

Africa in Revolt



Aotearoa: For a Workers Government!

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Bi-Polar World/Socialism or Extinction!

Aotearoa: For a Workers' Government

NZ is a neo-colony, nominally politically independent since it ceased to be referred to as a 'dominion' of Britain in 1945. Yet NZ never had a national revolution and its 'dominion' status was never repudiated. The 'dominion' has passed from Britain to the two giant post-war imperialist powers, the declining US, and the rising China. By definition, the political independence of neo-colonies is a lie, as they remain subordinated to their neo-colonial masters. What passes for politics in NZ remains determined by imperialism, expressed most directly through the politics of the various governments which hold parliamentary power. The upcoming October 2023 election provides an opportunity to analyse what power, if any, governments can exercise independently of imperialism. What are the limits to that independence? Does it make any difference that the Labour Party is more non-aligned historically, and today inclined towards China and the BRICS, while the National Party is historically aligned with the US? We argue here, that despite such differences, and the degree to which left and right centre governments are aligned with China or the US, in the last analysis it doesn't matter. The only force that can liberate NZ from imperialism, East or West, is the revolutionary working class, as part of the global formation of Workers' Governments, East and West, North and South.

NZ as a Neo-colony of Imperialism

To explain what is going on in NZ we have first to understand its position in the global economy. This is what sets the conditions determining its economic development and in turn its political and cultural dynamics. To survive, capitalism must increase its share of the wealth produced by labour. The definition of a neo-colony is a country which has formal political independence but remains dominated economically by one or more imperialist powers. For Marxists, a country that remains dominated economically cannot be politically independent.

The history of successive government in NZ proves this point. NZ has always been politically dominated by imperialist finance capital, that of Britain in the interwar period, and increasingly the US and China in the post-war period. Since the end of the post-war boom profits have fallen and never recovered. The end of the boom in the 1970s exhausted the limits of Muldoon's Keynesian economic nationalism, forcing the Lange government to impose its neo-liberal counter-revolution in the 1980's. While neo-liberalism has increased the share of profits at the expense of the share of NZ workers – topped by the NZ\$ [1 trillion transfer of wealth](#) from labour to capital during the height of the Covid pandemic 2020-22 – it is not enough to save global capitalism's terminal decline. US and Chinese imperialism have no option but to increase their

exploitation of their neo-colonies, including NZ, downloading the cost of their terminal crisis onto workers and poor farmers.

In the case of China, NZ produces mainly raw materials with little processing. It sells milk products, raw timber, and allows China to invest in agricultural production with a similar level of processing. NZ imports mainly finished manufactures from China on the basis of competitive price. Is this no more than the normal operation of comparative advantage globally or does this amount to economic domination? It depends on how much China is in the position to extract surplus profits from NZ both in NZ's export to and imports from China.

NZ is also a neo-colony of the US – NZ has long been part of the Anglo-American Cold War story against Russia and China. But NZ is not yet committed to the inner security circle of AUKUS. Nevertheless, the US dominates NZ security and political relations, sharing Western Eurocentric 'values' – ['rip, shit and bust'](#). More recently it has invested heavily in tech startups and NZ state and corporate security and 'cloud' services. (eg Amazon). NZ is taking a relatively neutral line on the war. It didn't join with the other 5 eyes in Iraq or Afghanistan. It waits for the UN OK to send 'peacekeepers' or 'trainers'. In terms of the economic reality shaping the political,

the NZ bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie are rent seeking realists.

The foreign policy of the NZ Labour Govt is dominated by trade favouring China and its BRICS partners while resisting US military ultimatums. Current government officials have made at least two visits to India to further trade relations (expand) and recently visited Saudia Arabia and the UAE for new bi-lateral deals. All are now members of BRICS which indicates Labour's willingness to associate with the BRICS trading bloc despite pressure from the US - including the recent visit of US neo-con secretary of State Blinken. While both major parties put profits first, the National and ACT both have long term political and cultural relationships with the US during the Cold War.

ACT (Association of Citizens and Taxpayers) was founded by Labour Party who resigned who formed ACT after failing to push the Lange Government to enact the full-on US led neo-liberal counter-revolution to destroy the economic influence of the Soviet Bloc. The failure to reduce the Russia and China as pawns of the West didn't stop the rot of US economic decline. Biden's 'neo-conservative' proxy war against Ukraine to split Russia from China is its last desperate act to revive US imperialist hegemony. This warmongering threatens to escalate rapidly and draw NZ into a new world war. Given its political interests a NACT government in power would be more likely than a Labour led coalition to sacrifice trading relations with BRICS and cave into US political pressure to make war with China. To what extent will this different orientation in foreign policy towards East and West imperialist blocs, determine NZ's domestic politics?

Governments Left, Right and Centre

The upcoming elections in NZ are designed to highlight the apparent differences between a Labour led left-centre government and a National led right-centre government? This makes good political theatre in which governments appear to serve the interests of conflicting classes. In fact, both parties historically have converged on the political centre representing the petty bourgeoisie and its modern ally the bureaucratic administrative middle class that together serve the bourgeois ruling class.

The popular belief that a National led coalition will be hostage to the ultra-right ACT party, or a Labour led majority be hostage to the Greens or

Māori Party, actually works in the opposite direction. These ideological outliers painted as 'extremes' create the fear that tiny minorities will dictate the political agenda. Yet the reverse is the case. The 'extreme' minorities are locked into almost identical centrist majority governments which manage 'middle NZ' in the class interests of the national bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters. Meanwhile, the working-class majority becomes disillusioned in the parliamentary circus, disaffected in bourgeois democracy, and [potential fascist fodder](#).

This is the classic argument for the popular front between workers and bosses which prepares the way for fascism. The Ardern coalition govt showed this. In its first term, NZ First's centrist populist stance was the excuse used by Labour for not delivering on its 'transformational' election promises. In Labour's second term the Covid pandemic saw the coalition make a huge wealth transfer from workers to capitalists on the pretext of stabilising the economy. If a Labour/Green/Māori Coalition wins in October 2023 it will be no less a popular front based on the woke, liberal middle class, in bed with corporate capitalism.

Would a Left centre coalition be the 'lesser evil' compared with a NACT victory? No. Both left and right blocs depend on not scaring the centre to prevent the ultra-left Greens/Māori and Ultra-right ACT from running the government. Yet the minority parties cannot dominate government when the centre is the centre of political gravity occupied by an electoral majority committed to liberal democratic capitalist government. Revolutionaries call liberal democracy 'bourgeois democracy' since all such governments are committed to the fiction of 'democracy' to hide the bourgeois 'dictatorship' of the 'bourgeois' ruling class.

So, while the ult-right ACT and center-left Greens express the politics of the disaffected middle-class and petty capitalists, both are ultimately directed at their common enemy – the organised and independent working class. Their parliamentary solution is the popular (or peoples') front between workers and the bourgeoisie in a national unity government. If the upcoming elections throws up such a popular front it is the outcome is likely to be a hung parliament where National and Act to form a government must enlist NZ First Winston Peters as king maker, reversing his role in the previous Labour coalition.

If the left bloc between Labour and the Greens needs the numbers to form a government, it will be the leftist Te Pāti Māori that will act as the 'kingmaker'. It remains to be seen, in this eventuality, whether TPM will accommodate to Labour and Greens middle class or refuse Confidence and Supply and risk losing a vote of no confidence. The neo-liberal counter-revolution decimated organised labour particularly Māori, and created a whole new class of petty bourgeois now hostile to the working class. This accounts for the shift in Labour from a bourgeois workers party to an open neoliberal capitalist party during the 1980s. We argue that a party that incorporates workers and petty bourgeois capitalists together is a popular front party serving as the 'shadow' of the big bourgeoisie. That is why no genuinely workers party claiming to represent Māori and Pākehā can give such a popular front any political support without helping prepare the defeat of workers as a class. We can illustrate this danger when workers are fooled into voting for NZ First to prevent National from compromising with ACT in the hope that Peters will defend the interests of workers, Māori and Women.

NZ First Racist Populism

Peters is a scurrilous right-wing populist who loves to position himself as kingmaker in the centre of politics to keep governments of left and right honest. Despite his Māori heritage, Peters is an advocate of Eurocentrist white supremacy that defends the legacy of settler colonialism. His constituency is the aging 'one people' assimilationist rump scared of change under Left and Right governments which agree on woke post-modern capitalist globalism. Peters frightens his flock with his conspiracy theory that separatist globalism is caused by Marxist cultural wars over 'race' and 'class'. Never mind that globalism is the face of the imperialism that dominates neo-colonial NZ and the mortal enemy of Marxism. Peter's opportunism casts [imperialism and Marxism](#) as cultural warriors in bed together.

Behind this subterfuge, Peters real target is the white racists fear of racial 'separatism', that is 'brown power', as represented by 'co-governance' or 'power sharing' under Te Tiriti. Specifically, the culprit is the 'Marxist Globalist' UN token resolution on Indigenous Peoples' Rights adopted by both National and Labour. National sat on the resolution and then dumped it when the red flag of the reactionary 'one nation' assimilationist crowd was

raised. Labour, ever committed to Te Tiriti tokenism, tried to appease the woke left and legislate for the token co-governance, before sidelining it with the departure of PM Ardern, proving that under Labour, Te Tiriti will never be honoured. Not because Labour will probably be defeated this election but because it's focus groups and the woke media both rejected co-governance.

However, it is women who have most to lose by voting for NZ First. NZ First has an ostensibly liberal position on women's rights. It proposed the legalisation of abortion (2020) be put to a referendum. It postponed the undemocratic attempt by Labour and Greens to pass legislation implementing sex-self ID. Today, Peters has come out in support for women's rights, especially to their own spaces such as toilets, and women's sports. However, NZ First supports women's rights from a conservative standpoint. It opposes men and women changing sex because that disrupts the historical relationship of the sexes in marriage and the family. Taken together, with its white supremacist patriarchal agenda, it supports traditional roles for women in which they are historically subordinate. If women vote for NZ First on the issue of Women's Rights, it may get across the 5% threshold and enable a center-right popular front government to take power.

Te Pāti Māori, Women's Rights Party, Workers Now!

TPM stands for the honouring of the Tiriti O Waitangi. Yet the Treaty cannot be honoured without self-determination which means restoring iwi land rights, self-rule and political equality. No capitalist government left, right or centre, will grant Māori self-determination. This was proven when Labour, which had led the reform process on the Treaty in the 1970s, balked over Māori ownership of the Foreshore and Seabed (F&S). TPM was preceded by Mana Motuhake when Matiu Rata rebelled against Labour's neo-liberalism and joined with the NLP as part of the Alliance in 1990. TPM was formed in 2004 when Tariana Turia split with Labour over the F&S.

Our position then was to reject parliament and occupy the F&S. Of course, TPM did the opposite becoming a coalition partner with the National Party of John Key for three! In 2011 Hone Harawira split from TPM joining with union leader former Alliance MP Laila Harre in a coalition of his Mana Party with the Internet Party of Dot Com! The

Mana Party was a progressive left party, but as a mini popular front of Māori, unionists, and tech millionaires, it dissolved when Harawira lost Te Tai Tokerau in 2014. TPM was reborn in 2020 under the leadership of former Labour MP John Tamahere as treaty-centred and economically leftwing, calling for taxes on wealth and land speculation.

We recognise TPM today is a radical reformist party representing the interests of Māori as an oppressed people. Its leadership, while drawn from the labour bureaucracy and Māori middle class, is acting like the chiefdoms such as Te Whiti's representing collective Treaty rights by raising demands that cannot be met short of an end to capitalist society. The demand for self-determination under the Treaty means the restoration of Māori land use rights, self-rule, and political equality. No capitalist government would enact them. TPM's land tax on the unearned increment is in effect the nationalisation of the land as a use-value rather than a commodity producing rent. But for this to happen the end of money as capital, that is, no more than a measure of labour time, would demand a state bank replacing private banks. TPMs program calls for a Workers' Government to enact economic equality based on equal shares in a planned economy in a socialist Aotearoa.

Similarly, the [Women's Rights Party](#) and Workers Now! are radical reformist parties, in the tradition of the Suffragettes and women's organised labour. Of necessity, women's defence of the fundamental rights in the 19th and 20th century faces a counter-revolution in trans ideology, allowing men the right to be women and proving that the bourgeois right of free speech and association can only be realised by permanent or socialist revolution. These radical left parties of women and workers who have split to the left from social democracy should be given critical support by workers provided they don't prop up a popular front with the Labour Party and the Greens. We call on these parties to reject any political endorsement of the ruling capitalist parties, including confidence and supply agreements, and to use parliament like Lenin and Liebknecht advocated, as a 'tribune' or rostrum where communists stood to raise their revolutionary platforms for a Workers' Government, to take power, overthrow capitalist and patriarchal modes of production and to fight for socialism.

From Capitalist NZ to Socialist Aotearoa

We have argued that New Zealand is a neo-colony of imperialism, first of Britain up to WW2, and since then, of the US and China. We do not link the word Aotearoa to this neo-colony but reserve it for a socialist republic as part of a wider Pacific federation of socialist republics. To make the transition from neo-colony to socialist republic it is necessary to fight for the **permanent revolution**. From Marx in 1848 to Trotsky in 1940 permanent revolution means that it is the working class alone that can end capitalism and create the conditions for socialism. The fight to defend and extend bourgeois rights cannot succeed without the overthrow of the bourgeois ruling class, and its replacement by the proletarian ruling class.

Workers need an independent workers' party with a transitional program. We have shown how such basic demands cannot be met by parliamentary means in this age of imperialism. In fact, what rights remain are being eliminated. No capitalist government, no matter how many indigenous, workers and women are in the cabinet since the centre ground committed to stable capitalism strangles any real resistance. Workers Now, and Women's Rights Party are in the fight for a new **mass workers party** where both sexes, and all peoples, Māori, Pacific, Asian, African and European belong. The task of a mass workers party is to fight for workers' democracy in a Workers' Government based on the independent working class organisations of all workers and peoples.

The Te Pāti Māori is also in this fight. Despite its middle-class leadership, its fight for Māori self-determination cannot be realised under capitalism short of permanent revolution. All are staunchly defending basic bourgeois rights of Māori and women workers who make up the huge majority of the reserve army of labour. Yet this fight can be won only by breaking with the labour bureaucracy in politics and the unions, and with the bourgeoisie and its state machine. That is, breaking from the popular front regimes that tie workers to the bosses. These rights can be won only by the independent working-class party, uniting wage workers, contract workers, and unpaid workers, armed with its transitional program, as the only class capable of ending capitalism and building a socialist society in harmony with nature.

Brazil: Between the US and China/Russia

The capitalist system is opening its destructive character, affirming what Lenin said in the theory of Imperialism, the phase of capitalism of crises, wars and revolutions.

From 2008 until today, the balance we can draw from these years is that those who have paid the price of the crisis are the working class and the poor people. What we see is climate change threatening our survival and imperialism dragging us into a new war. The only force capable of defeating the bourgeoisie and putting an end to the rotten capitalist system is the workers' revolution. For this, the workers need to overcome the leadership crisis and build a revolutionary international party that leads to the victory of the Socialist Revolution.

The inter-imperialist dispute between the USA and China/Russia drags the world towards a great war. A war for raw materials and cheap labor in the semi-colonies. The decay of US imperialism enables the China/Russia imperialist bloc to strengthen and be its greatest threat.

In the last 15 years, the capitalist governments of the semi-colonies have tried to balance themselves in the face of an increasingly bipolar world, after 60 years of hegemony by American imperialism. But the capitalist economic crisis has led to political and social instability. Coups, impeachments, repression and authoritarianism in semi-colonial bourgeois states is growing. The class struggle intensifies. During this period workers try to resist increasing attacks, as it was in the Syrian Revolution and the Arab Spring in general, the great expression being the revolution in Egypt, Marikana in South Africa, resistance to coups in Peru and Bolivia in Latin America, to the resurgence of the governments of Venezuela and Nicaragua and a long etc. including the uprising in Chile, Brazil in 2013 and Jujuy today in Argentina.

Brazil is an American semi-colony, Latin America the "backyard" of imperialism. For the US to see China's influence today is an inconceivable threat. Brazil was never an "independent" country, Lula and the PT ruled for 14 years without breaking with imperialism. Lula returns to power for the third time in alliance with sectors of the bourgeoisie in a government to apply the dictates of imperialism, as he did in previous governments

sending troops to Haiti, reforming the social security system, privatizing and making concessions to the private sector, saving large companies with public money in the 2008 crisis, building Belo Monte and a long etc.

Like the entire semi-colony, Brazil is squeezed between the US v China/Russia inter-imperialist dispute. Semi-colonies are increasingly unstable economically, politically and socially. Some are still balancing between the two imperialist blocs, others are already being dragged into one of the disputed blocs.

Lula was elected with a speech of neutrality and dialogue for peace, in which he builds the figure of a strong international leader promising economic development internally. However, the more the government is squeezed by the international geopolitical dispute, the more Lula nods to China. Economic instability reveals that the development promised by Lula is based on credit, however, in a situation of terminal crisis of capitalism, caused by the Tendency to Fall in the Rate of Profits (TQTL) in which the bourgeoisie burns capital with the closure of factories, unemployment and war, that promise is increasingly unattainable. To stop the capitalist system and prevent the workers from paying the bill for the crisis, it is necessary for the workers to overcome the leadership crisis.

The bourgeoisie allied with Lula in the Frente Ampla (Popular), which does not want to jeopardize its business with China and sees Bolsonaro as a threat, but which also does not want a break with Washington, was "surprised" and outraged by Lula's declarations of that Ortega is not a dictator and that democracy is relative, defending Maduro, supporting China's "peace" agreement that keeps Russia occupying part of Ukraine, etc.

In the context of war, economic and climate crisis, the semi-colonies will be increasingly pressured to take one of the sides in the inter-imperialist dispute. In the imperialist epoch, there is no possibility of independence of the national bourgeoisie from imperialism. This independence is only possible with the socialist revolution. Therefore, we defend revolutionary defeatism, a Leninist political position of class independence that fights against both imperialist blocs. In the same way, nationally, workers must be in the

struggle with class independence from governments and any fraction of the bourgeoisie that, in the face of enormous instability, fight for power, with fascism and authoritarianism being the alternative to contain the population and guarantee agreements with imperialism.

We are moving towards a bipolar world after decades of American hegemony. The left is divided between those who support the “democracy” of US imperialism or the China/Russia imperialist bloc as the progressive and anti-imperialist pole.

The “Multipolar World” of the Putinist Left: Stalinists and Some False Trotskyists

Parts of the left are in an uproar, saying that China and Russia are defeating US imperialism and making the world “multipolar”. This sector does not see that China and Russia are now imperialist countries, considering them “independent” semi-colonies and even workers states. For them, China's exploitation of resources in Latin America, Africa and the entire semi-colonial world is a “win-win” business where everyone wins. The Chinese “investments” that compete with those of the IMF, such as those of lithium in the border region of Bolivia, Argentina and Chile that lead to the destruction of the environment, the misery of the people and attacks on workers like the one in Jujuy, are of a “good” capitalism. The defense of this exploitation is based on the same narrative as neoliberalism: investments will bring work, credit and development.

From Ukraine to Niger and Venezuela, this reformist sector of the left is openly supporting war, authoritarianism and coup d'états. Class struggle, class independence and socialist revolution are abolished from their vocabulary.

The “democratic” imperialist left: the Morenists of Latin America

Another part of the left fails to see the growing bipolarity between the US and China. Clinging to a dogma, the USA is the only imperialism and does not see the rise of China and Russia as imperialist countries at the expense of American decline. Therefore, they fail to see that in Ukraine, the war is inter-imperialist between US/EU and Russia (China). The war in Ukraine would be a war between semi-colonies, and clinging to their dogmas, they defend the invaded and

“democratic” Ukraine against the invading “dictator”, in fact taking the side of American imperialism in the war.

The Morenist “democratic” left forgets the class character of the war and denies any independence of the workers for the advancement of a Proletarian Military Policy as defended by Trotsky, in which the workers must turn their arms to their own bourgeoisie and transform the inter-imperialist war into class war.

This sector is, in fact, supporting the imperialist war and promoting a Popular Front with the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, acting as a transmission chain for the belligerent US policy. This position is the result of Moreno's theory of “democratic revolution”. Contrary to Lenin's theory that in the imperialist epoch the national bourgeoisies are no longer able to carry out the democratic revolution and achieve independence from imperialism, and reneging on Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution that the democratic tasks in the imperialist epoch can only be accomplished by the workers, once again the Morenoist left sided with the “democratic” bourgeoisies, as a necessary step towards the socialist revolution.

The United Front against the Popular Front

For the workers, exploitation by one or another imperialism is not a “lesser evil”. Faced with the inter-imperialist dispute, we defend the Leninist policy of Revolutionary Defeatism in which workers must fight against both imperialist blocs and turn their weapons against their own bourgeoisies.

We call for a United Front, a new Zimmerwald, against imperialist war and for revolutionary defeatism. The United Front brings together left-wing organizations and their bases, without sectors of the bourgeoisie. It must serve to unmask the opportunist leaderships and their popular front program that abandons class independence. We do this by presenting our combat program to both the imperialist blocs and the national bourgeoisies and by fighting the PF. In defense of the methods of class struggle with the organization of workers' committees, strikes, pickets and advances in self-defense mechanisms, towards the seizure of the means of production and power, to stop the war, end capitalism and build a socialist society.

Zimbabwe: Economic Crisis, State of the Working Class, Forthcoming Elections, and Urgent Tasks

In June this year President, Emerson Mnangagwa announced the next election dates. So all workers must consider the state's balance sheet. The national debt to GDP ratio explodes year over year peaking to 102.33% in 2023, with our lives in hock to imperialist finance capital year over year into the future. Zimbabwe experienced another round of hyperinflation hitting a high of 175.8% in June retreating in July to 101.5%. This is how our ruling class imposes its debts on us, as long as we let them.



Economic Crisis

This is the second time, the other was last year around the same period, that in a short space of time the incomes of workers were wiped out by over 500 per cent with prices of basic goods and services ballooning at an absurd pace whilst incomes remain stagnant. Their debt imposed on the masses poses the question. For the working class to survive the capitalist system at home and imperialism must die. The working class needs to take control of wages and prices! Only the Revolutionary Workers Group (RWG) has a program to stop inflation. Our transitional program completes the national democratic revolution, it breaks the debt trap by workers self-management and control of the big

national and foreign businesses, industries, mines, and lands.

The immediate background to this is the neo liberal policies of the second regime which devalued incomes and savings by equating the values of the local currency and that of the US dollar in 2018 followed by a directive scrapping the use of other currencies other than the local one without express permission via the law. We need the laws to be written by and for the working masses, the poor and landless farmers. Our transitional program creates a bridge to the masses writing the laws that govern the economy, and that bridge is through class struggle, self-organisation and political

independence from the capitalist class both foreign and domestic.

Through this raft of policies the state ensured that business and government made massive profits and surpluses respectively whilst the working masses continued to pay for the crisis through devalued wages right through the Covid-19 era. Internationally the last five years have generally been characterised by slow growth and a recession during the Covid-19 era with governments, from imperialist centres and semi colonies, resorting to attacks on incomes and working conditions to navigate the crisis of falling profitability.

State of the Working Class

The state of the working class is dire. De-industrialisation and informalisation of the economy has drastically reduced the numbers and quality of employed workers. Workers in formal employment now constitute a minority of the working population which is dominated by informal or self-employed workers with a large number of unemployed on the margins. This objective situation has weakened the working class coupled with subjective actions by leaders which have rendered the class redundant and docile in the face of attacks by capital. Very few trade unions are still standing up to attacks by both business and capital as they force on the working class the burden of paying for the crisis of capitalism in a subdued semi colony.

The situation has been made worse by the capture by the ruling party in alliance with its Chinese and Russian masters of a leading faction in the main trade union federation the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) at the 2021 congress resulting in the up to now dominant pro main opposition, Citizens Coalition For Change(CCC), faction being vanquished. Despite being aligned to the opposition the former leaders engaged in actions which despite being insufficiently prepared provided opportunity for deepening and broadening fight backs.

Today even token action has become taboo with the last nail in the coffin being the suspension of a militant trade unionist on spurious charges in desperate attempts to weed the federation of any alternative voices. The recent call by workers for action against useless local currency (ZWL) wages and in support of a petition to stop the president from signing the Labour Amendment Bill was actively sabotaged by the federation. Workers should organise themselves on the ground to conquer unions and a federation which are

independent of various wings of imperialism through total workers control and militant action.

Forthcoming Elections

On 23 August presidential, legislative and council elections will be held. This will be the second time Zimbabweans go to a poll since the advent of the post-coup second republic. In the 2018 elections we called on workers to boycott the plebiscite as a contest between bourgeois parties in which workers had no viable representative. Our assessment is that the election is heavily tilted in favour of the ruling party which has manipulated the pre-election environment as well capturing the election management body, Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC), despite its core base of the peasantry and beneficiaries of mining claims and residential stands in the cities and peri urban areas.

South Africa Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), in its statement on the elections, acknowledged that the elections will not be free and fair and are essentially a contest between parties that represent the reigning and rising wings of imperialism. The opposition CCC enjoys massive support across the population especially from workers, informal workers, unemployed youths and urban poor. A large number of the peasantry also support it. The continued economic crisis and absence of a viable working-class alternative have all worked in favour of the opposition despite its pro-capital and impractical Manifesto.

The chances of the opposition in this election can, to an extent, be favoured by the relative access to rural areas, digital innovation and cracks within the ruling party and regime which can manifest in the conduct of ZEC, the courts and security apparatus. Its greatest challenge will be the entrenched apathy among its support base and its organisational capacity as a result of shambolic primaries and sidelining of key leaders and groups. To its credit CCC did survive an onslaught to capture and/or crush it by the ruling party using an array of strategies soon after the death of its founding leader in 2018. It has emerged as a strong petit bourgeoisie party rising on the desperate support of the working class and poor masses eager for "change". Despite the economic crisis and huge support, its ascendancy to political power depends to the extent to which ZEC, the courts and security forces are "pressured" to respect the will of the "people" by the working masses, ruling party factions, observers and most importantly the different wings of imperialism.

Divisions on Participation of Workers

Three distinct positions have emerged on the attitude organised labour, the working masses, youths/students, progressive movements, radical intellectuals and socialists should take on the impending elections. Two are on extreme ends with one occupying the middle space. The first one is that *'...let us fully and unconditionally support the viable opposition, CCC, as the best foot forward to defeat the regime and usher in democracy first. Everything else, including key workers' demands, would follow from this.'* No conditions just hope for the better thus giving the opposition a blank cheque. This position is being propelled by the pro-opposition bureaucrats with some workers in tow.

The second, and middle of the road, position is, that *'...despite the character of the main opposition and facing a formidable and ruthless dictatorship workers cannot stand aside and have to offer conditional support to the viable opposition, CCC, by tabling workers' demands to it.'* The main reason for this is the entrenching of an authoritarian dictatorship of the military supported regime that has closed all democratic space through crushing protests and strikes as well as persecuting and jailing activists and workers. A section of the working class and socialist organisations champion this call. They argue that not doing so will alienate the left from the workers still under the grip of liberal illusions.

The last position characterises elections as a bourgeoisie democratic ritual more so if it is a contest between capitalist parties. In the absence of a workers or centrist party workers would be called on to boycott the elections and concentrate on building their forces to fight neoliberalism and dictatorship in alliance with progressive sectors of society. It argues that, firstly, it is naive for workers to think that merely participating in an election being run by an authoritarian and neoliberal coup dynasty (waiting for turns to rule) can usher in a new government. Secondly, it is disingenuous to suggest that a new petit bourgeoisie neoliberal (anti-worker) government brings about democracy and good conditions for workers.

It is true that workers still have faith in CCC because of its roots in the working class but we cannot run away from the fact that once in power CCC will not serve workers but capital so it is our duty to point out clearly that a CCC victory will not fundamentally change the situation of workers. The condition of workers can only be transformed through struggle. It is not in dispute that we are in

a semi-colonial authoritarian state presided over by a comprador bourgeoisie class managing the economy on behalf of both Western and Eastern imperialism and local capitalists whilst looting massively. It is doing everything to close the democratic space and take away workers' rights simply because that is demanded by imperialism facing acute crisis coupled to late primitive accumulation.

"Crony capitalism" is small fish compared to traditional, historic capitalism and imperialism despite its apparent concrete and immediate form. It is expressed as anachronistic "primitive accumulation" which involves overt looting and corruption, actions that have been disguised by the big mafia through legal and ideological smokescreens. The basic proposition is that the working class should not rely on elections to change its situation. Instead, it must take it upon itself to organise and lead the fight for basic social and economic rights and interests.

Tasks of Revolutionaries facing Monopoly Capitalist States

The level of democracy corresponds to the economic stability of a given country. It is naive to think that any new leaders would be neutral on labour and democracy issues especially now when the capitalist system threatens human existence and nature. An example is Zambia where the "liberal" Hichilema is already closing democratic space by blocking the opposition from holding rallies as the economic situation begins to deteriorate with the price of basic goods like mealie meal skyrocketing. The form of a bourgeoisie regime or state does matter to the working class in proportion to its level of organisation and preparedness to fight.

In Egypt and Sudan workers played a key role in bringing down brutal dictators despite subsequent retreat as a result of insufficient organisational and ideological independence. The crisis of the working class in Zimbabwe is a crisis of working-class leadership. A liberal state can change into a dictatorial one and vice versa due to objective conditions and not subjective choices. Why do workers have to wait for elections to fight a dictator who is in charge of the elections when it could have unleashed the mighty power of the working class? What we are seeing is the deliberate design by labour leaders to ignore basic working-class principles only to stampede behind a liberal regime as part of a counter-revolutionary global popular front with imperialism.

What then should be the attitude of revolutionaries to an election in which there is no workers' alternative yet the issue of protecting the democratic space is of great importance? The ruling regime has become so vicious and brazen that in the near future it would be almost impossible to organise if workers do not act in time. The recently passed Labour Amendment Act makes it impossible to engage in a lawful strike whilst punishing severely anyone involved in collective job action, the bedrock of working-class resistance and advancement of its interests. Other laws have been enacted to criminalise receiving support and solidarity from outside as well as making it impossible for community organisations to operate. What is more threatening is the lurking military faction of the regime waiting for total control and imposition of deep attacks on workers on the basis of a militarised state like Rwanda and Thailand. That would spell doom for the workers and must be resisted.

Urgent Tasks

Workers should not wait for five years to fight dictatorship and poverty through a popular front with an anti-worker petit bourgeoisie party that is controlled by Western imperialism through the Brenthurst Foundation, a rabid anti worker outfit. Any call for support of the main opposition is a deliberate ploy to deliver the working class to imperialism disarming them for imminent struggles ahead, no matter the outcome of the elections. A united, mobilised and independent platform of workers alongside other exploited and oppressed groups can fight the dictatorship better.

Workers must fight and defeat partisan bureaucrats tying them to different imperialist wings thereby demobilising them. Ultimately, the question of working-class action is a question of leadership and workers control of unions. We cannot rely on China to resolve our problems brought to us by western exploitation. Workers need to organise councils in the factories, build the unions and councils and coordinate them across Southern Africa that fight and are managed democratically, up to and including the insurrection by a Government of Workers and poor Farmers!

We recognise the counter-revolutionary character of the situation that requires us to advance our program of building an Anti-imperialist United Front (AIUF) of Southern African workers and poor farmers to resist the imposition of a regional and

global Imperialist Popular Front (IPF) behind rival imperialist blocs East and West. For us in the first instance this is a matter of fighting imperialist proxy wars and building the international party to overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership by means of militant propaganda for Trotskyism and Leninism.

For a sliding scale of wages and prices and employment for all who can work; working conditions should improve for all workers!

For the introduction of state projects to employ all the unemployed; central and local government must stop the attacks on vendors!

Land must be distributed to all poor peasants together with a state bank to provide inputs to all small farmers!

Jobs for all with a reduction in working hours until all who want to work can find a job!

To provide jobs for all big and imperialist assets must be nationalised and put under workers control and self-management!

Workers form action committees to lead the resistance to the growing attacks on the wages and working conditions of the poor and the livelihood of the majority poor!

We call for free and quality health care, housing and education for all!

Workers break with CCC and ZANU (PF) and form a worker's party that truly champions the interests of workers and poor masses!

Workers form rank and file bodies to lead action in all unions and break with the reformist trade union leadership!

For a workers' state that defends workers and peasants against the local and foreign capitalists!

No to US/EU and China/Russia imperialism fronted by the two leading parties!

No to reformism, centrism and fake Trotskyism, build a fighting socialist party!

For a workers and peasants' government on the basis of the armed people to implement decisions that benefit the workers and the poor!

For an African socialist revolution as part of the international revolution that alone can guarantee a better life for all!

For a new World Party of Socialist Revolution based on the Transitional Program of 1938 to lead the revolution to end capitalism and open the road to socialism!

Saturday, August 19, 2023

BRICS in Africa and Tasks of the Revolutionary Left



In a few days' time BRICS nations, comprising two emerging imperialist powers and three advanced semi colonies, will meet in South Africa (SA). For the first time, one of the leading members of the grouping, Vladimir Putin of Russia, will be absent following manoeuvres by traditional imperialists, using the International Criminal Court (ICC), to disrupt the gathering. The meeting takes place at an important juncture in the development, or rather degeneration, of global imperialism. The proxy war in Ukraine, pitting NATO and Russia over the control of Eastern Europe, is the main feature of imperialist tension and aggression in frantic attempts to salvage the sure decline and death of capitalism without regard for the fate of humanity and nature. Many semi-colonial states have applied to be part of the grouping and in most likelihood will be admitted.

The bloc is an international alliance of former deformed/degenerated workers states and former western colonies and semi-colonies for the purpose of projecting the economic and strategic interests of China and Russia as emerging imperialist nations engaged in a vicious war with their western counterparts for the extraction of surplus value and guarantee of key resources. One subject likely to be on the Agenda in South Africa is 'de-dollarisation'. BRICS members and prospective members are building closer trading relations paid by currency swaps. Brazil (and Argentina which is a prospective

member) are already paying for imports with their own currencies. The UAE and India recently agreed to trade in oil with their own currencies. The effects will be to trade with partners without being forced to use the US\$. The advantage of de-dollarisation is that it undermines one basic mechanism which exploits the oppressed countries. The US\$ is a fiat currency which is overvalued due to its role as a reserve currency. This undervalues other currencies relative to the US\$ allowing a transfer of value from oppressed countries to the US.

As more nations are attracted to the new trading bloc the US\$ will gradually devalue weakening the financial hegemony of US imperialism. Whether de-dollarisation brings genuine economic independence to the BRICS nations from Russia and China remains to be seen. As imperialist powers they cannot afford to allow the genuine national self-determination of their economic partners. Of course, as agents of Russia and China, those in government and the labour movement in the oppressed members of BRICS, who are bought and paid for, promote the narrative of a multipolar world based on equality and sovereignty, using this prospect to sell BRICS membership to the masses as the road to national independence and freedom.

The attitude of so-called Marxists on the nature of China and Russia informs their position on the war in Ukraine and has influenced their characterisation of the role of BRICS in semi colonial countries like South Africa. Failure to recognise the imperialist nature of the two states has led to either defense of these countries as “progressive” anti-imperialist nations fighting for a “fair” multi polar world or exaggerating the influence and hegemony of the west. Either way the implication of such a view on the role these nations are playing in semi-colonial states is that they play a progressive role that is beneficial to them all. Nothing can be further from the truth. The relationship with Russia/China is one of unequals riding on the misery of workers and poor peasants who are affected by poor working conditions and displacements to make way for extraction of vital mineral resources and surplus value.

The SA Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is an excellent example of the new “progressive” popular front between a radical petit bourgeoisie party representing the “Pan African” section of the national bourgeoisie in alliance with Chinese and Russian imperialism hiding behind the facade of mutual benefit. Malema is open about his admiration for Cuba as a model for future economic development in South Africa. China has found a reliable partner in the EFF which uses clever rhetoric to hoodwink the masses shifting focus from the African National Congress (ANC) which is reluctant to sever ties with Western Imperialism and the Maoist Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP) which has failed to build a strong mass base in the working class.

The bureaucrats of the South Africa Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) have delivered the workers to the dead end of the EFF-China/Russia Popular

Front to ensure a compliant and distracted labour force. As in Cuba and other Bolivarian states this alliance comes at the cost of workers’ rights and acute exploitation. Petit bourgeoisie radical nationalist parties like the EFF have anchored themselves on pseudo-Marxism with their radical rhetoric capturing thousands in the working class. An example of China’s influence on political parties across Africa is that of the leader of the Socialist Party of Zambia, allies of SRWP, who has openly voiced support for the bourgeoisie Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF) in the coming elections.

Recently a coup took place in [Niger](#) ousting the pro France president and government. The coupists claim they were forced to act as a result of the deteriorating security situation in the country, a key reason given by other western African countries which have experienced a coup recently, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso’s coup regime supports the coup in Niger and injects a [strong advocacy](#) for the Cuban and Bolivarian ‘revolutions’ in Latin America which are strongly tied to Chinese and Russian imperialism. We argue that the [Bolivarian model](#) has, along with the formation of BRICS, been a strong inspiration for national revolutions in Africa. We would predict more coups in Africa that hold up the Bolivarian/BRICS example as a guide to their participation in the dominant existing global imperialist popular front.

Soon after the coup in Niger France and other western countries together with ECOWAS condemned the coup and urged for restoration of civilian rule. [France and ECOWAS](#) have shown their intent to intervene militarily if civilian rule is not restored. This latest coup, showing [popular](#) hatred for France and support for Russia, is just the latest expression of the ongoing degeneration of Western imperialism which has caused untold suffering on the masses and ravaged the region through continuing war. The working masses are facing the brunt of the war and economic crisis through slave wages and high prices as France, along with other imperialist nations, want to shift the cost of paying for the structural crisis of capitalism to the shoulders of workers and the poor masses.

The coup is a pre-emptive tactic by a section of the local bourgeoisie to forestall popular revolt and direct anger to a wing of imperialism whilst leaning on another wing as the basis for maintaining capitalist relations against the threat of revolution. Popular support for the coup is a reflection of the

desperate situation workers and the masses find themselves in and yearning to break free of the exploitative and oppressive environment they find themselves in. The only solution to the crisis of capitalism in a semi-colony is the permanent revolution that combines national liberation with socialist revolution in Niger as part of a socialist West Africa. We oppose the coup and call for the independent mobilisation of workers and poor masses against both the Bouzoma government and the coup government both representing wings of imperialism suffocating the country. This position arises from a correct view that contemporary global capitalist society is essentially characterised by the fight between traditional and emerging imperialist powers over resources and surplus value.

In SA the ANC and its spinoff the EFF arose out of the historic settlement to trade in the military struggle for bourgeois democracy in 1995. Since [SA joined BRICS](#) in 2009 it has pinned its hopes on China to break out of its subordination to Western Imperialism. 14 years later that dream has become a nightmare as the ANC regime is now not only the lapdog of Western imperialism but also China and Russia. The working people are locked into this imperialist popular front by the regime and by its corrupt unions incorporated in the state. In Zimbabwe ZANU-PF does China's bidding legislating against Western sanctions, and against workers' rights to meet the terms of China's win-win deals. Here is the evidence that the BRICS model for development is a trap that denies the working masses any say in their future. This must not be the future of the Sahel and the whole of Africa where the military regimes are allowed to build new popular fronts with Russia and China. To smash the armed popular fronts like ECOWAS we call for independent workers' organisations to form a continent-wide anti-imperialist united front capable of defending itself from military repression.

Marxists, opposed to Stalinists and centrists, should start from the basic position that China and Russia have transformed to become imperialist states exporting excessive finance capital for their own interests and using comprador bourgeoisie governments in semi-colonies and labour bureaucrats to protect and advance their interests. We argue that this relationship is that of an international popular front tying the working masses to the imperialists through the national bourgeois regimes. Against this popular front which exploits the masses desire for national independence

to draw them into this popular front, revolutionaries must counter-pose the Anti-Imperialist United Front (AIUF) to break workers and oppressed from the bourgeois regimes and the imperialist powers they serve.

How will this struggle take shape? In West Africa we see the military leadership as one fraction of the national bourgeoisie substituting itself for the people. Marxists have no confidence in military rule which, like Sisi in Egypt, or Mnangagwa In Zimbabwe, imposes an authoritarian regime with the barest of democratic fig-leaves, hiding their subservience to imperialism. Marxists warn against military regimes and their bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist agendas. *We are for building an international united front of workers, poor peasants and rank and file soldiers in every country to take the power into our own hands, to join hands across national borders and fight to complete the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution as the Permanent Revolution.* The theory-program of permanent revolution is our guide for socialist action in a semi colony dominated by two wings of imperialism. Alliances like BRICS and NATO serve these different wings in a rush to maximise production and super-exploitation.

To provide jobs all big and imperialist assets must be nationalised and put under workers control and self-management!

For workers action committees to lead the resistance to the growing attacks on the wages and working conditions of the poor and the livelihood of the majority poor!

Workers form rank and file bodies to lead action in all unions and break with the reformist trade union leadership!

No to US/EU and China/Russia imperialism fronted by local bourgeoisie parties!

No to reformism, centrism and fake Trotskyism, build a fighting revolutionary socialist party!

For workers and peasants' governments on the basis of the armed people to implement decisions that benefit the workers and the poor!

For an African socialist revolution as part of the international revolution that alone can guarantee a better life for all!

For a new World Party of socialist revolution based on the Transitional Program of 1938 to lead the revolution to end capitalism and open the road to socialism!

Bipolar World - Socialism or Extinction! Down with Capitalist War! For a Socialist World!



The 1917 February Revolution in Russia was led by striking women

From Crises to Wars

As Marx once said the old order is dying but the new order is yet to be born. Capitalism is a finite society which goes from its birth in Europe in the late 18thC to maturity in the late 19thC, the 'Late stage' capitalism in the 20thC, finishing in 'End Stage' capitalism in the 21stC. The basic contradiction between Capital and Nature is the death sentence to Capital. As the contradiction intensifies it speeds up events driven by class struggle. Capital's destruction of the material conditions for its own existence becomes visible as chaotic forces such as slumps and ecological collapse. There is no way out for the ruling class. It can no longer rule in the old way because the working masses have nothing to lose and refuse to be ruled. Workers refuse to starve or die in wars of mutual destruction to give the breath of life into capitalism.

As Trotsky said, workers are natural dialecticians, they see the objective reality of capitalism destroying itself, creating the chaos of destruction of nature and humanity, and subjectively begin to become conscious of the necessity for socialist revolution. The new socialist order exists inside the dying capitalist order in embryonic form as the precondition for socialism. The working class is now the big majority, and its advanced productivity can produce enough material plenty for a good life for all. But while it is *conscious of itself*, it is not yet *conscious for itself* as the only class capable of building a new socialist order. Workers need an international revolutionary party and program based on Trotsky's

Transitional program of 1938 that subjectively transcends the objective situation. The program teaches them that class struggle will prove that even their most basic needs for life and liberty cannot be met short of the overthrow of the capitalist system. Yet since capitalism will not die of its own accord it has to be overthrown. In what follows we outline our method and program for making that historic transition from the death agony of capitalism to the birth pangs of socialism. We begin with the analysis of the war in Ukraine.

The Lessons of the Ukraine War

The war in Ukraine is the chaotic manifestation of the underlying contradiction between Capital and Nature exploding to the surface in the inter-imperialist war for Ukraine. *Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism – the epoch of crises, wars, and revolutions.* The war is the result of the terminal crisis that leads to war which in turn creates the conditions for revolution. Lenin, in *Imperialism; the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, argues the limits to profitability in the advanced capitalist countries forces them to export surplus capital to the colonies to extract enough labour value, by driving down the value of wages, to restore the rate of profit in the 'motherland'. Marx explains in *Capital* that this is caused by the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (LTRPF) due to the rising ratio of Constant capital which does not create value, to Variable capital which does produce value (c/v). The export of surplus capital is a counter-tendency to the LTRPF and drives the redivision of the world among the big powers competing to maximise super profits/absolute rent.

Ukraine is a perfect example. Applying Marx's law, in the post WW2 boom period the US and the EU powers experienced falling profits. To create the conditions for a new boom in production it was necessary to massively destroy existing Constant and Variable capital equivalent to another world war to restore the rate of profit. Neoliberalism was launched in the 1980s to 'restructure', i.e., destroy fixed assets and wages in the semi-colonial world and the imperialist heartlands. But the real prize of neoliberalism was the restoration of capitalism in Russia and China in 1992 opening up the former Degenerated Workers States (DWS's) to world capitalism and a massive devaluation of constant and variable capital.

Yet by 2000 the Western Powers had failed to replace the state monopoly capitalist (SMC) regime in Russia then under Putin and gain access to devalued assets. Similarly, in China they succeeded in opening up the restored capitalist economy for Western investment, but failed to break the

monopoly state's control over its banks and key economic sectors. Even the 'boom' of the 1990s was due more to credit and speculation than real value growth. All up neoliberalism failed to return the rate of profit to the post-war boom level and the so-called "End of History" was history.

Neoliberalism privatised state-owned property and drove down wages in the existing capitalist states, but ultimately failed to re-colonise the newly restored capitalism of the former Soviet Union and capitalise on the re-valuing of assets and labour to counter the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (LTRPF). So long as the former DWS's resisted colonisation by Western imperialism it was Russia and China which capitalised on their massive territories and economic resources beyond the super-exploitation of Western finance capital. The US/EU then resorted to an aggressive expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, using the membership of Georgia and Ukraine as a weapon to provoke a war. The object was to bankrupt, force a regime change and breakup Russia as a stepping stone to recolonising the ex-Soviet Union (SU) and the whole of Eurasia. This plan backfired dramatically as Russia's economy is now growing faster than that of Germany's.

The imperialist ruling classes are in denial. Ideology and the propaganda war in both camps dress up their imperialist rivalry with slogans about personal/national freedom (US) and equality/win-win (China). The reformist left pimps the bourgeoisie's propaganda – for US imperialism or for Russian and Chinese imperialism. This is the social imperialist left – living off the super-exploitation of their colonies and semi-colonies. Most advocates of US social imperialism defend Ukraine from Russia on the grounds of supporting Ukraine's independence. Those who deny the proxy character of the inter-imperialist war, put Ukraine's national rights ahead of defeating US militarism. US social imperialists justify the killing both Ukraine and Russian workers in uniform in a war which risks breaking out into nuclear war.

In reality, inter-imperialist war sharpens the contradiction between bourgeois democracy and

the underlying *bourgeois dictatorship*. It exposes the hypocrisy of praising Western democracy against Eurasian dictatorships when both evolve into imperialist monopoly capitalist states to manage inter-imperialist war. US military invasions since 1991 push the propaganda of 'democracy and freedom' against Russia's 'equality and sovereignty' and China's 'socialist win-win' narratives. All are crisis-driven projects that serve their bourgeois sovereign 'right' to restore profits by any means necessary. The cannon fodder gets no say in this proxy war in Ukraine as it affects both individual rights and national rights of minorities. Ukraine's right to national self-determination, and the rights of national minorities such as Russian speakers in the Donbass, are sacrificed to the inter-imperialist war. This subordinates these national rights to the reactionary right of rival imperialist powers to go to war over Ukraine to decide which one will exploit the strategic resources of their victims.

Geopolitics: From Eurasia to Africa and Latin America

Imperialism arises from the shift from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism where finance capital concentrates and centralises into fewer, bigger imperialist powers to create state monopoly capitalism. As mentioned above, it is the reaction to the limits set by nation states by exporting capital to capture super-profits and absolute rent to counter the crisis of falling profits. But 100 years later when neoliberalism has failed to restore profits, the structural crises of the 20st Late Capitalism has become End Stage Capitalism's terminal crisis in the 21stC as it crashes into the limits imposed by Nature. We define the *terminal crisis* as capitalism destroying its conditions of existence. It can no longer activate measures to counter the LTRPF without destroying nature. The terminal crisis spreads from the top to bottom to download the cost of the crises onto the workers and poor farmers in the semi-colonies and the imperialist rivals, as they compete for the shrinking sources of strategic resources.

As the terminal crisis intensifies it picks up speed and spreads globally creating the impression of chaos among nations. But 'chaos' is a bourgeois tag which does not penetrate to the underlying causes of the terminal crisis which is the decay of global capitalism. Lacking a Marxist analysis, *the bourgeois fail to see that their national sovereignty like their individual sovereignty is a fetish*. Nations were formed to protect national

capital, but capitalism since the late 19thC was forced by the LTRPF to escape national borders to restore the rate of profit. All wars since have been in the interests of one or other imperialist power. That is why the war in Ukraine cannot be a war confined to Ukraine and Russia and must overflow into a global war. It is currently the major front marking the fault line between Europe and Asia – a proxy war on both sides that must spread to other fronts across other continents to repartition the world and reset the imperialist pecking order. We scratch below the surface of trade deals, coups, special military operations and there we find the US/EU facing off against China/Russia.

The speed and intensity of this global war drive cannot be explained other than by Marx's dialectical method. The US and EU powers as declining imperialisms exhibit a failing capacity to produce value at home caused by the LTRPF. The export of excess profit to compensate for falling profits at home then determines their relative competitiveness in the world market. To make super-profits abroad the US and EU have to build branch plants in countries with cheap labour and compliant states. As we argued above the US/EU were desperate to recolonise the SU and China as new sources of strategic resources and markets to save their massive capital stocks from devaluing. They poured in masses of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to take advantage of the natural wealth of these countries only to be faced by protectionist barriers imposed by a newly evolved form of state monopoly capital. The outcome is that the US/EU economies in decline not only failed to recolonise them, they had to face the prospect of failing to compete with them on the global market.

As the war in Ukraine heads for a stalemate, Russia and the US are negotiating with advanced weaponry over a new border between Eastern and Western Ukraine. Both are under pressure from their allies to end the war. The EU cannot sustain more economic damage from the blowback from the war and China has to make preparations for what it sees as the coming war with the US. The US sees China as its mortal enemy globally as each competes to expand their spheres of influence at the expense of their rival. The Ukraine war on the Eurasian front is now 'pivoting' into a wider war with Russia and China in East Asia over several fronts. While Taiwan is the main target as the US Pacific ground zero, South East Asia and the whole Asia Pacific is being drawn into the fallout. In Europe, Poland is mobilizing at the Belarus border

as Wagner parks its troops there. At the same time new fronts are developing in Africa and Latin America.

Such fronts in South East Asia and the Asia Pacific are being built to encircle China as the US bully's countries in the region to sign up to NATO East to oppose China's growing economic influence. The object is to boost friendly regimes like Myanmar and regime change unfriendly ones such as Thailand. Australia's Labor Government is in AUKUS and NZ is attending the meetings of NATO East. In East Africa the latest coup in Niger has thrown up a new front where a proxy war between US/France and Russia for control of its uranium appears certain. The US has long supported Uganda and Rwanda in a covert war in the DRC to contest China's grab of vital minerals like diamonds and Cobalt. Other African countries are being forced to take sides or stay neutral.

In Latin America the US is bullying Brazil and Argentina to abandon BRICS as the BRICS meeting draws closer. In all the Latin American regimes, the fractions of the bourgeois that side with one or other great powers, will create opportunities for the US to intervene to stage color revolutions and coups that end in proxy wars. All these wars are blatantly about whether the US or China dominates the control of global strategic resources like uranium, gold, lithium etc., to further plunder the Global South and impoverish its peoples.

As the global terminal crisis of capital deepens, imperialism unloads the cost of paying for its crisis onto the shoulders of the poor masses of the global south. They have no choice but to fight for their existence. In the past the Western powers subdivided the world into their own spheres of interest. Both world wars arose when a declining power Germany went to war to rebuild its global position. Today, the whole West is in decline. Germany's GDP has fallen behind Russia as it pays the price of the EU backing the US/NATO war on Russia. Ironically Russia has taken its place as the economic sanctions and the Ukraine war has forced it to develop a close strategic alliance with China.



So, while Western imperialism declines, the new imperialism of the East continues to grow. In End Stage capitalism as we have argued, all wars will tend to become a world-wide war with many fronts. ***Since both imperialist blocs are equally destructive of humanity and nature, both must be opposed by the world's workers. Yet the revolutionary left either, does not recognise Russia and China as imperialist, or retreats to the defence of one against the other as being the more 'progressive', suppressing the organisation of an independent working-class position on imperialist war.*** We now move to an analysis of the prospects for a growing resistance to inter-imperialist wars, to the alliances between imperialism and pro-imperialist bourgeois regimes, and the need for the new world party of socialist revolution and program necessary to lead the global masses to overthrow imperialism and build socialism.

The Global Imperialist Popular Front

The vast majority of the ostensible revolutionary left include those from Stalinist, Maoist or centrist Trotskyist origins. They are the modern Mensheviks who believe that imperialism has the capacity to be reformed in stages. This strategy calls for popular fronts, in which workers ally with the progressive petty-bourgeoisie and the liberal bourgeoisie, to take the parliamentary road to managing any crisis in the interests of

workers. Historic examples abound of such *imperialist popular fronts* (IPF) betraying the workers to imperialism and preparing the ground for fascist reaction. Both WW1 and WW2 were sold to workers by Mensheviks as gigantic IPFs. Workers were rallied around the national flag of one or more imperialist powers against the enemy imperialist powers.

The historic betrayal of the Menshevik 2nd International in not opposing WW1 was condemned by Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky at the **Zimmerwald** conference in 1915. Lenin and Trotsky guided the Bolsheviks through the first four Congresses of the Comintern to counterpose the Anti-Imperialist United Front (AIUF) to the IPF. The

Stalinised Comintern after 1924 transformed the AIUF of the Second Congress into an imperialist popular front. Stalin's first great betrayal was the 'block of 4 classes' with the bourgeois KMT which led to the massacre of the leadership of the Communist Party in 1927. Later, following its ultraleft block with Hitler against the German revolution in 1933, Stalin flipped into a popular front with social democracy and the centre parties in the European imperialist states to forestall socialist revolutions in Europe and prevent the political revolution against the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

It was in this period that Trotsky warned that in Latin America the Popular Front Party (PFP) was the governmental form of the IPF, betraying the revolution in Latin America in the interwar period. With the rise of Russia and China in the 21stC our tendency was the only one to argue that the Bolivarian movement of Chavez joined with Castro's 'socialism' in the ALBA states, to form an IPF with the emerging Russian and Chinese Imperialism. The rise as a 'progressive great power bloc' was sold to the masses as the 'socialist 5th International' alternative to Western imperialism, and an escape route from the crisis of capitalism wrought upon the global south entirely by the US/EU powers.

We predicted that the Bolivarian IPF would become an example for more betrayals across all the continents. The Mensheviks in the West (aka social imperialists) put off action to defeat their own ruling classes into the future. In Ukraine, the Russophiles pretend that the war is *not* a proxy war between imperialists because Russia is not imperialist. Those who recognise Russia and China as Great Powers refuse to acknowledge that they are imperialist in the sense of plundering the Global South for strategic resources and pumping out surplus value immiserating the working masses. They say Russia is only defending itself from US regime change and NATO encroachment with the help of China and other allies. They conveniently pass the task of defeating US imperialism to Russian workers in uniform in a military front with their national bourgeoisie. It is not surprising then, that as the war spreads to more fronts on other continents, that the prevailing position in the Global South is inspired by the Bolivarians. The US hegemon is held responsible for all the reaction in the post-WW2 period and Russia and China are progressive states defending themselves.

The formation of two blocs around the US/EU and Russia and China exist only because members

regard theirs to be the more 'progressive'. We have seen how this applies to the Western bloc's propaganda, proclaiming dedication to democracy and human rights. It is equally clear in the Eastern Bloc. If we take the case of BRICS+ which is undergoing rapid expansion, we hear the same message from the pro-Russia/China national bourgeoisies. It runs like this. *'Russia and China do not sanction or threaten to go to war with their partners. They do win-win deals where both sides get a fair share of the profits. Their models of economic development since the restoration of capitalism continue that of the Soviet policy of economic and military aid. It represents the historical model for the Global South where state to state deals are done without political strings attached.'* The bi-polar military front opening up over Niger vindicates this model when the Coup leader preaches the evils of US/French colonialism and the benefits of alignment to Russia.

This Bolivarian model is presented flamboyantly by Julius Malema, leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in South Africa. He campaigns like an African Hugo Chavez for a united Africa which can become equal partners in the development of capitalism with the help of Russia and China. His statement that "Africa is open for investment" is clearly directed mainly at them because, unlike Western imperialism, they supposedly do not behave like imperialist powers. We reject this popular front narrative of Russia and China engaged in win-win diplomacy and economic fair shares with their colonies and semi-colonies. The slogan of multipolarity rather than bipolarity is a cover for BRICS as a union of oppressor and oppressed countries as if they were equals. We argue that the win-win deals are between the imperialist ruling classes and the semi-colonial ruling classes whose 'fair shares' in the plunder cost the workers and poor farmers their lives.

'Win-win' deals or 'fair shares' steals

Let's unpack the delusion of the 'win-win-fair shares' model which sends the message that Russian and Chinese imperialisms are 'progressive'. Much of the appeal of this model is the history of both as 'socialist' states. Julius Malema speaks effusively of China's "socialism with Chinese characteristics". We heard that often from Castro and Chavez. We argue that all that remains of this legacy today is the centralised bureaucratised capitalist state. The state monopoly capitalism (SMC) of Russia and China is subject to the law of value and defends that law. Their states' ability to moderate the free

market is designed to maximise profits in the interests of state capital-in-general. In other words, any advantage they have in competing with the US/EU powers owes nothing to 'socialism', past or present.

It took Western imperialism 200 years from birth to maturity to become imperialists exporting capital to super exploit the world's workers to restore profits. China (and Russia after the lost decade of the 1990s) has had to take the same path from restoration of the market to a high-tech global value chain in 30 years. But it is the same imperialism, the same relations of production, and the same underlying laws of motion. It follows that as SMC regimes Russia and China must compete with their Western rivals to prevent the LTRPF from driving down profits. This means that any sharing of profits with partner regimes will be based on China's own experience of capitalist development but presented as 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.' Aid and debt forgiveness then is made to appear as part of a state socialist plan to gain popular approval for equal shares in 'progressive' win-win state-to-state deals.

Therefore, mimicking China's developmental plan requires similar SMC regimes. State-to-state deals between Russia and China and their economic partners must share the 'characteristics of state capitalism'. In the name of 'state socialism' the partner states will eliminate the problem of private property, a major unnecessary cost to capital, by nationalising property rights. Malema is a big fan because he knows that the 'win-win' deals depend on taking the workers along. To win popular support for 'state socialism' the working masses must believe that they will get a fair share of the win-win deals like Chinese workers with the provision of infrastructure, jobs, health, housing, living incomes etc. shifting millions out of poverty. China was able to do this by allowing Western imperialism to profit from FDI with cheap inputs from Chinese and global labour in exchange for technology transfer.

But critically, China never allowed imperialist private direct investment to spread from high tech manufacturing to control of the state, finance, and state-owned land. Russia since 2000 has rolled back foreign investment to restore a centralised state-run economy. But now Russia and China are becoming their imperialist partners, they will not be able to retain sufficient value to control the economy except as the agents of imperialism. So while Russia and China's partners in the Global South may

technically become economically independent, but not as Malema promises on 'our terms', rather 'their terms'. *Those terms will be dictated by the making of profits that are necessary to allow Russia's and China's stock of surplus capital to be reproduced at a long-term profit rate that allows the further accumulation of capital. Any apparent 'advantages' over the US/EU bloc resulting from win-win deals with Russia and China of the US/EU will be determined not by goodwill, or 'socialism' but by the efficiencies of state capitalist long-term planning.*

Therefore, how can Russia and China deliver on promises made by the client regimes to the working masses? There are many risks. The 'long term' plan is subject to constant disruption by the terminal crisis of capital, the prospect of unending wars, and more importantly, revolutions. The terminal crisis affects all imperialist states, democratic or autocratic. Russia and China are not immune from the terminal crisis of capital, made worse by climate emergency and the threat of more pandemics. Capitalism on its last legs and nature on the brink of collapse does not contribute much to reducing the risk of permanent crises leading to war and revolutions.

Therefore, any advantages that Russia and China have to displace the US/EU as the 'lesser evil', if not 'progressive' imperialist bloc, are subject to economic laws of motion that will mobilise an intensified class war between the capitalist and working classes on every front. This high risk of mounting class struggle is factored in by all imperialists when preparing contingency plans for risk management of investment. The new imperialists carry some soviet era goodwill baggage with them which once exhausted cannot offset the risk of the working masses rising up in revolution. This baggage has the name of the IPF used to trap, disarm and divert workers from revolution. This raises the urgent necessity of building an international anti-imperialist united front (AIUF) to challenge and smash the counter-revolutionary IPF.

The Anti-imperialist United Front

The AIUF is a UF of workers and poor peasants against imperialism that embodies the permanent revolution in the epoch of imperialism. We recognise that after Lenin's death the Stalinists turned it into a pro-imperialist popular front. For this reason, Trotsky abandoned it for his concept of permanent revolution after the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927. But it remains an accurate concept today,

provided it consciously excludes petty bourgeois and bourgeois forces in the UF.

We justify this practice first, by Lenin's characterisation of the epoch as imperialist where national self-determination is not possible without the defeat of both the national bourgeoisie *and* their imperialist masters. Second, by our recognition that Lenin shared Trotsky's concept of permanent revolution in Russia which Trotsky, after the lesson of China, then applied to all the colonies and semi-colonies. Only revolutionary workers can resolve the unfinished program of the bourgeoisie by means of international socialist revolution. Hence the AIUF applies the method of the UF to the theory/program of permanent revolution in the epoch as a whole.

This is why in the first decade of the 21stC End Stage capitalism, when the new imperialisms of Russia and China are presented as the 'progressive' or 'socialist' friends and partners in the revolution, we opposed the Bolivarian IPF posing as a AIUF in front of the masses to trap, defeat and divert the workers and poor farmers. Hence, we recognised the Venezuelan PSUV and the Cuban Communist party as the same reactionary Popular Front Parties (PFP) that Trotsky identified in Latin America in the 1930's. And this is exactly the model adopted in all colonial and semi-colonial bourgeois regimes in Asia and Africa. In fact, they describe the class composition of all 'populist' parties including the Peronist party, the South African ANC, and the Communist Party of China (CPC). In every case it is necessary to confront the PFP as the agent of imperialism with the AIUF to break the workers and poor peasants from the petty bourgeois and bourgeois classes.

The AIUF therefore is formed politically to break the workers from the bourgeois PFP particularly when it controls the government and hence legislative power. The object is not to create an independent workers' party to contest elections but to build a revolutionary party. The AIUF can critically support workers' parties inside government unless they are in a governmental popular front where the bourgeois partner dominates and provides an alibi for betrayal. ***When workers parties put up candidates they stand as tributes to promote the program, not to join in parliamentary circuses.*** Revolutionaries do not spread illusions in worker majorities, or in workers' ministers, pushing a government to the left. This is the classic strategy of all shades of reformists who believe that workers can take power by winning control of the

parliamentary executive. The object is not to participate in the government but to smash workers' illusions in reforms and break workers from the PFP.

Marxists know that the state is the organising committee of the bourgeoisie. State power is not concentrated, nor separated, in the legislature, executive and judiciary. Bourgeois parliaments are the democratic front for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Once exposed the dictatorship will dispense with democracy and resort to the use of state forces to repress revolution. Therefore, the AIUF must be based on the independent organisations of the working class. It must be armed to defend itself from state and parastatal institutions/forces in order to win dual power and prepare for socialist revolution. Yet while the AIUF is the unity of a workers' front for an action, specifically to break and destroy the popular front, it is composed of workers at different levels of consciousness. Reformist workers and trade union conscious workers remain trapped at the fetishised level of relations of exchange. ***Revolutionaries use the AIUF as a tactic to put transitional demands on the reformist leadership of the labour movement to expose their role as agents of the class enemy and transform the reformist workers and trade union conscious workers into class conscious proletarians.***

From War to Revolution

The AIUF to be effective has to be guided by revolutionaries. And revolutionaries cannot exist outside a revolutionary party and its revolutionary program. The revolutionary party is the subjective force acting through its program to change objective reality. The AIUF is a tactic in the Transitional Program to break workers from the bureaucracy and from the bosses. We argue that the AIUF arose out of the discussion around the Left Zimmerwald Manifesto of 1915 which called for the defeat of both imperialist sides in war. In 1916 Liebknecht made his famous demand, "workers turn your guns on your own ruling class." The Left Zimmerwald program on the war was summed up first as "turn imperialist war into civil war", and second, "build a new international" to replace 2nd International which liquidated itself into social imperialism and social chauvinism.

The 3rd international was therefore also conceived at Zimmerwald. The AIUF tactic was next applied in the Bolshevik program that led to the October

Revolution in Russia and the formation of the 3rd International in 1920. The Left Zimmerwald program was now part of the Bolshevik Party program "to turn the guns of the workers and peasants" in uniform on the Russian imperialist ruling class. After the February revolution led to the fall of the Tsar, the Bolsheviks applied the AIUF against the bourgeois Provisional Government. It was put to the test against the counter-revolutionary coup attempt by the white Russian (Tsarist forces) led by General Kornilov in August. The Bolsheviks formed a tactical military bloc with the bourgeois government against Kornilov, to prove to reformist soldiers and trade unionists that the bourgeois government's real class enemy was the Soviets not the Tsarists backed by the imperialist powers.



Then came the "turn imperialist war into civil war". As the embryonic Red Army, the Soviet forces easily outmanoeuvred and defeated the Kornilov coup as a preliminary to the Civil War that began almost immediately after the revolution. Workers and poor peasants staged the insurrection in October 1917, formed a workers and poor peasants' government, and negotiated for peace at Brest-Litovsk with the German high command in the attempt to spark the revolution in Germany. This tactic did not wholly succeed as the Germans invaded southern Russia occupying around a third of the old Russian Empire, forcing an end to the negotiations on March 3rd 1918. As a result, this changed the character of the war in Soviet Russia into that of the national defence of the revolution in the Civil War against the imperialist powers.

Moreover, the Bolshevik's stalling tactic at Brest-Litovsk may have helped incubate the wave of mutinies in the German armed forces that first broke out exactly eight months later in the navy at Keil on 2nd November 1918, setting off the German Revolution. Armed soldiers and workers set up soviets in several parts of Germany and turned their guns in their defence. But there was no revolutionary general staff to take the next vital step of armed insurrection, that is, to aim their guns strategically at the ruling class. The soviets were

suppressed by 'special forces' of the defeated Germany army led by proto-fascist white guards. What was lacking was the next vital step, an established Bolshevik-type party that could stage the break from the treacherous social democracy which formed the popular front Weimar Republic.

The small Spartacist League of Luxemburg and Liebknecht came too late and was too small to make a difference. The general staff, revolutionary party and program, was missing in action. The ruling class suppressed the German revolution but feared its return unless the Soviet Union was destroyed. The imperialist powers buried their differences after the capitulation of

Germany, invaded the Soviet Union to wage a civil war from 1918 to 1921, until they met an historic defeat at the hands of the Red Army. This stalemate made another world war inevitable, once more creating the conditions for revolution out of crisis and war to decide which class rules. The old world was still dying, the new world was born, but smothered by "all the old shit" of the old world.

The AIUF tactic was first formulated officially by the 3rd International led by the Bolshevik Party at its Fourth Congress in November 1922. It was part of the turn towards the United Front (UF) as a result of the failure of the workers revolution to spread to Europe and the rest of the world. The Congress balance sheet of this failure isolated the missing ingredient. It was the inability to break the social chauvinist and social imperialist IPF between workers and the bourgeoisie formed by the SPD as part of the executive of the new Weimar Republic. The way forward from 1922 was through the application of the United Front tactic led by Bolshevik-type parties in all the European powers to win the majority of reformist workers to class consciousness and the revolution. However, at that point the revolution was already isolated and degenerating under a growing bureaucratic leadership under the influence of the weight of the peasantry.

As the revolution degenerated under the mis-leadership of the bureaucracy, it became the task

of Trotsky, and the Left Opposition, to take up the battle for the UF against the PF in the years between the WW1 WW2 against the bureaucracy in the SU and the rise of fascism. After the victory of fascism in Germany in 1933 Trotsky set out to build a new international. It was founded in 1938 on the [Transitional Program](#) based on the method of dialectics which shone through the writings of this period, many published in the book *In Defense of Marxism*. Here we have the living Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky raising the flag of the vanguard party firm in principle but flexible in tactics, preparing for WW2 and arming the worlds' workers with the program to stop the war by turning our guns against the ruling classes and the imperialist war into civil war.

The application of the AIUF in WW2 continued that of WW1 but was now strengthened by the lessons learned by the victorious Bolshevik revolution. Two demands were fused together at its heart; *the dual defeatist position in inter-imperialist war to turn the war into a civil war, and the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union*. Dual defeatism required the arming of the working class to join with the ranks in the military to turn their guns on the ruling class. Revolutions in the imperialist states would empower the international workers army to unite with Russian workers and soldiers and stage a political revolution against the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. In the US Trotsky devised the *Proletarian Military Policy* to arm the trade unions and unionise the official army. It was grounded in the lessons of the historic betrayal of 1914, the Manifesto of the Zimmerwald left of 1915, the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, and of the defeats of the German revolution at the hands of social democracy, Stalinism and fascism.

These are the 'principles' of the program against imperialist war rooted in Marxism that are the basis of any assessment of the application of the AIUF in WW2. All the preconditions for turning war into revolution were there in the program, but not in practice. The vital factor, the revolutionary leadership of the 4th International after Trotsky's death, was lacking. The assessment of our [tendency](#) is that even more so than during WW1, the Bolshevik-type party was missing in action. Despite valiant struggles against the imperialists, Stalinists, and their own ruling classes, by the militant ranks,

especially in [Greece and Indo-China](#), the leadership of the main sections in the US and Europe capitulated to social chauvinism, and the war against fascism. Instead of turning their guns against their imperialist ruling classes the leadership of the 4th International turned their guns on the fascists in an IPF with imperialism and the Stalinist Soviet Union.

The lessons learned from this history of the AIUF in its struggle against the IPF are what shape our response to the war in Ukraine as the first of many wars towards a 3rd Imperialist war. In summary, we call for a New Zimmerwald and a new Proletarian War Policy embodying the principles of Lenin and Trotsky in a new AIUF. The old world still lives in all its reactionary barbarism and its counter-revolutionary IPFs. There can be no confusion here. The conditions for international revolution are now so overwhelmingly objectively present in the capitalist destruction of its ecological foundation in nature. Humanity survives only in the capacity of the working masses to put an end to rotten capitalism.

Yet the subjective will of the working masses which is bursting through the cracks to rise up, overthrow capitalism and restore nature in harmony with humanity, is blocked by the liquidation of the revolutionary Marxist party and its program. The new revolutionary international is still missing in action. We call on all those exploited and oppressed of the world who yearn to complete the world revolution that began in 1917, to unite with us in our call for a [New Zimmerwald](#). Together we can build an AIUF to smash the imperialist ruling classes and their client states and create a new World Party of Socialism to organise workers, poor farmers and all oppressed peoples internationally, for the fight to make a new world to save the world!

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International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency

Class Warrior: Theoretical Journal of ILTT http://www.cwgusa.org/?page_id=594

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