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On the Growing Impact of the National & Democratic Question

National Platform of the Socialist Tendency (Russia)

Ukraine War & PO (Argentina) * RRP (Russia) & Gaza War

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.103, April 2024

National Platform of the Socialist Tendency (Russia)	p.3
Once More on the PO (Argentina) and the Ukraine War	p.5
The PO (Argentina) and the Ukraine War: Continuing the Debate	p.7
The “Trotskyist” RRP in Russia fails to support the Palestinian resistance against the Zionists’ genocide in Gaza	p.12
Theses on the Growing Impact of the National and Democratic Question <i>The Marxist theory of Permanent Revolution and its application in the current historic period of capitalist decay</i>	p.14

Picture on the cover: Caucasian tribesmen fight against the Cossacks, 1847 (Source: Wikipedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/1%D0%A8%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%BC_%D0%B0%D1%83%D0%BB%D0%B0_%D0%A1%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B0.jpg)

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

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National Platform of the Socialist Tendency (Russia)

By Socialist Tendency (RCIT Section in Russia), March 2024

The National Platform of the *Socialist Tendency* was adopted by general vote in March 2024 and is a complement to the RCIT manifesto "*The Revolutionary Struggle in the Era of Capitalist Collapse*" (<https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto-2023/>).

This manifesto describes the position of the capitalist system in Russia and the world, puts forward the tasks of the Socialist Tendency for the current period, and also sets the general features of future socialist construction.

The document is of key importance for the RCIT section in Russia, because it sets the direction of action for the near future and for the long term, is a compass in the revolutionary struggle and briefly gives a general description of the views of our group.

1.

The current historical period is a period of decline of the capitalist system and, as a consequence, a period of acceleration of imperialist rivalry between the leading world powers - the USA, Britain, the EU, Japan, China and Russia. The struggle of the monopolies of the dominating countries for the redistribution of the world market entered a period of destructive confrontation after the start of the global economic crisis in 2008, which, in turn, deepened even more in the new phase starting in 2019-20.

In a practical sense, this period was marked by major wars, attacks on national and democratic rights, environmental disasters and the growth of social inequality resulting from the increase in the organic composition of capital. The response to this was the intensification of class struggle on the part of the oppressed masses, which we can all observe today in different parts of the globe.

2.

The modern Russian Federation became capitalist after the collapse of the Soviet system in 1989-1992, when, with the help of a series of reforms, and then privatization and the so-called "shock therapy," the monopoly of foreign trade, state ownership and planned economy were destroyed. The period of historical defeat of the working class of the 1990s was characterized by colossal social decline, the beginning of the destruction of democracy by Yeltsin's tanks in 1993, two Chechen wars in 1994 and 1999, the defeat of the opposition forces in the 1996 elections, the redistribution of property and the "seven bankers", the default of 1998 and the miners' class war of 1997-99.

At the same time, Russia's possession of a huge amount of natural resources and the gradual emergence of a rigid right-wing liberal vertical, with the coming to power of the security forces led by Vladimir Putin and supported by a number of oligarchs, already in the 2000s stabilized Russia's position and allowed it to become one of the leading imperialist powers.

For decades, young Russian imperialism, trying to flirt with this or that "big brother," developed relatively independently, but this ultimately led to confrontations with the countries of the "Global North," which massively affected not only the external, but also the internal Russian

politics.

Imperialism in its Russian interpretation has not an abstract, but a very concrete face - this is Vladimir Putin and his Bonapartist group of representatives of the ruling class, which adopted neoliberal laws, crushed dissent and started military conflicts, relying on right-wing extremist and ultra-conservative ideology.

3.

The goal of revolutionary Marxists in Russia is a social revolution that will open the way for the construction of a democratic workers' state with public ownership of the means of production, workers' control, a scientific planned economy and the right of nations to self-determination. Such a state, in close cooperation with other democratic workers' states, will begin to build socialism, the highest and most developed stage of which Marx called communism. The proletariat will be the vanguard of this state; it will lead the working intelligentsia, as well as representatives of small and medium-sized businesses.

In the struggle for the socialist revolution, we advocate a transitional program, that is, a program of struggle from today to the revolutionary uprising, the goal of which will be the creation of a workers' government that opens the door to the road of socialist construction. Therefore, we support the entire economic and democratic struggle - against the uncontrolled emission of money, massive injections into the military-industrial complex, the arbitrariness of monopolies, the reduction in the real volume of national production, leading to inflation and a decrease in the standard of living of the ordinary people, against state repression, against the tendency to transform labour relations into forms GPC [a civil law agreement, which in Russia is increasingly replacing employment contracts, Ed.] and self-employment agreements, for the increase of wages, for the right to freedom of speech, for the rights of women, minorities, etc.

We call the state to write off debts and the transfer of oligarchs' property to public control. Key industries, services and finance must be nationalized under workers' control without compensation to the capitalists. These measures can also become the basis for further reindustrialization of the country.

During the transition period, it is possible to develop the movement of production and consumer cooperation as an alternative to the currently dominant form of private property (IE, LLC, JSC, CJSC; these are Russian abbreviations for the categories of individual entrepreneur, limited liability company, joint stock company, and closed joint stock company, Ed.) in the sphere of housing and communal services, light and medium industry, and agriculture.

The main duty of every socialist is to oppose all wars of Russian imperialism, since the ruling class in the Kremlin is the main enemy of the peoples of this current empire. In cases where the Russian army wages war against an oppressed people or semi-colonial countries, we take the side of the latter and advocate the defeat of "our" imperialist government; in the event of inter-imperialist clashes, we advocate the defeat of all conflict camps.

Another important issue is the protection of national minorities and support for their right to self-determination, even to the point of secession.

The struggle of the workers and the oppressed cannot be won by relying on new faces of politicians at the top of the existing system or by winning the most votes in parliamentary elections. As Marx said, only the working class can liberate itself. Consequently, in every sector of the struggle we advocate the creation of self-organization bodies: workers and district committees, self-defence units to protect people from fascists or the police, women's organizations, etc.

Grassroots, horizontal self-government will be carried out by elected bodies of deputies with an imperative mandate. During the Russian Revolution of 1905 and 1917, such bodies were called Soviets.

The army must be formed on a workplace basis, in close contact with the working class, in order to avoid its transformation into a separate "caste", cut off from the rest of society, as it is the case in bourgeois societies. The commanders of the revolutionary troops should not have any economic and social privileges in relation to the soldiers, so that they are not cut off from them but rather share all experiences, hardships and victories with them.

A system of people's militia is also needed, that is, a system of training the working population in the basics of weapons and combat tactics for the high-quality defence of the workers' state in the event of an imperialist threat from the outside.

In "peaceful" times, the army should exist on a voluntary contract basis.

Repressive police bodies should be replaced by workers' militia units that will defend not the interests of capitalist "order" and private property, but the common interests of all working masses, that is, public property, the right to work, the right to freedom of thought and freedom of conscience. These militias shall implement reliable protection of life and health of every worker, and not create a system of punishment for crimes generated by poverty and misery.

The political vertical of power must be replaced by a system based on democratic centralism and a horizontal method of decision-making without the usurpation of the state by a narrow circle of people and "leaders," even if they consider themselves as socialists.

4.

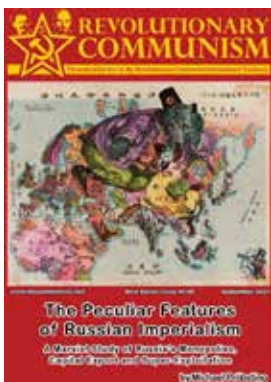
The current socialist movement in Russia looks rather sad. It is mainly represented by either Stalinist sects of social patriots or ultra-left associations of semi-liberals. The scientific method of Marx and Engels is replaced by positivist idealism. Lenin's analysis of imperialism is being replaced by geopolitical theories of varying degrees of reaction. Absenteeism on national and democratic issues lead domestic Marxists either to political conformism or to direct support for "their" government on the most burning issues that socialists face today. The united front tactics are rejected with references to a future socialist revolution, which itself would solve all problems, while a lack of understanding of the tasks of overcoming the crisis of the revolutionary leadership does not even allow them to critical support oppressed countries or movements in their legitimate struggle against the imperialist aggressors, and the failure to accept the transitional program pushes such characters directly into the tenacious clutches of reaction.

5.

The task of the *Socialist Tendency* at this stage is to build a revolutionary party on a national and international scale. A party that, at a historical moment, will be able to lead the revolutionary masses and lead them to victory. Our group is part of RCIT (*Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*) - an association of revolutionary Marxists, which for many years has shown the principled and irreconcilable nature of its struggle against imperialism and oppression.

We call on all honest socialists to join us in the fight for a better new world!

We have a long road ahead along the path of Unity–Struggle–Victory!



Publications of the RCIT

The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

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

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

Once More on the PO (Argentina) and the Ukraine War

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

A few weeks ago, the *Partido Obrero* – a sizeable Trotskyist party in Argentina with a few deputies in national and regional parliaments – published a polemic against the RCIT in which they attacked us for our defence of the Ukraine against the invasion by Russian imperialism.¹

In our reply, we refuted these accusations. We explained that the PO leadership is incapable of recognising the imperialist class character of Russia based on the bizarre claim that capitalist restoration has supposedly not been completed in Russia (and China).²

This debate was verbally continued at the recent “*Internationalist Meeting*” in Milano (Italy) – a conference which was attended by more than two dozen organisations.³ In his speech, Guillermo Kane – a PO leader and Buenos Aires provincial deputy – repeated his party’s critique of the RCIT and likeminded socialists. He also reiterated the PO’s thesis of the “unfinished capitalist restoration” in Russia and China, to which the author of these lines responded in his speech that “*such nonsense from the parallel universe of revisionism makes the flat earth theorists look like serious scientists.*”

In his written report about the Milano conference, published a few days ago, Kane prefers not to mention the PO’s thesis of the “unfinished capitalist restoration”. Unfortunately, he is equally restrained when it comes to his party’s smear of the RCIT and likeminded socialists as supporters of “NATO imperialism”.

Such writes the PO leader: “*Pro-Ukrainian groups defend a “dual character” of the war in the Ukraine. In this sense, the Italian PCL, the MST-LIS, Sinistra Anticapitalista (Italian section of USec), RCIT, League for the 5th International and others. According to them, it would be at the same time a Russia-NATO clash and a war of national liberation of the semi-colony Ukraine. They do not see, or they pretend that they do not see, that Ukraine since 2014 is being plundered by the European powers and, mainly, the United States and that the reinforced presence of NATO is not a liberating force but will deepen its*

domination. Military enlistment with NATO is not a possible means for national liberation. This type of argument has in many cases accompanied the “Trotskyist” political support for military operations supported by imperialism, in Syria or Libya. Documents from various currents already advance support for US provocations against China that are being prepared around Taiwan, supported by Japan, Australia, India and other allies.”⁴

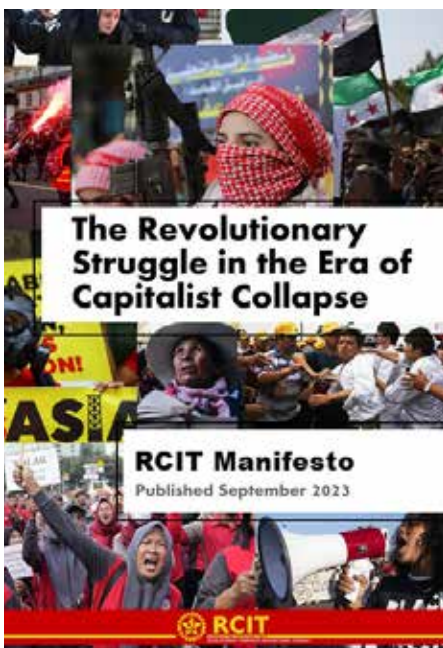
There is no point to repeat our analysis of Russia as an imperialist power, of its aggression against the Ukraine or of the “dual character” of the conflict. All of this has been outlined in much detail in our first reply to PO resp. in other works.⁵ We shall rather limit ourselves to a few comments on these new attacks.

First, as we demonstrated in our pamphlet “*Ukraine: A Capitalist Semi-Colony*”, this country has been plundered in the past decades not only by Western corporations but also by Russian monopolies.⁶

Second, economic exploitation is not the same as occupation by military means. True, in the end, both are forms of imperialist oppression. But still there is a massive difference between a colony and a semi-colony with important consequences for political sovereignty, room for political maneuver, possibilities for independent mass struggles, etc. The PO leaders might not understand this not insignificant difference but the peoples in Africa and Asia which expelled the colonial masters from Europe in the 1950s and 1960s certainly do!

Third, while we thank Kane for his insight that “*NATO is not a liberating force*”, we must still remind him that the Ukraine is not military occupied by NATO troops but – in the Eastern and Southern regions – by Russian troops.

Kane’s reference to “*‘Trotskyist’ political support for military operations supported by imperialism, in Syria or Libya*” is also telling. The RCIT and other authentic socialists supported the Arab Revolution, including the heroic popular uprisings in Syria and Libya. Naturally, we did not support any form of military intervention of imperialist powers – be it by NATO or by Russia. In contrast to us, numerous Stalin-



New Program of the RCIT

The Revolutionary Struggle in the Era of Capitalist Collapse

Adopted at the IV. World Congress of the RCIT in September 2023

- * Introductory Note
- * An Era of Catastrophes, Wars and Revolutionary Struggles
- * Wars of Oppression and Wars of Liberation
- * Capitalist Civilization Threats and the Struggle to Save Humanity
- * Capitalist World Economy and the Struggle for a Decent Living Standard
- * Their War of Ideas and Ours
- * The Struggle for Power to Open the Road to a Socialist Future

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A5 Format

ists and semi-Stalinists used such NATO interventions as an excuse to denounce such popular uprisings as “proxy operations of Western imperialism”. Consequently, they refused to support these revolutionary democratic struggles against reactionary capitalist dictatorships.⁷

Finally, we have no idea to what the PO author is referring when he claims: “Documents from various currents already advance support for US provocations against China that are being prepared around Taiwan, supported by Japan, Australia, India and other allies.” We can only guess that this is another “profound thought” from the parallel universe of PO revisionism.

In conclusion, we reiterate what we emphasised at the Milano conference: it is impossible to understand the world situation and the corresponding tasks for revolutionaries without recognising the central role of inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers (U.S., China, Russia, Western Europe and Japan)⁸ as well as the important place of the national and democratic question in the liberation struggles of the working class and the oppressed peoples.⁹

Footnotes

1 Rafael Santos: ¿Dinero para las aceras o para el ejército? RCIT: consejos “trotskistas” para maximizar las finanzas de la Otan en la guerra en Ucrania, Partido Obrero, 09.02.2024, <https://prensaobrera.com/internacionales/dinero-para-las-aceras-o-para-el-ejercito>

2 Michael Pröbsting: Ukraine War: Reply to another ill-considered Polemic of PO (Argentina), 15 February 2024, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/ukraine-war-reply-to-another-ill-considered-polemic-of-po-argentina/>

3 RCIT: Internationalist Meeting in Milano: An Inspir-

ing Conference! 22 February 2024, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/report-from-internationalist-meeting-in-milano-february-2024/>

4 Guillermo Kane: Reunión internacionalista en Milán 2024: la izquierda europea en su laberinto, Partido Obrero, 2024-02-23, <https://prensaobrera.com/internacionales/reunion-internacionalista-en-milano-2024-la-izquierda-europea-en-su-laberinto>.

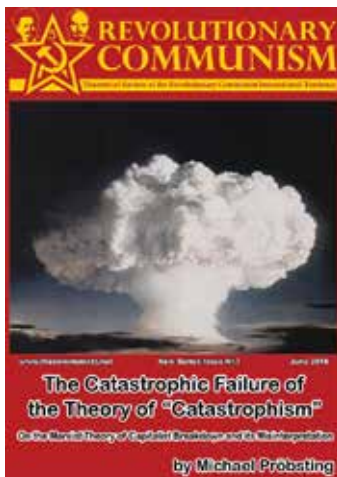
5 We refer readers to a special page on our website where all RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and the NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>.

6 Michael Pröbsting: Ukraine: A Capitalist Semi-Colony. On the exploitation and deformation of Ukraine’s economy by imperialist monopolies and oligarchs since capitalist restoration in 1991, January 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/ukraine-a-capitalist-semi-colony/>

7 The RCIT has published a number of booklets, statements and articles on the Syrian Revolution since its inception in March 2011 which can be read on a special sub-section on this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>.

8 See on this e.g. our book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>

9 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Theses on the Growing Impact of the National and Democratic Question. The Marxist theory of Permanent Revolution and its application in the current historic period of capitalist decay, 23 February 2024, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-growing-impact-of-national-and-democratic-question/>



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of “Catastrophism”

*On the Marxist Theory of Capitalist Breakdown and its Misinterpretation
by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its
“Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International”*

By Michael Pröbsting, May 2018

Introduction * A Note on the PO’s term “Catastrophism” * What did the Marxist Classics Say? A Brief Overview * Empirical Evidence for the Long-Term Decline of Capitalism * What will come after Capitalism? * Epoch and Periods * The Current Historical Period which Opened in 2008/09 * Empirical Evidence for the Decay of Capitalism in the Present Historic Period * The Dialectical and the Mechanistic Interpretation of Cycles on Capitalism * Permanent Collapse? No, there is Collapse and Collapse * Consequences of “Catastrophism” (I): Confusion on Capitalist Restoration * Consequences of “Catastrophism” (II): Confusion on China and Russia as Capitalist Powers * Excuse: The Theory of “Long Waves” and Dialectical Materialism * From Economic Crisis to Revolutionary Situation? * Can the Crisis of Leadership be Solved without an International Democratic-Centralist Organization? * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format

The PO (Argentina) and the Ukraine War: Continuing the Debate

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 21 March 2024

A few days ago, the Argentinean *Partido Obrero* published a comprehensive polemic against the RCIT in their theoretical publication *“En Defensa del Marxismo”*.¹ This is now the third time in the last few weeks that they criticise our defence of the Ukraine against the invasion by Russian imperialism.² However, since the issue under discussion is one of the key questions of the current world situation, we embrace the opportunity to continue this debate with another reply.³

Before doing so, we want to express our appreciation that *Partido Obrero* – a sizeable Trotskyist party with legislators in national and regional parliaments – supports the campaign in solidarity with the author of these lines and has even published an article on this issue.⁴ As we did report, several Zionist forces in Austria have laid a criminal complaint against me because of *“suspicion of incitement to commit terrorist offenses and approval of terrorist offenses in accordance with Paragraph 282a, Section 2 of the Criminal Code.”* This absurd accusation is based on a paragraph in the RCIT’s statement from 7 October 2023 which has been distributed as a leaflet at demonstrations: *“The RCIT reiterates that as long as the Zionist state exists, the Palestinians will continue suffering from state terrorism! This is why we stand for the socialist perspective of a democratic and red Palestine. We support the struggle for the destruction of the Zionist state and the right to return for all Palestinian refugees.”*⁵

Naturally, we are grateful that the PO comrades – like all other left-wing parties with legislators in the Argentinean parliament – come out in solidarity against this heinous Zionist attack on a pro-Palestine activist.⁶

Still, as we are united in standing against a common enemy which is carrying out a monstrous genocide in Gaza, we still have the responsibility as Marxists to openly debate our differences on other issues like the war in the Ukraine. As we did already publish a reply to each of the two previous polemics of PO, we will limit ourselves at this place to elaborate some additional arguments in order to refute the criticism of the comrades.

What did our Ukrainian comrades say? PO myth vs. reality

The whole PO polemic against the RCIT is based on an unfortunate double confusion. It combines their own political confusion about the character of the Ukraine War and Russia’s class character with a deliberate attempt to amalgamize of what we say. Let us go through this step by step.

All these recent polemics come down to accuse the RCIT of supporting NATO imperialism in the Ukraine War. (*“Pröbsting ... calls for defeating “Russian imperialism” on the side of NATO imperialism.”*; he *“works firmly for the triumph of Western imperialism against Russia”*; we are giving *“advice from the RCIT to optimize NATO’s finances in the war being fought in Ukraine against Russia”*, etc.)

At the beginning of the debate, the PO based its accusations on an article of our Ukrainian comrades in which they denounce liberal and populist politicians for trying to solve the problems of the country by fighting corrupt of-

ficials or by raising taxes of oligarchs. The PO made out of this that we would oppose social spending as *“unnecessary expenses compared to military expenses”* and that *“the RCIT joins in this search for fiscal efficiency.”*

In fact, our comrades explained that such bourgeois policy is an illusion and that the precondition for overcoming social contradictions and fighting effectively against Russian imperialism is to nationalise the key sectors of the economy under workers control.

“First of all, in the cobblestones, which act as a collective image of all budget expenditures, the protesters put the meaning of unnecessary expenditures compared to military ones. However, this general image has a name – public good. (...) Among them are not only cobblestones, but also roads in general, along with lighting and so on. But, as the average citizen will rightly object: not all the goods that are created bring benefits but go to corruption schemes. Knowing that corruption is the abuse of official position for the purpose of personal enrichment, such a citizen, under the influence of liberal ideology, will make a hasty conclusion: if someone gets rich at the expense of the state, then the role of the state should be minimized by reducing taxes and reducing the functions of the state to legal ones.

Unfortunately, such a statement of the problem does not offer a solution. (...) The root cause of corruption is the relationship between officials and entrepreneurs. Officials have a desire to earn as much as entrepreneurs, but unlike them, they do not exploit workers to join the process of robbing the people. Hence, they use their official position, that is, they sell their own interests and their function of access to redistribution for money to capitalists. (...) The obvious questions would seem, at the expense of whom? The people pay taxes. Well, who cares – money would go to the people for arming the army, if it were not for parasite officials. But not only the worker pays tax, but also the capitalist, oligarch, big businessman, call it whatever you want. Despite the fact that the tax system puts pressure on both classes, it is the capitalist who easily evades them due to his connections and privileges, and this brings the most total damage to the entire people and the country. (...)

It is here that we see that behind these rallies is the real problem, the antagonism between the worker and the capitalist. First of all, the capitalist and partially the official benefit from the redistribution, while the people pay for all this. Unfortunately, people do not see this truth. Their righteous anger against officials and corruption, on the contrary, is turned by liberal ideologues from telegram channels into an attack on themselves. (...) So, what is the solution to this situation? Can someone make all the oligarchs pay taxes even more and then everything will be fine? No, only bourgeois populists, politicians and bureaucrats can speak with such slogans. (...)

There is only one way out of this situation – taking control over the economy by the working people themselves, introducing a planned economy. When the key sectors of the economy are nationalised and under control of the working people, they can produce according to the needs of the country and its population – and not in the interests of oligarchs and corrupted bureaucrats! At the same time, on the contrary, as long as our enterprises are in the hands of corrupt bureaucrats, their resources will be stolen, and no citizen will be ready to jump into the car to protect the parasites who protect their children from war abroad. Only a

planned economy, the transformation of the national liberation war into a people's war will be a guarantee of independence!" ⁷

We apologise for reproducing such a long quote from our article, but it is necessary to demonstrate that the whole PO polemic is based on a chimera. Our English-language skills are certainly far from perfect (the RCIT has hardly any native-English speakers), and the PO comrades, who are native Spanish speakers, are most likely hampered by reading our articles via machine translation. Still, it is difficult to understand how the PO can justify such an amalgamation of our positions!

Confusing military with political support for the defence struggle of the Ukrainian people

Having said this, it would be of course mistaken to believe that this is a debate about – deliberate or involuntary – misunderstandings. However, before we deal with the fundamental differences, we need to clarify another issue: the difference between political and military support for a (petty-)bourgeois force at the top of a legitimate liberation struggle.

As the RCIT has explained numerous times, we strictly differentiate between these two types of support. While we favour in such circumstances support for the military struggle, we oppose political support as we consider these forces as political obstacles in the struggle for the liberation of the working class and the oppressed.

This is a long-standing Marxist position, and it is for this reason that revolutionaries are fundamentally opposed to vote for the budget of a bourgeois government (be it for

social or for military spending). This is even true in those cases where such a governments stand at the top of a progressive struggle. Trotsky explained such an approach in the case of the popular front government in Spain during the civil war against Franco 1936-39. In this conflict, the Fourth International supported the military struggle of the Republicans in order to defeat the fascists. However, Trotsky strictly refused to vote for a budget of such a government.

"To vote the military budget of the Negrin government signifies to vote him political confidence ... To do it would be a crime. How we explain our vote to the anarchist workers? Very simply: We have not the slightest confidence in the capacity of this government to conduct the war and assure victory. We accuse this government of protecting the rich and starving the poor. This government must be smashed. So long as we are not strong enough to replace it, we are fighting under its command. But on every occasion we express openly our non-confidence in it: it is the only one possibility to mobilize the masses politically against this government and to prepare its overthrow. Any other politics would be a betrayal of the revolution." ⁸

For this reason, the RCIT has never advocated support for a budget by the bourgeois Zelensky government. Quiet the opposite, we have made our fundamental opposition against this regime very clear – including a joint statement with the Ukrainian comrades of *Spalakh*. *"We denounce the Zelensky government for its neoliberal policy which results in the sell-out of the country's people and resources to foreign and local oligarchs. Likewise, we denounce its pro-NATO and pro-EU policy. This policy could only result in the subordination to the foreign policy interests of U.S. and European imperial-*

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting analyses the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – the U.S., China, EU, Russia, and Japan. He shows that the diplomatic rows, sanctions, trade wars, and military tensions between these Great Powers are not accidental or caused by a mad man in the White House. They are rather rooted in the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system. This rivalry is a key feature of the current historic period and could, ultimately, result in major wars between these Great Powers.

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

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting critically discusses the analysis of modern imperialism by a number of left-wing parties (left social democrats, Stalinists, Trotskyists and others). He demon-

strates that most of these organizations fail to understand the nature of the Great Power rivalry and, consequently, are not able to take an internationalist and revolutionary stance.

The author elaborates the approach of leading Marxist figures like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg to the problems of Great Power rivalry and imperialist aggression against oppressed peoples. He outlines a Marxist program for the current period which is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

The book contains an introduction and 29 chapters plus an appendix (412 pages) and includes 61 figures and tables. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan
A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective

By Michael Pröbsting



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ism. As a result, the country is getting now under pressure from Western powers to negotiate with Russia and to accept the occupation of the South and the East. The only way forward is a popular war against Russian imperialism independent of any Great Powers – similar to the resistance forces in Iraq and Afghanistan which expelled the American occupiers. The Ukrainian workers and peasants need to organise themselves independently. They need their own government – a workers and poor peasant government – in order to take their fate in their own hands and to remove any influence of oligarchs and foreign imperialists.”⁹

Unfortunately, the PO comrades don't seem to be familiar neither with the writings of Trotsky nor those of the RCIT. Hence, they believe that if one supports the struggle of a camp led by bourgeois forces this would equal political support for this leadership.

The dual character of the Ukraine War: a book of seven seals for PO

The PO attempts to make fun with our analysis of the dual character of the Ukraine War. “*Pröbsting has invented the pseudo-dialectical theory that the war has a dual character: it would be inter-imperialist on the one hand and national liberation on the other. It is not known what “dialectical” calculation was made to calculate what percentage is inter-imperialist war and what percentage is liberation war. But his “mathematics” has helped him place himself, “from such a contradictory analysis of the war”, in the camp of NATO imperialism against Russian imperialism and to work firmly for the triumph of Western imperialism against Russia.*”

The only thing which is true about this statement is that the RCIT was the first organisation which recognised the dual character of the Ukraine War – a thesis which we issued in a Manifesto published a few days after the beginning of the conflict.¹⁰ Later, this characterisation was adopted by other pro-Ukrainian socialist organisations.

It should be noted that we elaborated the theory of wars with dual character already more than a decade ago.¹¹ We did base this conception on the Marxist classics who did face similar wars with contradictory character – from the American Independence War against Britain (supported by France) in 1775-83, the Italian struggle for independence from Austria-Hungary (with support of the French) in 1859, the Dublin uprising against Britain (with German weapons) in 1916 or the Chinese war against Japan (with U.S. support) in 1937-45. We have dealt with such kind of wars extensively and refer readers – in particular the PO comrades! – to these works.¹² It is really unfortunate that the PO gets so confused by wars with contradictory character that they try to find refuge in comical remarks.

The PO sneers at our analysis and claims that “*it is not known what “dialectical” calculation was made*”. Well, if that were the only thing which they don't know! A few sentences before, the PO author claims: “*The war in Ukraine has been going on for decades.*” Really, “*for decades*”? In the world, we are living in the war started on 24 February 2022, i.e. two years ago. And if one wants to refer to the brief war in Donbas in 2014, one could speak about a single decade at best. So much for the “*mathematics*” of PO!

Russian imperialism? The PO's walk on eggshells

But, of course, the root of the problem is not based on the PO leaders' lack of computational ability but rather their ineptitude to understand the class character of Russia as an imperialist power. As we did show in our past documents, the PO has claimed since three decades that capitalist restoration has not been completed in Russia (and China).¹³ In their latest polemic against us, the comrades try to circumvent this issue with spectacular smoke grenades.

First, they ignore to answer our critique and refuse to say a single word if they still stand to their bizarre theory about the “non-completed” restoration of capitalism in Russia (and China) – something which seems to create much headache to prove for the PO leader, despite their self-proclaimed knowledge of mathematics. We therefore repeat our question, in the hope that the comrades will reply to it in their next polemic: does the PO still believe that capitalist restoration has not been completed in Russia (and China)?

Instead of clarifying this issue, they make some confusing assertions. On one hand, they claim that the conflict in the Ukraine would have an “*inter-imperialist war*”. This is a fascinating thesis given the fact that the PO has always denied the imperialist character of Russia! Hence, they end up in the bizarre theory of an “*inter-imperialist war*” between two non-imperialist countries – the Ukraine (which the PO correctly characterizes as a semi-colony or neo-colony) and Russia (which, according to PO, is not an imperialist power)! And these people make fun about the RCIT's understanding of dialectic!

The PO tries to circumvent the fundamental contradictions in their logic by referring to the “*imperialist character of Putin's regime and its aspirations to recreate the old imperialist regime of tsarism*”. But the character of a state derives from its objective economic, political and military class character – not from the “*aspirations*” of its leaders!

In this context, it is important to remember that PO and its allies use the category of “*imperialism*” in a deliberate confusing way. In a reply to our arguments, published in 2018 in their theoretical journal “*World Revolution*”, they wrote that there would exist “*pre-capitalist imperialism*” and “*capitalist imperialism*”. Discussing Russia in World War I, when Lenin and Trotsky denounced Russia as “*imperialist Great Powers*”, PO tries to relativize this characterization by claiming that Russia would have represented a “*pre-capitalist imperialism*”. “*Hence, the imperialism of Russia and the Ottomans resembled the imperialism of the Greater Rome rather than capitalist imperialism.*”¹⁴

In fact, for PO such “*pre-capitalist imperialism*” has been the feature of a ... capitalist semi-colony! “*The elements of militarism and feudalism that dominated Russian imperialism were also present in Ottoman imperialism. However, the Ottoman Empire was a semi-colony and did not possess the distinct characteristics of imperialism defined as the highest stage of capitalism. Therefore, neither Russia nor the Ottoman Empire cannot be seen as imperialist powers that defined the (imperialist) character of the World War I. They were dependent on great imperialist powers and therefore occupied a secondary position (at best) in the inter-imperialist rivalry.*”¹⁵

It is in this spirit that the PO leaders claim that Putin's “*imperialism*” would be something qualitatively different

from the imperialism of other Great Powers.

In other words, the PO theoreticians construct a definition of “imperialism” which is in fact the “imperialism” of a semi-colony, or more precisely, a non-imperialist “imperialism”. You see, there is a lot which we could learn from these masters of dialectic!

“Imperialist restoration”?

How does the PO achieve this feat? By introducing a new category: “imperialist restoration”. By this they hope to circumvent to answer the question if capitalist restoration has been completed in Russia.

“This has occurred in Russia in a particular way: the bureaucracy that previously enjoyed the use of collectivized state property has been “transformed” and helped to create an oligarchic bourgeoisie - which it itself integrates - owns, through the savage privatization of the means of production. But this is NOT the restoration that imperialism seeks to find a way out of its crisis. Imperialism wants to colonize all the states of Eastern Europe and, especially, the immense territory of Russia. (...) This is the imperialist restoration underway in Ukraine and throughout Eastern Europe and which has as its direct goal the advance in the same direction manifested in the war against Russia.”

In fact, “imperialist restoration” is a highly confusing category. Does it mean the restoration of an imperialist power? Obviously not, since the PO author speaks about “imperialist restoration” in the Ukraine. It rather seems to mean capitalist restoration under imperialist domination. If this is what PO means, we ask if this implies that in their view capitalism has been already restored in those countries which are under Western imperialist domination (like those in Eastern Europe)? And does this mean that capitalist restoration would be only possible under the domination of the U.S. and the EU? And does this mean that capitalist restoration has not been completed in Russia since, as the PO article says, the process in this country has not been “the restoration that imperialism seeks to find a way out of its crisis”? It will be of interest to see how the PO comrades find a way out of this web of inner contradictions.

As a matter of fact, capitalism has evolved in history under various circumstances and, in the case of late developed countries (like Japan in the second half of the 19th century), this process must not necessarily take place under domination by another power.¹⁶

Furthermore, history has seen all kind of different imperialist powers which came into existence not under domination by another power but as a result of their own political, economic and military involvement. (We have written about this extensively in our book “Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry”.¹⁷)

The PO comrades seem to be completely unaware of these contradictory but real developments in history – in the late 19th and early 20th century as well as in recent times. Instead of a concrete analysis of Russia’s involvement as an imperialist power, they rather try to solve the problem by inventing new and confusing categories. However, as we did show in several studies, Russia has been a capitalist state since the early 1990s and later become an imperialist power – dominated by domestic monopolies and a bonapartist regime – which has been engaged in substantial capital export as well as military interventions (e.g. Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, Ukraine).¹⁸

The PO polemic against the RCIT concludes with the following revealing paragraph: “As in the First World War, an important part of the “left” has allowed itself to be dragged into the camp of imperialism, rejecting the need to confront it in all fields and, more than ever, especially in that of imperialist war. Liebknecht’s slogan that he calls for considering his own bourgeoisie as an enemy in war is fully valid today.”

Well, that would be true if we would really be in a World War III with the Great Powers of East and West bombing each other. But this is just another phantasmata of the PO comrades. In the real world, Russian imperialism is trying to occupy and subjugate the Ukraine – a semi-colonial country.¹⁹ Western powers support the Ukraine in order to weaken their imperialist rival. It should not be too difficult to realize that this is not a World War III but ... the Ukraine War!

Hence, revolutionary socialists need to find a correct tactic in such a war of an imperialist power against a semi-colonial country – and not in a phantom world war. This means that the task today is to defend the Ukraine against the Russian invasion without lending any political support to the Zelensky government and without support Western sanctions against Russia.²⁰

Footnotes

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The Gaza War 2023-24

See all relevant RCIT documents on our website:

<https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/compilation-of-articles-on-the-gaza-uprising-2023/>

The “Trotskyist” RRP in Russia fails to support the Palestinian resistance against the Zionists’ genocide in Gaza

By Alexey Sedov, Denis Sokolov and Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 6 February 2024

The genocidal war of the Zionist state in Gaza is the most important event in the current world situation. This is even more so as it is currently transformed – with the U.S. attacks against Yemen, Iraq and Syria – into an Israeli-American war against the Arab peoples.

The war embodies the attempt of the settler state to crush the Palestinian resistance and to expel the population from Gaza. Furthermore, U.S. imperialism tries to regain its domination over the Middle East.

For all these reasons, this war is a crucial test for each and every socialist organisation. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its sections in Russia and in Israel / Occupied Palestine have unconditional supported the heroic resistance, currently led by Hamas, against the Zionist state. Likewise, we fully side with other forces fighting the Israeli or the Western imperialists (like the Houthis in Yemen). In all these conflicts we advocate the *military victory of the Palestinian and pro-Palestinian forces and the defeat of the Zionist and imperialist enemies*. At the same time, the RCIT has always emphasized that such support for the *practical* struggle does not mean that we lend *political* support to these forces.¹

Like many other socialist and democratic forces, sections of the RCIT have been actively involved in practical solidarity activities with Palestine.² In Austria, several pro-Israel forces have laid a criminal complaint against Michael Pröbsting, the International Secretary of our organisation, accusing him of “*incitement to commit terrorist offenses*.”³

“A clear stance against both Hamas and Israel”?

Unfortunately, the *Revolutionary Workers Party* in Russia (RRP) has a very different approach. On their internet channels, they only published a single document of their organisation on the Gaza War – as this would be a secondary sideshow in the global class struggle!

In fact, there would have been no harm if the RRP leadership would have forbear to publish such statement!⁴ While this document expresses general sympathy with the Palestinian people – there is rarely any socialist, democrat or ordinary person with an inch of conscience in the world who does not so – it goes not beyond such a statement of compassion combined with a few empty phrases about the need for socialism.

The RRP fails to state a single word about the necessity for socialists to *support* the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist invaders. In fact, nearly all parties of the Palestinian people support the armed struggle against Israel’s genocide – from petty-bourgeois Islamists (mainly *Hamas* and *Palestinian Islamic Jihad*), nationalists (like the *Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade* and the *Popular Resistance Committee*) to left-wing organisations (e.g. the *Popular* respectively the *Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine*).

Shamefully, the RRP refuses to lend such support. Worse, they put Hamas, the leading force of the Palestinian resistance, on equal levels with the Israeli Apartheid state, currently committing one of the worst massacres in modern

history! After explaining the reactionary nature of Israel, the RRP statement continues: “*Hamas itself is also reactionary*.”

Consequently, the RRP concludes that it opposes Hamas and Israel equally: “*Marxists must take a clear stance against both Hamas and Israel, while advocating the complete liberation of the Palestinian people from occupation*.” Remarkably, in stating their fundamental opposition, they name even Hamas before Israel!

True, Marxists *politically* oppose Hamas. We want to build a revolutionary party which can replace Hamas as the leading force of the national liberation struggle. But we side with this petty-bourgeois mass movement against the Zionist monster which tries to annihilate the Palestinian people. Let’s be clear: only an idiot or a lackey of reaction can put Hamas on the same level as the terrorist settler state!

It should be added that in Russia, Hamas is not considered as a terrorist organisation – in contrast to nearly all Western imperialist countries. Hence, even from an opportunist point of view there is no excuse for the RRP’s shameful denunciation of the leading Palestinian resistance organisation!

The tradition of Ted Grant: adaption to social-imperialism

The RRP’s coward stance on the Gaza War is no accident. It is deeply rooted in their political method which stems from the right centrist tradition associated with Ted Grant and Militant/CWI. As we did show in a special pamphlet, Grant and his followers have repeatedly refused to support national liberation struggles of peoples in (semi-)colonial countries against imperialist oppressors. To name a few examples we refer to the Malvinas War between Britain and Argentina in 1982, the nationalist resistance against the British occupation of Northern Ireland, the armed struggle of the Iraqi people against U.S./UK imperialism in 1991 and 2003 or the Ukraine’s war of national defence against Russian imperialism since February 2022.⁵

Marxists have an expression for such a policy which is particularly appropriate for organisations operating in imperialist countries – as it is the case with the Russian RRP: *adaption to social-imperialism*.

The material basis of such adaption to social-imperialism is the economic and political power of the imperialist state as well as the strength of the bureaucratic apparatus of “left-wing” bourgeois parties. In Russia, an imperialist power since more than two decades,⁶ the misnamed “*Communist Party of the Russian Federation*” (KPRF) is such a social-imperialist party which wholeheartedly supports Great Russian chauvinism,⁷ including Putin’s reactionary invasion of the Ukraine.⁸ Its leader Gennady Zyuganov has close relations with Putin since many years and is a regular guest at the Kremlin.⁹

Despite the KPRF’s character as a social-chauvinist “*Ruskij Mir*” party which unconditionally supports Putin’s impe-

rialist war, the RRP calls it “a traditional proletarian party” in which it works hard as “disciplined party members”! It regularly supports the KPRF at elections and even stood candidates on its list.¹⁰

It is therefore hardly surprising that a group which fails to consistently oppose its “own” imperialist enemy equally fails to oppose another imperialist enemy (like Israel)!

In short, the RRP leaders have repeatedly failed to take an internationalist and anti-imperialist stance. Authentic socialists must draw conclusions from this: break with the such opportunist mis-leaders and join forces with those who advocate the policy of revolutionary struggle against imperialist powers – be it Israel, the U.S. or Russia!

Footnotes

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

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The Ukraine War and the NATO-Russia Conflict

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Theses on the Growing Impact of the National and Democratic Question

The Marxist theory of Permanent Revolution and its application in the current historic period of capitalist decay

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Preface: The following set of theses is an attempt to outline a specific issue of the theory of permanent revolution which, in our view, is of increasing relevance for the strategy of Marxists in the current historic period. We try to present a comprehensive problem in a condensed form in order to make it better accessible for readers. Hence, we focus ourselves on the essence of the issue without discussing their manifold concrete forms as they appear in the social and political dynamics in capitalist countries and the class struggle all over the world. However, readers can find references in the footnotes to other works of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* where we have discussed a number of such concrete examples in more detail.

Mechanist method and reformist strategy

1. Materialist dialectic – in contrast to its wayward counterpart of vulgar mechanism – has always recognised that development never advances in a gradual and ascending line. It rather proceeds in an uneven way, combining contradictory elements which in their totality result, first, in a quantitative and, at some point, in a qualitative transformation. (“*Development is the “struggle” of opposites*”, as Lenin said.)¹ Such transformation often represents some form of progress, but sometimes also regression. It is because of its dialectical nature that “*a development, so to speak, [...] proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions.*” (Lenin)²
2. Many “Marxists” have failed to apply such a dialectical approach to the sphere of social prognosis as well as political analysis. They rather assume that capitalism evolves in a gradualist way and, hence, that progress from capitalism to socialism has to develop likewise in a gradual way. Such a philosophy constitutes the theoretical fundament of various versions of revisionism – mostly of left social democratic or Stalinist origin. Since the productive forces develop continuously, the proletariat grows and grows, and humanity is getting closer and closer to socialism. One only needs to direct such “organic” development to the right channels so that progress could take place without big ruptures.
3. From such a mechanistic concept follows the fantastical reformist strategy to transform capitalism peacefully via elections and parliamentary reforms (which, in the view of some more left-wing revisionists, might be advanced by some pressure from the masses on the streets). Such an approach has constituted the theoretical basis for the strategy of social democracy (from Kautsky and Otto Bauer to Tony Benn and Sarah Wagenknecht), Stalinist parties as well as of various types of bourgeois left populism (a la SYRIZA, DiEM25 and PODEMOS/SUMAR). Centrists like Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe and Alan Woods have also adopted to this parliamentary and pacifist strat-

egy – albeit disguised in “Trotskyist” language.³ Government coalitions with bourgeois parties, administration of capitalism in order to save it from its crisis, demobilisation of the masses and integration of the party and trade union bureaucracy into the capitalist state apparatus – these are the practical results of such a reformist strategy.

4. However, the mindset of vulgar mechanism is a much wider phenomenon, and it also effects not only various radical leftists like the Left Communists, Bordegists, or Anarchists but also many Trotskyists. Naturally, all disciples of Trotsky adhere – at least in words – to his theory of *uneven and combined development* as well as to the strategy of *permanent revolution* (the former is the theoretical fundament of the latter). Nevertheless, they often accept – consciously or unconsciously – the reformist idea that capitalism is “inevitable evolving”, that the productive forces are “inevitable growing” and, hence, that capitalism is becoming “purer and purer”. In other words, these self-proclaimed Trotskyists implicitly reject the theory of uneven and combined development. They do not recognise the *acceleration of antagonisms* in the epoch of imperialism but rather assume a *harmonization of the contradictory processes*, i.e. that the tempo and nature of such lines of developments would *converge*.

5. As a consequence, such “Marxists” wrongly assume – consciously or unconsciously – that the national and democratic question would progressively losing its relevance and that the class struggle would be increasingly reduced to a direct confrontation between a “pure” bourgeoisie and a “pure” proletariat. As Trotsky once remarked: “*Vulgar ‘Marxism’ has worked out a pattern of historical development according to which every bourgeois society sooner or later secures a democratic regime, after which the proletariat, under conditions of democracy, is gradually organized and educated for socialism.*”⁴ It is, of course, true that capitalism is a highly dynamic social formation and, hence, that the forms of contradictions are not at a standstill. (Stagnation, in the literal sense, does not exist – neither in nature nor in human society.) Indeed, as we did show somewhere else, the proletariat is globally growing in relative and absolute terms. However, at the same time, this process takes place in a contradictory way as the social differentiation within the working class is also increasing.⁵ Likewise, the classic petty-bourgeoisie is declining while, at the same time, new semi-proletarian, semi-petty-bourgeois layers are growing in numbers. Or, to take another example, the spread of modern technologies – internet, smartphones, etc. – integrates different parts of the world more than ever. However, this does not result in a convergence of regions and classes around the globe. In fact, inequality in wealth is growing between the classes within individual countries as well as between imperialist and semi-colonial countries.⁶ As Trotsky once said: “*The force of this law [of uneven development, Ed.] operates not only in the relations of*

countries to each other, but also in the mutual relationships of the various processes within one and the same country. A reconciliation of the uneven processes of economics and politics can be attained only on a world scale.”⁷

Uneven and combined development: old and new forms in the current historic period

6. Without a dialectical approach, one cannot comprehend the *uneven* character of social development – “the most general law of the historic process” (Trotsky)⁸ Such unevenness in the development of different social processes – nationally and internationally – inevitably results in the interaction between these which causes new combinations. This is why Marxists speak about the *law of uneven and combined development*. Such contradictory nature of development guarantees that gradual progress in history without ruptures and catastrophes is impossible – even more so in the epoch of modern capitalism where all parts of the world are increasingly interconnected via economic and political bonds.

7. The concrete development of capitalism in the current historic period demonstrates that this social formation has exhausted any progressive potential. Ignoring the reformist-mechanist illusion of gradual advance in historical progress – a fanciful idea nurtured both by the liberal bourgeoisie as well as the labour bureaucracy – capitalism has rather entered its stage of decline and decay. Since the Great Recession in 2008, and even more so since the beginning of the Great Depression in 2019, we see not only a deepening of economic crisis but also a series of catastrophes, wars and revolutions. It is sufficient to refer to the climate catastrophe,⁹ Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza,¹⁰ the Ukraine War,¹¹ the pandemic and the COVID Counterrevolution in 2020-22,¹² the inter-imperialist Great Power rivalry,¹³ etc.

8. It is inevitable in such a period of decay that the antagonisms of capitalism accelerate – between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between oppressor and the oppressed nations as well as between states in general and the imperialist powers in particular. The result is, among others, the expansion of the bonapartist state apparatus and a rise of attacks on democratic rights, increasing racism and Islamophobia, more tensions and wars in the Global South, acceleration of rivalry between states, the transformation of productive forces into destructive forces (climate catastrophe, high-tech weapons, AI, etc.). Such development epitomizes a process of *social regression* – a development which was once put by Rosa Luxemburg in the famous formula that humanity faces the alternative of “Socialism or Barbarism”. As a result, the national and democratic question is not losing its relevance – contrary to the delusions of mechanist reformism and its centrist sibling – but, quite the opposite, is becoming more important.

9. Lenin and Trotsky elaborated the concept of uneven and combined development under the conditions of the first half of the 20th century when capitalism had entered the epoch of imperialism, resulting in world wars, social catastrophes and revolutionary upheavals. They emphasised, among others, the interaction and combination of modern capitalist development and the integration of pre-capitalist societies in the (semi-)colonial East and the South. The semi-colonial countries – despite the fact

that they are much more pervaded by capitalism than they were a century ago – are still economically “backward” in comparison with the imperialist states. Likewise, these societies are still characterised by contradictory combinations of capitalist and pre-capitalist features (like tribal structures in Africa, the caste system in India, etc.) For all these reasons, the theory of uneven and combined development completely retains its validity.

10. At the same time, it is crucial to recognise that the leaders of the Third and Fourth International considered the national and democratic question as relevant not only for semi-feudal colonies but also for “advanced” capitalist and imperialist class societies. It is sufficient to refer to Lenin’s and Trotsky’s writings on the struggle of the Irish people against Britain, about the importance of the Black question in the U.S., on the relevance of migrants in imperialist countries or about the importance of democratic demands in countries like Germany or Italy.¹⁴

The evolvement of imperialism and its contradictions

11. However, it is crucial to understand that in addition to such long-existing features of imperialist capitalism, *additional* contradictory developments are becoming increasingly important and are engrafted to the complex nexus of capitalism in its period of decay. Imperialist capitalism in the 21st century has *essentially* the same contradictions as its progenitor version in the times of Lenin and Trotsky. But being essentially the same does not mean being *identical*. Imperialism has evolved and modified in the last three quarter of a century, and it would be a silly caricature of orthodox Marxism to limit oneself to the simple repetition of old formulas.

12. First, new developments in computer technologies are creating new possibilities as well as new dangers and sometimes simply represent social regression in guise of technological revolution. Hence, we see tremendous technological breakthroughs which simultaneously go hand in hand with the danger of annihilation (e.g. new weapons) or with social regression (e.g. destruction of jobs, surveillance, genetic manipulation, the shift from social life to virtual non-reality). In other words, we see the development of new productive forces which are, from their outset, also destructive forces.¹⁵

13. We see similar developments in the social and political field. Overripe capitalism in its period of decay combines the most modern technologies with an increasing trend to replace bourgeois democracy with authoritarian and bonapartist forms of rule. As the RCIT explained in more detail in a recently published document, the ruling class is systematically expanding the bonapartist state apparatus aimed at attacking or abolishing democratic rights.¹⁶ Such attacks range from military and institutional coups, attacks on national and religious minorities on all continents, anti-immigrant policy, attacks on the right of free speech (under the pretext of “incitement to terrorism”, denouncement as “foreign agent”, etc.), increasing police repression and internet surveillance, bonapartist attacks under the disguise of “pandemic control” (the policy of Lockdowns and “Green Pass” during the COVID Counterrevolution 2020-22), attacks on women’s and LGBT+ rights, etc. Such a policy – which we have called *Chauvinist State Bonapartism* – has been advocated both by

“right-wing” as well as “liberal” sectors of the ruling class. 14. We see such an uneven and combined development also in the field of bourgeois ideology. The capitalist imperative of economic expansion (to extract more surplus value) clashes with the equal necessity to protect their spheres of influence against imperialist rivals (resulting in trade wars, protectionism, and sanctions); the demand of capitalist monopolies to import young labour forces (because of aging demography of the population in their own countries) clashes with the need of a crisis-ridden ruling elite to incite chauvinism against “foreigners”; the liberal ideology of “human rights” and “democratic values” clashes with the geo-strategic imperative of Western imperialist powers to support Israel – their key ally in the Middle East – which carries out a barbaric genocide against the Palestinian people, etc. The result of all this is an unprecedented Orwellian confusion – “War” is “Peace”, “Democracy” is “Surveillance” and “Human Rights” are “Genocide”.

15. In other words, we see a peculiar combination of most modern technologies with authoritarian, “pre-democratic” (or “post-democratic”) forms of rule. Decaying capitalism combines hyper-modern developments in the economic base – which in itself become more and more contradictory and destructive – with an increasingly “pre-modern” superstructure. Hence, the uneven and combined development today contains both the long-existing combinations of modern capitalism and semi-feudal structures as well as new combinations of “revolutionary” technological breakthroughs with anti-democratic and bonapartist superstructure. Capitalism in its last stage of decay “returns” to its pre-democratic phase of the 19th century – like a senile returning to the stage of childhood.

16. When we talk about the social regression of decaying capitalism, we certainly do not mean that the modern class society would transform itself into a new version of feudalism (as some petty-bourgeois progressive ideologists are suggesting). No, there is no regression to previous historic social formations like pre-imperialist capitalism or even feudalism. What we see is the dialectical law of development as the evolvment of inner contradictions – “*motion is a contradiction, a unity of contradictions*”, as Lenin said¹⁷. Capitalism is stuck in the final stage of its development where it has reached its historical limitations since a long time and where its fundamental contradictions – the productive forces are permanently and increasingly hitting the wall of the relations of productions as well as of the nation states – take an increasingly explosive form. Trapped in a historic cage, the ongoing development of capitalism with all its contradictions must necessarily take a more and more explosive and destructive form. This means that such a decaying social formation unavoidable destroys more and more the social and living conditions of humanity and that it increasingly abolishes the bourgeois-democratic form which it had taken in a number of countries for a shorter or longer period. In other words, capitalism is regressing in its form and increasingly reveals its historic essence – the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie which means, in the epoch of imperialism, the domination of the monopoly bourgeoisie. It is therefore no surprise that its form takes certain similarities with the epoch of the early stage of capitalism with its absolutist monarchies and the Thirty Years’ War in Europe in 1618 and 1648.

17. Lenin once stated that “*political reaction all along the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism.*”¹⁸ This is of course true. However, this general law has found different forms of expression in different periods within the imperialist epoch. No doubt, reaction rampaged in the period between 1914 and 1945 but had to retreat, to a certain degree, in the post-war period (long boom, welfare state, de-colonialisation, etc.) After 1991, a period began which was characterised by social regression (neoliberalism, destruction of social gains in the former Stalinist workers states, etc.) and, at the same time, expansion of bourgeois democracy. With the onset of the historic period of decay in 2008, we see a deepening line of social and political reaction which, inevitable, provokes catastrophes, wars and revolutionary convulsions. Hence, “*political reaction all along the line*” is a dominant feature of capitalism today more than it has ever been since 1945.

The actual relevance of the strategy of permanent revolution

18. Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution is based on three chains of thought: a) the tasks of the proletarian liberation struggle – including the democratic tasks – cannot be implemented under any form of capitalist regime and it must therefore continue without interruption until the proletariat has conquered power and established its dictatorship; b) the global nature of capitalist economy makes the successful construction of socialism possible not in national isolation but only on an international scale; c) the revolutionary struggle does not end with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat but must be further advanced in order to raise the material and cultural level of the masses and to build a society in which classes wither away. Hence, the working class must continuously drive forward the revolutionary process.

19. The first of these three theses is particularly relevant for the subject under discussion here. Trotsky emphasized that “*the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation.*”¹⁹ While he considered this issue as particularly important for the revolutionary strategy in (semi-)colonies, he explicitly called his theory of permanent revolution as relevant also for imperialist countries.

20. It is because of the above-mentioned expansion of chauvinist state bonapartism which increasingly oppresses the popular masses that the national and democratic question becomes more relevant in the current historic period of decaying capitalism. Hence, Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution is more relevant than ever – both for the liberation struggle in the semi-colonial as well as in the imperialist countries. The long-lasting process of the Arab Revolution since 2011, the great wave of popular uprisings in summer and autumn 2019 – from Hongkong to Chile and Sudan to Catalonia, the COVID Counterrevolution in 2020-22 and the mass protests against it, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Ukraine War since February 2022 and the current Gaza War which provoked an unprecedented global pro-Palestine solidarity movement, the burning national question in the South of Nigeria²⁰ – all these are vivid confirmations of the *global validity* of this thesis.

21. Another law of dialectical motion connected with the law of uneven and combined development is the negation of the negation. According to the *law of negation of the negation*, development takes place as a change. First the original state of the object, its transformation into its opposite (that is, its negation), and then the transformation of the opposite into its opposite. Palestine before 1948 was inhabited mostly by Arab Palestinians. The Zionists were a minority holding only 6% of the lands of Palestine. In 1948 the Zionists negated the right of self-determination of the Palestinians by ethnic cleansing. In the current war of Israel on Gaza we can see the beginning of the process of negating the transformation of Palestine in the direction of one Palestinian state democratic and socialist from the river to the sea. At this beginning of the transformation, we see it in the chants of millions who say *"From the river to the sea – Palestine will be free"*. This is a change of consciousness that indicates the historical direction.

22. As Trotsky emphasised in the above-mentioned quote, democracy and national liberation can only be achieved and secured if the working class and the popular masses take power, i.e. when they successfully carry out a socialist revolution overthrowing the ruling capitalist class. However, this does not denigrate the relevance of struggles for single national and democratic demands. Similarly, the struggle against the closure of a particular factory or for higher wages remains important even if we know that the problems of unemployment and poverty can not be solved without the national and international expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

23. In fact, national and democratic struggles are elementary features in the chain of permanent revolution. Like other forms of struggle – e.g. the economic struggle (against an austerity package, etc.) – they *can* become a springboard for socialist revolution. This is even more the case since national and democratic struggles can easily become, by their very nature, *political* struggles since they relate to the question which political forces rule the country. Furthermore, governments often try to pass austerity packages via anti-democratic measures, such as article 49.3 in the case of the pension reform in France or the Ley de Acompañamiento in Spain or Ley Omnibus in Argentina. Therefore, contrary to the silly assertion of economist revisionists, the national and democratic struggle is not a deflection from the class struggle. It is rather a form of class struggle as Trotsky explained. *"The sectarian simply ignores the fact that the national struggle, one of the most labyrinthine and complex but at the same time extremely important forms of the class struggle, cannot be suspended by bare references to the future world revolution."*²¹

24. In fact, such economist nonsense is based on the assumption that a worker is only interested in higher wages and job security. It ignores that a worker is also a worker outside his or her workplace; that he or she can face discrimination – within as well as outside the workplace – because of gender, skin colour, language, or passport; that he or she could face the horror of foreign occupation, military dictatorship or war, etc. As a matter of fact, the national and democratic question has always been an essential feature of capitalism since a class society can not exist without superstructure and ideologies in order to guarantee the process of exploitation of the oppressed classes, i.e. the appropriation of a surplus product by the ruling class.

Capitalism has never and can never exist without social and political oppression of the masses. Even more, class societies since their inception thousands of years ago have always been characterised by the combination of economic exploitation with social and political oppression. This includes the oppression of women and youth, domination of ethnic groups by others, forms of dictatorships etc. In fact, these manifold forms of oppression have played a key role in numerous class struggles throughout the history of humanity! For all these reasons, the liberation struggle of the working class must include not only economic but also national and democratic demands.

Trotsky and the revolutionary role of democratic demands in the Transitional Program

25. Trotsky therefor considered democratic slogans as important and necessary elements of the Transitional Program. One or the other formalist supporter of Trotskyism might claim that such democratic slogans, while being legitimate part of the Transitional Program, are only of secondary relevance. True, this might have been the case in some rich imperialist countries with a stable economy and a long bourgeois-democratic tradition. But today, hardly any such country exists anymore! Even the wealthiest bourgeois democracies face important issues of racism, migration or Great Power rivalry.

26. Furthermore, Trotsky also emphasised that specific democratic slogans can have the character of transitional demands. *"The struggle against the military dictatorship must inevitably assume the form of transitional revolutionary-democratic demands, leading to the demand for a Chinese Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal direct, equal, and secret voting, for the solution of the most important problems facing the country: the introduction of the eight-hour day, the confiscation of the land, and the securing of national independence for China"*²² One might object that such a democratic demand can be disarmed as a revolutionary slogan and become integrated in the capitalist system. It is true that under the conditions of capitalist economic upswing and political stability or of a serious defeat of the working class, such democratic demands can be defused of its revolutionary potential. However, this is true of nearly all transitional demands. Think about the soviets or the factory councils in Germany in 1918-19 when they were, first, politically disarmed by the social democratic majority within and, then, reduced to an advisory body for the bourgeois republic. The same happened with the workers militia in Austria after World War I when the *"Red Guard"* led by Joseph Frey was integrated into the *"Volkswehr"*. History has also shown that it is likewise possible to integrate certain elements of workers control into the capitalist system (e.g. in Italy or Britain in the 1970s, factories under self-management in Argentina in the 2000s).

27. The relevance of this or that specific national and democratic demand can not be determined in abstract. Such is related to the concrete features and inner contradictions of bourgeois rule as well as to the specific conditions of the class struggle. However, the more the capitalist system is in crisis, the more the ruling class is forced to attack the national and democratic rights of the masses, the more such slogans will play an important role in the class struggle. In any case, authentic Marxists have no rea-

son to deny or to downplay the relevance of the national and democratic question in the class struggle. *“These doctrinaires (the ultra-left Bordegists in Italy, Ed.) refuse to understand that we carry on half, three-quarters or, in certain periods, even 99 percent of the preparations of the (proletarian, Ed.) dictatorship on the basis of democracy, and in doing this we defend every inch of democratic positions under our feet”*²³

28. Lenin emphasized that the national and democratic question and the involvement of the masses – including sectors with reactionary prejudices – are a necessary component of the revolutionary process in imperialist countries. Such he wrote in 1916 in response to the imperialist economists who denied the important role of national and democratic struggles: *„To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.-to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution. So one army lines up in one place and says, “We are for socialism”, and another, somewhere else and says, “We are for imperialism”, and that will be a social revolution! Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a “putsch”. Whoever expects a “pure” social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.*

*The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these there were masses imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. But objectively, the mass movement was breaking the hack of tsarism and paving the way for democracy; for this reason the class-conscious workers led it. The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But objectively they will attack capital, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for difficult reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately “purge” itself of petty-bourgeois slag.”*²⁴

Some revisionist counterarguments

29. Let us finally deal with some counterarguments which are often put forward by revisionist distorters of Trotsky’s theory of *permanent revolution*. Some claim that this strategy would mean that socialists could support the struggle for national and democratic demands only if they are directly related to the struggle for socialism and, if this

is not the case, one should not support such national and democratic struggles. This, of course, is utter nonsense. Usually, nearly all struggles of the working class and the oppressed – economic as well as political – are *not* related to the socialist final goal! But does this mean that we can not support the immediate interests of the workers and oppressed? Is it not the case that the oppressed classes first and foremost *learn in struggle* and not by reading books?! And is it not the obligation of revolutionaries to participate in such struggles and, by this, to aid the masses in gaining experience and to develop a socialist class consciousness?!

30. A further counterargument is that the theory of permanent revolution would mean that national and democratic struggles without combination with socialism are meaningless since they could never successfully realise their goals within the boundaries of capitalism. This is utter nonsense too. First, as mentioned before, socialists must fight together with the masses because – as Marx stressed – *“being determines consciousness”* and without struggle neither socialist parties nor the proletariat can become revolutionary! Second, Trotsky spoke about *“the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation”*. This does not mean that not a single national or democratic demand could be temporarily realised! It would be equally wrong to claim that a wage increase or the right of abortion or same-sex marriage would be impossible to achieve under capitalism.

31. Another distortion is the idea that the theory of permanent revolution would only be relevant to semi-colonial countries in the Global South but not to imperialist countries. As we noted in a RCIT pamphlet on this issue: *“Thus while during the 19th century democracy was still suppressed or threatened by the pre-capitalist nobility, the absolutist bureaucracy and the opportunist bourgeoisie, today it is threatened by imperialist monopoly capital and its lackeys in the semi-colonial countries. Yes, today there are no semi-feudal modes of production within the imperialist countries, but this does not at all imply that capitalism has become “pure.” What we are facing instead is decaying, rotten imperialist capitalism. Such a system creates new contradictions and exacerbates long-existing ones. As the reactionary offensive of the imperialist bourgeoisie accelerates, it makes immediate and democratic demands an increasingly more important part of the program for permanent revolution within the imperialist countries.”*²⁵ Trotsky himself insisted on the relevance of the strategy of permanent revolution also for the “advanced” capitalist countries. *“While destroying democracy in the old mother countries of capital, imperialism at the same time hinders the rise of democracy in the backward countries.”*²⁶

32. Various “Marxists” consider the struggle for national and democratic demands not as class struggle but rather as something separate and inferior. As the quote above showed, Trotsky explicitly rejected such an economist idea. In fact, workers join the class struggle not only when they leave the factory in the workwear but also at the weekend. The vital interests of workers and their families are not limited to jobs and wages but also include democratic issues (to use their native language wherever they want, to marry whom they want, to have the right of abortion, to have the right of national self-determination, etc.). In other words, the class struggle is a much broader concept than the mechanistic boneheads can imagine.

33. Finally, revisionists often justify their refusal to

support national and democratic struggles because these are usually led by petty-bourgeois movements (e.g. nationalists, Islamists, left-liberal feminists). Of course, it is true that such struggles are often led by such non-revolutionary forces. But given the deep crisis of revolutionary leadership, nearly all class struggles are led by non-revolutionary forces! Are economic demonstrations and strikes led by corrupted trade union bureaucrats – eying at a well-paid position in the capitalist management or the government – in any way superior to national struggles led by petty-bourgeois forces?! In fact, such a counterargument betrays the aristocratic degeneration of many centrist organisations in rich countries since they consider pro-imperialist reformist bureaucrats as something more “proletarian” than petty-bourgeois nationalist or Islamist leaders in semi-colonial countries or among migrants.²⁷

34. In order to overcome the leadership of economic as well as political struggles by non-revolutionary forces, Marxists must not denounce these from the sidelines but rather participate in such struggles energetically. They have to apply the united front tactic in its various forms according to the concrete circumstances (in trade unions and popular organisations, with other parties, with military forces, the anti-imperialist united front, etc.). This means that revolutionaries join the struggle even if it takes place under a non-revolutionary leadership, advocate the self-organisation of the masses independent of the bureaucrats, criticising the leadership wherever it fails and putting demands on them in order to expose them and to aid the masses in learning through their own experience with these leaders. It is through such a process that Marxists can build an alternative leadership – a *Revolutionary World Party*. This is what the RCIT is fighting for jointly with other authentic revolutionaries!

Footnotes

- 1 V.I. Lenin: On the Question of Dialectics (1915); in: LCW 38, p.358
- 2 V.I. Lenin: Karl Marx. A Brief Biographical Sketch with an Exposition of Marxism (1914); in: LCW 21, p. 53
- 3 See on this e.g. the pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: The Poverty of Neo-Imperialist Economism. Imperialism and the national question - a critique of Ted Grant and his school (CWI, ISA, IMT), January 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/grantism-imperialism-and-national-question/>
- 4 Leon Trotsky: The Permanent Revolution (1929), Pathfinder Press, New York 1969, p. 131
- 5 See on this e.g. our book by Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today, The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today. On the Application of the Marxist United Front Tactic in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the Present Period, May 2016, (Chapter III), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/book-united-front/>.
- 6 See on this e.g. our book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>
- 7 Leon Trotsky: The Permanent Revolution, p. 255
- 8 Leon Trotsky: History of the Russian Revolution (1930), Haymarket Books, Chicago 2008, p. 5
- 9 See on this e.g. RCIT: Theses on Agriculture and Ecology,

September 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-agriculture-and-ecology/>; RCIT: Revolutionary Change to End Climate Change! Only expropriation of the capitalist corporations opens the road towards the end of climate change, 20 September 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/revolutionary-change-to-end-climate-change/>

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

11 We refer readers to a special page on our website where all RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and the NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>.

12 We refer readers to a special page on our website where all RCIT documents on the COVID Counterrevolution are compiled, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/col-lection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>.

13 On the inter-imperialist rivalry see e.g. our book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>

14 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Struggle for Democracy in the Imperialist Countries Today. The Marxist Theory of Permanent Revolution and its Relevance for the Imperialist Metropolises, August 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/democracy-vs-imperialism/>

15 The RCIT documents on Artificial Intelligence are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/compilation-of-articles-on-artificial-intelligence/>

16 RCIT: Bourgeois Democracy in the Age of Capitalist Decay and the Revolutionary Struggle for Democratic Rights, September 2023, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/bourgeois-democracy-and-the-struggle-for-democratic-rights/>

17 V.I. Lenin: Conspectus of Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy; in: LCW 38, p. 256

18 V. I. Lenin: Imperialism and the Split in Socialism; in: LCW Vol. 23, pp.105-106 (Emphasis in the original)

19 Leon Trotsky: The Permanent Revolution, p. 276

20 See on this e.g. various articles on the website of the RCIT comrades in Nigeria, <https://communism4africa.word-press.com/>

21 Leon Trotsky: Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Muddleheads (July 1939), in: Writings 1939-40, p. 50, online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/07/ukraine.htm>

22 Leon Trotsky: The Political Situation in China and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition (1929); Trotsky: Writings 1929. p. 149; see also Leon Trotsky: Problems of the Italian Revolution (1930); in: Trotsky Writings 1930, p. 224

23 Leon Trotsky: Critical Remarks about Promoteo's Resolution on Democratic Demands (1931), in: Trotsky Writings 1930-31, Pathfinder 1973, p. 135

24 V. I. Lenin: The Discussion on Self-Determination summed up (1916); in: CW Vol. 22, pp. 355-356

25 Michael Pröbsting: The Struggle for Democracy in the Imperialist Countries Today

26 Leon Trotsky: Marxism In Our Time (1939), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/04/marxism.htm>

27 For a discussion of the issue of aristocracy see e.g. our book by Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice, (Chapter III, iii), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/>

