition, the Panama Canal, another key artery for global trade, is grappling with a severe drought as a result

of capitalist-induced climate crisis. This has diminished water levels, resulting in a staggering 36% reduction in total transits over the past month compared to a year ago.²⁶

Finally, we must not underestimate the consequences of the current war in the Middle East for the developments within the Western imperialist countries. As we just said, the above-mentioned consequences of the war for global trade will most likely result in an increase of inflation.

It will also make the ruling class in the U.S. and Europe even more aware of their military limitations in a period where wars are already taking place in different regions or might do so in the foreseeable future (e.g. Ukraine War, wars in the Middle East, tensions around Taiwan and the South China Sea). Hence, we can expect a dramatic program of armament in Western countries in the next years – something which Putin has already done since 2022.

A particularly important and encouraging phenomenon is that the Gaza War has resulted in the formation of an unprecedented solidarity movement with Palestine not only in the Arab and Muslim world but even in the Western imperialist heartlands. This movement is not only anti-war but also *anti-imperialist*.

It is particularly interesting that even in the heartland of Western imperialism, anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist views have become more popular. The very pro-imperialist and pro-Israel *Wall Street Journal* reported “*Roughly half of Americans 18 to 24 years old think Hamas’s October attack was justified by grievances of the Palestinians, according to a Harvard Harris Poll.*”²⁷

Likewise, the *Times of Israel* reported in 2021 about another poll which found that 25% of US Jewish voters agree that “*Israel is an apartheid state*” and 22% agree that “*Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians.*” (This poll was already before the current Gaza War!) It also found that 20% of US Jewish voters under 40 years agree with the statement “*Israel doesn’t have a right to exist.*”²⁸

These are important developments not only because they undermine the Western efforts to aid the Zionist massacre in Gaza and, at the same time, break up the domination of Zionism amongst Jews. They also help to revitalise and to internationalise the workers movement and the left in the Western countries themselves. As we did already point out repeatedly, the workers movement and the left have been strongly affected – particularly since 1945 – by the conditions of the Western domination of the capitalist world and their privileged situation, compared with the rest of the world. These developments have strengthened the position of the reformist labour bureaucracy and their social base – the labour aristocracy.

These forces have imposed a policy and an ideological outlook characterised by the separation of these layers (and their appendage among the so-called “left”) from the lower strata of the working class in the imperialist countries as well as the popular masses in the semi-colonies. The RCIT has called this phenomenon as *aristocratism*.²⁹

This negative development has opened space for the devastating and demoralising influence of all kinds of (petty-)bourgeois ideologies in the workers movement and the left – from left-liberalism and social-democratism to Post-Modernism and Islamophobia. The pro-Palestine solidarity movement will be an important antidote against such deeply-rooted aristocratism in the workers movement and the left in the imperialist countries. Revolution-

aries can and must link to this new experience of thousands of new activists.

Furthermore, the huge pro-Palestine solidarity movement is terrifying the ruling class in Western countries, and this has resulted in an unprecedented wave of attacks on democratic rights and attempts to criminalise Anti-Zionist views. (For example, the author of these lines is currently under investigation for “*suspicion of incitement to commit terrorist offenses*” because of the RCIT’s support for the Palestinian liberation struggle.)³⁰ In such a situation, the defence of fundamental democratic rights becomes not only important in itself but is also a key element of anti-imperialist activities in these countries.

We mentioned above the possible consequences of an Israeli defeat for the settler state. Since the U.S. and Western Europe are the most important allies of Israel and since the ruling class in these countries has made support of Zionism a key feature of its political and ideological identity in the current period (also in order to put down Muslim migrants and anti-imperialist activists), it is impossible that such a defeat of Israel would be without consequences for the Western class societies.

Naturally, it is difficult to predict concrete developments. But what seems most likely to us is a further political polarisation. An Israeli defeat will certainly embolden migrants and the pro-Palestine solidarity movement and might push sectors of the workers movement to the left. In any case, it will bolster the cause of anti-imperialism. At the same time, it might also strengthen the extreme right-wing racist and pro-Zionist forces. An Israeli victory could influence the relation of forces within this development but would likely not alter the fundamental process of polarisation.

If we take all the above-mentioned developments together – the consequences for the world economy, for the relations between the Great Powers as well as between the Western powers and the oppressed nations, the death agony of the Zionist state, the highly explosive nature of the situation in the Middle East which might result in new wars and revolutions, the process of armament and political polarisation in the U.S. and Western Europe, etc. – it is clear that they could open a new chapter in the world situation. The combination of these developments means that an Israeli defeat – which would be also an indirect defeat for the Western powers – could result in a revolutionary crisis in individual countries or even globally. In other words, it could open a global revolutionary situation.

To put it another way, faced with the ever-escalating aggression of the Zionist state and its Western backers, history will say: “*Give me war and I give you revolution!*”

The tasks of revolutionaries

As we are heading towards an explosive world situation, it is all the more crucial for revolutionaries to join forces in creating a leadership which is up to the tasks of the struggles. It is a fact that authentic revolutionaries today constitute only a small minority and that the mass struggles are led by petty-bourgeois Islamist, nationalist or reformist forces. However, this is no reason to despair but rather to intensify the efforts of advancing the construction of a *Revolutionary World Party*.

The most important precondition for close collaboration

between revolutionaries is the elaboration of a platform for the main tasks of the class struggles today. This means concretely to have broad agreement about the following tactics.

Unconditional support for the struggle of the Palestinian resistance and for all other pro-Palestinian forces (like the Houthis in Yemen) – without lending political support to their leadership.

Expel the U.S.-led naval force from the Red Sea! Close all imperialist military bases in the Middle East.

For a global boycott movement against the Terror and Apartheid state Israel.

No to the repression of pro-Palestine and anti-Zionist views. Defence of democratic rights of assembly and free speech.

Revolutionary destruction of the Zionist state. For a single secular and democratic Palestinian state from the river to the sea which would allow the Palestinian refugees to return, and which would grant minority rights to the Jewish population. Such a Palestinian state should be a workers and fellahin republic within a socialist federation of the Middle East.

Renew the Arab Revolution to bring down the pro-imperialist regimes and to open a process of permanent revolution in the region.

Support the ongoing struggle of Syrian people against the tyranny of Assad and his reactionary backers in Moscow and Teheran!

No support for any imperialist Great Power (U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe, Japan) – for revolutionary defeatism in any conflict between them.

Strengthen the workers movement in the imperialist countries by combining the opposition against domestic capitalists with a platform of consistent anti-imperialism. This means to stand in solidarity with the victims of imperialist aggression (Palestine, Yemen, Ukraine, etc.) and to support their resistance. It equally means to confront racism, Zionism and Islamophobia at home and to support the struggles of migrants and national minorities (the struggles of the Black people, of the national minorities in Russia’s Caucasus and Central Asia, in Catalonia, etc.)

Naturally, such a tactical platform must be combined with a transitional program for socialist revolution in the current period.³¹ However, the best program for socialism is worthless if it is not situated in the conditions of the global class struggle of today. Hence, we propose such a platform to all revolutionaries in the Middle East and globally in order to advance the construction of a *Revolutionary World Party* – the most important task in the current historic period!

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30 See on this e.g. RKOB: Austria: Pro-Israel Forces Lay Criminal Complaint against Michael Pröbsting, 29 January 2024, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/pro-israel-forces-lay-criminal-complaint-against-michael-proebsting/>

31 See e.g. the new RCIT Manifesto: The Revolutionary Struggle in the Era of Capitalist Collapse, adopted by the IV. Congress of the RCIT, September 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto-2023/>

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People.

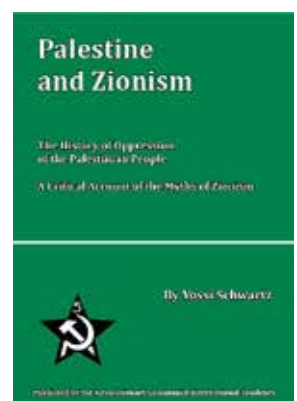
A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

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

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

The book contains an introduction and 7 chapters (112 pages) and includes 7 Tables and 3 Maps. The author of the book is Yossi Schwartz, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine..

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



Why Do Several Middle East Countries Refuse to Boycott Israel?

Pro-Palestine solidarity and capitalist double-speak

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 5 February 2024

All governments in the Middle East denounce Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian people in Gaza. However, when some countries suggested at the last meetings of the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in November 2023 that all member states should rupture their economic relations with the Zionist state, this proposal was rejected since some governments were strongly opposed to it.

What is the reason for such a gap between the verbal denunciation of Israel's war crimes and the refusal to translate such words into deeds? The answer is simple: it's about money.

This becomes evident when we take the figures from an economic report which the Bank of Israel published in March 2023. ¹ According to this report, "Israel's trade in goods with Middle Eastern countries, long limited, has been growing rapidly in the past two years. Imports from Turkey are surging and so are imports from and via the United Arab Emirates following the Abraham Accords. Israeli exports to these two countries have increased, as have natural gas exports to Egypt and Jordan. Total goods imports from the region's countries exceed exports to them."

The Bank of Israel provides detailed figures about Israel's trade with Middle East countries with which it has official relations. These countries are Türkiye, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and Bahrain. (See the Table below)

Growing trade ties

According to the report, imports to Israel have substantially increased. The most important among the Middle East countries is Türkiye. Effectively, Israel's imports from this country grew by 150% between 2011-15 and 2022 – from \$2.3 billion to \$5.7 billion. Imports from the UAE increased even more dramatically – in particular after the so-called "normalisation" between the two countries in 2020. While Israel imported commodities worth \$116 million in 2020, these figures increased by more than 16 times within two years to \$1,891 million! Imports from the other mentioned Middle Eastern countries increased also, albeit less spectacularly.

We see the same process when it comes to Israel's exports to these Middle Eastern countries. Exports to Türkiye grew by 50% between the years 2020 and 2022 – from \$1.4

billion to \$2.3 billion. And exports to the UAE increased by 900% in the same period – from \$74 million to \$670 million. Likewise did Israel's exports to Egypt grow from \$12 million to \$127 million.

As a result, the share of these Middle Eastern countries in Israel's imports increased from 3.9% (2011-15) to 7.7% and the share in its exports from 3.7% to 4.4%.

Likewise, the above-mentioned Middle Eastern countries have become popular destinations for Israeli tourists. The Bank of Israel reports: "Israeli tourism to the region's countries – mainly Turkey, Egypt, and the new destinations of the UAE and Morocco – expanded to more than 1.8 million visits in 2022 and increased relative to 2019 as well. The number of passengers flying to countries in the region (including back to Israel) was 3.9 million in 2022 – about one-fifth of international air travelers through Ben-Gurion International Airport."

Hence, it becomes clear that Israel has become an important economic partner for several Middle Eastern countries – in particular for Türkiye, the UAE and Egypt. If the governments of these states would impose a boycott against Israel, they would lose a lot of money!

Double-Speak

This, of course, is a shame since, in fact, the Middle Eastern countries could seriously hurt Israel's economy if they would impose a boycott against the Zionist state. Look what the Houthis in Yemen have achieved with their strikes against Israel-linked cargo ships! ² According to reports, the Houthis actions have resulted in virtually closure of Israel's port of Eilat, and its income fell by 80%. ³

If all governments would implement such a consistent policy in solidarity with the Palestinian people, Israel would quickly be brought to its knees!

Türkiye's Erdoğan government plays a particular shameful role. It (correctly) denounced Israel's genocidal war and said that Hamas is not a "terrorist organisation" but a national liberation movement. However, at the same time, as we did show above, it is the Middle East country with the largest trade volume with the Zionist state!

Not only this. Ankara also plays a crucial role in supplying Israel with oil. Azerbaijan contributes 40% of Israel's annual oil consumption and this fuel is transported



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

through Türkiye! When Hamas succeeded on 7 October to damage Israel' primary oil dock in Ashkelon, Erdoğan allowed an oil tanker to transport 1 million barrels of Azerbaijani crude from Türkiye's Ceyhan Port to Israel's Eilat Port.⁴

There is a word for this: double-speak. The ruling class of these Middle East countries have Palestine in their mouth – but money in their heart and in their pocket!

This is no surprise since these governments are all capitalist. They serve the financial interests of a small group of domestic and foreign corporations. They are ready to do business with everyone – including with Israel and the Sheitan!

It is the workers and the popular masses which must organise a boycott movement against Israel and those corporations which collaborate with this terror and Apartheid state. Only workers and peasant governments which expropriate the capitalist corporations and oppose all imperialist Great Powers – those in the West as well as in the East – can ensure a consistent policy of solidarity with the Palestinian people!⁵

Victory to the Palestinian resistance! Defeat Israel!

Footnotes

1 Bank of Israel: No Longer an Island Economy? Growing trade and tourism relations between Israel and Middle Eastern countries, 28.03.2023 <https://boi.org.il/en/communication-and-publications/press-releases/no-longer-an-island-economy-growing-trade-and-tourism-relations-between-israel-and-middle-eastern-countries/>. All figures are from this article if not indicated otherwise.

2 See on this e.g. RCIT: U.S & Allies Send Naval Force to

Red Sea to Support Terrorist Israel against Houthis, 18 December 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/u-s-allies-send-naval-force-to-red-sea-to-support-terrorist-israel-against-houthis/>; Gaza War: The Houthis and the Looming Imperialist Intervention in the Red Sea, 14 December 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/the-houthis-and-the-looming-imperialist-intervention-in-the-red-sea/>;

see also Michael Pröbsting: Gaza War: The Houthis Have Opened the Second Front. Major international shipping companies stop their operations through the Red Sea after a series of attacks by the Yemeni rebels, 16 December 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/gaza-war-the-houthis-have-opened-the-second-front/>; Yemen's Houthis Seize Israeli Cargo Ship: A Legitimate Act of Solidarity with the Palestinian Resistance, 20 November 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/houthis-seize-israeli-cargo-ship/>

3 Pepe Escobar: Yemen Ready to Stare Down a New Imperial Coalition, December 20 2023, <https://www.unz.com/pepe-escobar/yemen-ready-to-stare-down-a-new-imperial-coalition/>; see also Michael Pröbsting: War and Revolution in the Middle East. The transformation of the Zionist War on Gaza into an Israeli-American war against Arab peoples brings the region as well as the world closer to revolutionary explosions, 1 February 2024, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/war-and-revolution-in-the-middle-east/>

4 Turkish Minute: Israel's oil imports continue to pass through Turkey despite Erdoğan's pro-Palestinian rhetoric, October 30, 2023, <https://www.turkishminute.com/2023/10/30/israel-oil-import-continue-pass-through-turkey-despite-erdogan-palestinian-rhetoric/>

5 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more a number of RCIT documents on the 2023-24 Gaza War are compiled, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/compilation-of-articles-on-the-gaza-uprising-2023/>.

Table: Israel's Goods Trade with Middle Eastern Economies, 2011-22 (in Million US-Dollars in Current Prices)

	<i>Imports to Israel by Country of Purchase</i>					
	2011-15	2016-18	2019	2020	2021	2022
Türkiye	2,348	2,794	3,208	3,498	4,764	5,700
United Arab Emirates	15	31	-	116	837	1,891
Jordan	287	314	293	210	392	469
Egypt	80	65	76	80	127	180
Morocco	8	14	10	10	11	18
Bahrain	0	-	-	-	3	11
Total	2,738	3,218	3,587	3,914	6,134	8,269
Share of total goods imported	3.9%	4.6%	4.7%	5.6%	6.7%	7.7%

	<i>Exports from Israel</i>					
	2011-15	2016-18	2019	2020	2021	2022
Türkiye	2,050	1,546	1,758	1,431	1,919	2,272
United Arab Emirates	25	17	11	74	354	670
Jordan	134	60	99	39	64	67
Egypt	27	22	4	12	31	127
Morocco	164	92	111	91	121	38
Bahrain	0	0	-	-	4	2
Total	2,400	1,737	1,983	1,647	2,493	3,176
Share of total goods imported	3.7%	2.8%	3.4%	3.3%	4.1%	4.4%

