

Marxism and War

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1. Introductory Remarks

Since 2008 we live in a historic revolutionary period caused by the tendency of the rate of profit of capitalist production to fall. This tendency leads to capitalist governments serving the very rich to attack economic social and democratic rights of the workers and the poor.

The capitalists in some countries like Germany are in crisis, in other countries right wing tendencies are on the rise. This crisis is reflected in the US in the form of Trump. This is also a period that the mass movement of the oppressed is on the rise. The current latest cases are Palestine and Iran.

The crisis of humanity in this period is the lack of strong revolutionary International leading socialist revolutions. The tendency of the rate of profit to fall is leading to trade wars. Unless we will overthrow the world capitalist system, the conflicts between the old imperialist states the US, Western Europe and Japan and the new imperialist states China and Russia, will lead to a third world war.

US President Donald Trump is already pushing for a trade war with China. He acts to restrict imported goods made by China: *"The trade imbalance between America and China is one of Trump's signature moves, and a tariff is one way to address that kind of problem: It's a tax levied on imports from a particular country in order to make those imports more expensive. The U.S. trade deficit with China was a whopping \$342.6 billion in 2014 — not \$505 billion as Trump implied, which was America's trade deficit with the rest of the world combined. But that's still a problem. It means China sold \$342.6 billion more worth of goods and services to America than America sold to China."* [1]

Wars between imperialist states, no matter how the capitalists and their servants portray themselves and what color they paint their faces with, are all about control over raw materials, markets and cheap labor. Right now, the competition between the new and the old imperialist states is intensifying.

WWI, which cost humanity about 20 million deaths, broke out because different imperialists wanted to re-divide the colonies. WWII, where the death toll almost tripled, broke out as the only way out of an economic crisis that began in 1929. Of course, the defeat of the revolutionary struggle of the working class contributed to humanity's inability to stop it on time. This was mainly due to the counter-revolutionary policies of the social democrats, the Stalinists and centrists such as the POUM in Spain.

Both world wars destroyed a large portion of the forces of productions in Europe, Asia and Africa. They claimed the lives of about 100 million people, most of whom were civilians. Thus we live in a world where a mentally ill serial killer will be put to death or imprisoned for life, while those who are responsible for the deaths of millions will die of old age.

The very need of rebuilding the destroyed economy was behind the first-world prosperity after WWII. The capitalist world system does not present any way out of the vicious cycle of economic crisis except the destruction of large portions of the forces of production. A third world war will lead humanity back to the Stone Age and might even cause the total elimination of the human race. As Lenin put it: *"For humanity to live imperialism must die."*

This compels us to examine the question of wars and revolution. Marxists are not pacifists who oppose all wars. Marxists use the concept of the nineteenth century Prussian writer and soldier, Carl von Clausewitz, who wrote "*war is the continuation of politics by other means.*"

Bourgeois peacetime politics is consisted of the exploitation of the working class, oppression of the working and non-capitalist women, exacerbation of racism and national chauvinism against immigrants (current scapegoats happen to be brown skinned or Muslim), destruction of the environment and, of course, preparing for a new global war. Lenin wrote that we have to look at "*the class character of war: what caused that war, what classes are waging it, and what historical-economic conditions gave rise to it.*"

We revolutionary Marxists openly declare that our aim is to achieve a socialist society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war. However, on the road to a classless society we support wars waged by revolutionary classes, wars which are of direct and immediate revolutionary significance. Wars that advance the struggle of the working class and the oppressed against the imperialist enemy and its servants.

As Trotsky wrote: "*We do not and never have put all wars on the same plane. Marx and Engels supported the revolutionary struggle of the Irish against Great Britain, of the Poles against the tsar, even though in these two nationalist wars the leaders were, for the most part, members of the bourgeoisie and even at times of the feudal aristocracy ... at all events, Catholic reactionaries. When Abdel-Krim rose up against France, the democrats and Social Democrats spoke with hate of the struggle of a "savage tyrant" against the "democracy." The party of Leon Blum supported this point of view. But we, Marxists and Bolsheviks, considered the struggle of the Riffians against imperialist domination as a progressive war. Lenin wrote hundreds of pages demonstrating the primary necessity of distinguishing between imperialist nations and the colonial and semi-colonial nations which comprise the great majority of humanity. To speak of "revolutionary defeatism" in general, without distinguishing between exploiter and exploited countries, is to make a miserable caricature of Bolshevism and to put that caricature at the service of the imperialists.*" [2]

Trotsky explained why Marxists defend the struggle of the oppressed people when they are led by non-revolutionary and even reactionary leadership: "*I will take the most simple and obvious example. In Brazil there now reigns a semi fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case I will be on the side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!" [3]*

2. The Different Types of Wars before and in the Age of Imperialism

The war of the American colonial settlers against British colonialism was progressive as it removed the fetters from the forces of production in North America. *"Previous restrictions on trade and industry ended. As a result, an American merchant marine and manufacturing industry developed, especially in munitions and consumer products. ... Large estates belonging to loyalist families were broken up into smaller plots. Primogeniture, the ancient British practice of passing on a family's entire estate to the eldest son, was ended. Both these policies provided increased opportunities for small, independent farmers."* [4]

At the same time, the war of the white colonists against the native nations was reactionary as its aim was to destroy and steal their land, not to help them develop the forces of production.

"It is important to recognize that European and U.S. settler colonial projects unleashed massively destructive forces on Native peoples and communities. These include violence resulting directly from settler expansion, intertribal violence (frequently aggravated by colonial intrusions), enslavement, disease, alcohol, loss of land and resources, forced removals, and assaults on tribal religion, culture, and language. The configuration and impact of these forces varied considerably in different times and places according to the goals of particular colonial projects and the capacities of colonial societies and institutions to pursue them. The capacity of Native people and communities to directly resist, blunt, or evade colonial invasions proved equally important." [5]

In the American civil war Marx and Engels supported the North against the South because capitalism, at that time, was still progressive and victory for the North would abolish slavery. They saw the war as continuation of the revolutionary war for independence. Of course this was not a war that could lead to socialism but they believed that victory for the North would advance the cause of all workers, both white and black, by destroying chattel slavery.

At the same time the sympathy of many in the British upper class, especially those who dealt with cotton was with the South, despite the fact that Britain had abolished slavery within its territories in 1833. However, the mill workers of Manchester supported the North. Though they endured long hardship the workers of 'Cottonopolis' refused to spin cotton picked by American slaves and supported Lincoln's embargo. Lincoln acknowledged this sacrifice when he wrote to the workers of Manchester in 1863 saying that theirs was an act of *"sublime Christian heroism, which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country."* [6]

British capitalism was more advanced than American capitalism in the 1850-1890 period *"In this phase of development the growth process was led not by the textile industry but by the expansion of coal-mining, iron-and steel-making, railway construction, ship building, and other branches of mechanical engineering, such as the manufacture of steam-engines, textile machinery, and machine tools."* [7]

At the same period during the earliest phases of industrialization. *"American industry ... was ... characterized by ... local [miniature] monopolies protected from competition with each other by high transportation costs. By 1850, the average industrial plant in the US employed only seven workers. A year later, more than half of all British industrial enterprises had five or fewer employees." At mid-century, the internal American market for manufactures was still smaller than that of the British.* [8]

Marx and Engels did not support British colonialism even when it was more-advanced capitalism. They examine wars from the point of view of the international working class that understood that British imperialism was already a reactionary force against progress in the direction of democracy and socialism. England was already a bastion of reaction during the French revolution when it fought France in order to restore the old feudal regime and prevent democratic revolutions in other countries. It was motivated by the need of stability of profit flow.

Marx and Engels supported not only the Irish and the Polish struggles for independence but the struggle of the oppressed Indian people against British colonialism. *"Marx was almost the very first to grasp the true nature of the revolt. On June 30, 1857 he explained the fact that the Sepoy's revolt of 1857 were the first to rise by the pertinent observation that the Indian Army happened to be 'the first general center of resistance which the Indian people were ever possessed of'."* On July 28, 1857, he quoted with approval Disraeli's remark on the previous day: *"the Indian disturbance is not a military mutiny, but a national revolt"*. On July 31 1857, Marx asserted that what John Bull considers to be a military mutiny *'is in truth a national revolt.'* [9]

"Britain had been trading in India since about 1600, but it did not begin to seize large sections of land until 1757, after the Battle of Plassey. This battle pitted 3,000 soldiers of the British East India Company against the 5,000-strong army of the young Nawab of Bengal, Siraj ud Daulah, and his French East India Company allies. Fighting began on the morning of June 23, 1757. Heavy rain spoiled the Nawab's cannon powder (the British covered theirs), leading to his defeat. The Nawab lost at least 500 troops, to Britain's 22. Britain took the modern equivalent of about US \$5 million from the Bengali treasury, which financed further expansion. The East India Company traded in cotton, silk, tea, and opium. Following the Battle of Plassey, it functioned as the military authority in growing sections of India, as well. By 1770, heavy Company taxation and other policies had left millions of Bengalis impoverished. While British soldiers and traders made their fortunes, the Indians starved. Between 1770 and 1773, about 10 million people died of famine in Bengal, one-third of the population." [10]

Wars in the Epoch of Imperialism

In this epoch of the decline of capitalism, war between two imperialist camps like WWI and WWII (except for the Stalinist Soviet Union that was a degenerated workers state and the semi-colonial nations fighting against imperialists like China vs. Japan) will destroy the forces of production and most importantly the lives of millions and millions of workers.

The International Monetary Fund writes: *"By the end of World War II, much of Europe and Asia, and parts of Africa, lay in ruins. Combat and bombing had flattened cities and towns, destroyed bridges and railroads, and scorched the countryside. The war had also taken a staggering toll in both military and civilian lives. Shortages of food, fuel, and all kinds of consumer products persisted and in many cases worsened after peace was declared. War-ravaged Europe and Japan could not produce enough goods for their own people, much less for export. (...) By 1947, the United States had accumulated 70% of the world's gold reserves. The United Kingdom had gone from being the world's greatest creditor to the world's greatest debtor. Countries had sold off most of their gold and dollar reserves, as well as their foreign investments, to pay for the war. What few reserves remained were now quickly running out. Trade deficits meant there was little hope of replenishing them."* [11]

Severe inflation plagued the weakened economies. By 1948, wholesale prices were 200% higher in Austria, 1,820% higher in France, and a massive 10,100% higher in Japan than they had been before

the war. In 1948, the French government devalued the franc by 80%, making a 5,000 franc note practically worthless. In some countries like Germany, the monetary system collapsed. People resorted to barter, often using cigarettes as money. [12]

Thus the imperialist wars, no matter under what ideology or regime, are reactionary because they destroy the forces of production on a large scale for the profits of small number of families. The only correct position in such wars is revolutionary defeats to all the imperialist camps. [13]

Another type of war is a war between an imperialist state and colonies or semi-colonies, for example the US war against Iraq or Afghanistan or British imperialism against Argentina (the Malvinas war in 1982). In such a war the RCIT stands with the oppressed people of the semi-colonies regardless of what leadership they have and in this struggle. Building the revolutionary working class party must include using the tactic of the *Anti Imperialist United Front*. [14]

Trotsky wrote in *On the Sino-Japanese War*: "*In the Far East we have a classic example. China is a semi-colonial country which Japan is transforming, under our very eyes, into a colonial country. Japan's struggle is imperialist and reactionary. China's struggle is emancipatory and progressive. But Chiang Kai-shek? We need have no illusions about Chiang Kai-shek, his party, or the whole ruling class of China, just as Marx and Engels had no illusions about the ruling classes of Ireland and Poland. Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle.*"

Another type of war is a war between two semi-colonies like the war between Iraq and Iran or Ethiopia and Eritrea. Another type is a war where imperialists use local armies of semi-colonies for example the African Union Mission to Somalia, AMISOM, a U.S.-controlled military operation financed by Washington that provided political, intelligence and diplomatic cover. Somalia is a source of oil and other strategic interests for imperialism. In such a war we oppose the servants of imperialism and call to defend the country under attack.

3. Dialectical vs. Formal-Mechanical Logic

Logic is not only a tool of thinking but it reflects the actual motion in nature and society. There are two kinds of logic - mechanical logic and dialectical logic. The first one relates to the external motion of large bodies and the second one relates to both internal and external, i.e. actual motion.

Non-revolutionary "Marxists" no matter what they say about themselves use only formal mechanical mode of logic whenever they are tasked with expressing revolutionary positions. Mechanical logic uses Newtonian laws of mechanics. The three basic laws describing the motion of material bodies under the action of forces applied to them:

First law: if no forces act on a material point (or if the forces applied to it are in equilibrium), then relative to an inertial reference system the material point is in a state of rest or uniform rectilinear motion.

Second law: If a force FF acts on a material point, then relative to an inertial reference system the point undergoes an acceleration such that its product with the mass mm of the point is equal to FF : $ma=F$.

Third law: Two material points act on each other with forces that are equal in absolute value but opposite in direction along the line joining the two points.

Newton's laws of mechanics are based on the notion that object A is always A and not B. However, even scientists who use Newton's laws have to admit that they cease to be valid for motions of objects of very small dimension (elementary particles). Since large bodies are made of elementary elements everything is in motion and not only because of an external force but because of internal motion caused by internal contradictions. For this reason A in the real world is in the process of becoming B.

To give an example: the Stalinist Soviet Union collapsed because of the external pressure of the armed race and because of the bureaucratic relations of production blocked any further development of the forces of production already in the 1970s.

It is possible in simple cases, when two very similar states fight each other to reach a correct revolutionary position by using formal logic. For example, WWI when the correct revolutionary position was a revolutionary defeat for all the imperialists and, hence, in each imperialist state the main enemy of the working class was the national capitalist class.

However, there are many wars where formal logic is not sufficient and without dialectical logic it is easy to fall into a wrong position. For example the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. Since both states are semi-colonies, using formal logic leads to the position of revolutionary defeat for both. However Between 1979 and June 1981, Iran had a sharp internal struggle. In January 1980 Abolhassan Banisadr became the president of Iran and he clashed with the theocratic Islamic Republic Party. The guerrilla group *People's Mujahedin of Iran* (MEK) also opposed the IRP.

On 28 June 1981, a bombing of the office of the IRP killed around 70 high-ranking officials, cabinet members and members of parliament, including Mohammad Beheshti, the secretary-general of the party and head of the Islamic Republic's judicial system. The government responded with thousands of arrests and hundreds of executions. The uprising and armed struggle against the Khomeinists was

crushed and the Ayatollas further consolidated their power. Thus, *until* then it was necessary to defend Iran but *after* the Ayatollas consolidated their power, it was time for revolutionary defeatism on both sides. [15]

Another example is the military clash between Fatah and Hamas in Gaza in 2006. Formal logic leads to the conclusion of opposing both reactionary sides. Some centrists even thought that since Hamas is Islamist and Fatah is secular it was necessary to support Fatah. In sharp contrast, using dialectical modes of thinking led to the position of revolutionary defense of Hamas. It was based on the fact that Israel was behind Fatah's attack on Hamas after losing the 2005 elections. Those centrists like Alan Woods' IMT who refused to defend Hamas because it is an Islamist organization reflected the Islamophobia of the imperialists.

Using the logic of dialectics, resulting from careful observation of motion and interaction of different forces of nature and society, began already in ancient Greece. Socrates already referred to the laws of dialectics:

"After being told that dialectic is a systematic way of discerning the essence of things, Glaucon asks for a fuller description of its nature, forms, and method" (Republic 532d-e). Heraclitus 500 years BC said "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man."

As any Marxist knows, the laws of dialectics were already worked out in detail by Hegel. However, they appear in a mystified, idealist form in whose writings. Marx and Engels who were Hegel's students gave dialectics its materialist basis.

Trotsky in the *ABC of materialist dialectics* wrote: *"We call our dialectic materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our "free will", but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of the nebulae. Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society."*

Engels defines dialectics as *"the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought."* In *Anti-Dühring* and *The Dialectics of Nature*, Engels explained the laws of dialectics, beginning with the three most fundamental ones:

- 1) The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa;
- 2) The law of the interpenetration of opposites, and
- 3) The law of the negation of the negation.

These three laws are not the only laws of dialectics, but only the most important ones. Lenin in summary of Dialectics recognized 16 laws of Dialectics. In this article we will explain the three fundamental laws of dialectics.

Quantity and Quality

This law manifested in nature. For example, water boiling in 100c can no longer be called water, but steam, and under 0c it would not be called water but ice. The motion includes at certain point of the

developing contradictions sudden and explosive periods in which, accumulated changes (quantitative change) undergoes a rapid acceleration, in which quantity is transformed into quality.

This law manifests itself in society when we observe the way capitalist society replaced feudal society and slave society was transformed into a feudal society. It explains how the growing contradiction of Tsarist Russia exploded in the Russian revolution.

Trotsky in the ABC of materialist dialectics wrote:

“Every individual is a dialectician to some extent or other, in most cases, unconsciously. A housewife knows that a certain amount of salt flavors soup agreeably, but that added salt makes the soup unpalatable.”

To use the dialectical method it is necessary to understand phase transitions when one phenomenon is changing to another. Using the example of water, the phase of transition is the period of the changes from solid to liquid or from liquid to gas. At a certain point, the growing contradictions of a phenomenon cause a qualitative leap.

This explains how inorganic matter changed into organic matter and how open revolutionary uprisings explode at certain points of long periods of struggle against exploitation and oppression. This critical point in the process of the revolution in Russia was reached already in September 1917, as Lenin understood, and if Lenin was not alive, the Russian revolution would have failed and been crushed.

While according to formal logic the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, in reality the whole is greater than the sums of its parts. An army is not simply the sum total of individual soldiers. It is a massive force that transforms the individual soldier physically and psychologically. The same is true for a revolutionary party that transforms the individual members into a great force that at a certain point in the revolutionary process can lead the transformation of society.

The Unity of Opposites

People who use dialectical logic proceed from the standpoint that everything develops by means of a struggle of opposites; that the whole is made from contradicting parts; that capitalism develops in virtue of the contradiction between the social character of production and the private means of appropriation. The engine of social evolution is the struggle between the working class and the oppressed against the capitalist ruling class.

The negation of negation

If the law of the unity and struggle of opposites discloses the source of development, and the law of the transition of quantitative changes into qualitative changes reveals the mechanism of development, the law of the negation of the negation expresses the direction, form, and result of development.

The effect of the law of the negation of the negation is fully revealed only in an integral, relatively complete process of development through a chain of interconnected transitions, when it is possible to specify a more or less finished result of the process.

At each particular stage, the law of the negation of the negation is usually revealed only as a tendency. Every phenomenon is negated and the new phenomena that replace it will be negated and the former

phenomenon will replace it, but on higher level. This law is the basis of our understanding that classless primitive communism was replaced by class society some 13,000 years ago, but modern communism will replace class society but on a higher level than primitive communism.

4. Examples of the Application of Dialectical Laws in Revolutionary Politics

To understand Trotsky's *Proletarian Military Policy* for WWII in the democratic imperialist states, it is necessary to use the logic of materialist dialectics. WWII was the continuation of WWI but not a repetition of it. It was different because of the Soviet Union that was not a capitalist state and because some imperialist states had a democratic form that had to be considered for tactical reasons, while in content, both imperialist camps were the main enemy.

The *Proletarian Military Policy's* aim was to turn the American working class's desire to fight fascism into a revolutionary perspective of overthrowing its "own" imperialist state. The essence of the proletarian military policy was a call for trade-union control of the compulsory military training being instituted by the state. Of course, the American ruling class would oppose such a policy, but it could appeal to the working class.

Unfortunately, after Trotsky was murdered by a Stalinist agent, the SWP tilted the policy in the direction of reformism when they explained during their trial that Nazi Germany is the enemy, forgetting that in each imperial state the main enemy is at home. This caused later groups like the ICL to reject Trotsky's correct tactic altogether.

In the war of 1948 between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab states, it was necessary to oppose the Zionist state and use the tactic of revolutionary defense for the Arab armies, even though the high officers of the Jordanian legion, for example, were British. The reason was that the essence of the war by Israel was to expel the Palestinian masses and the Arab states entered the war under the pressure of the Arab masses that felt solidarity with the Palestinians suffering from brutal massacres.

In May 1948 the organ of the Fourth International published the mistaken position of Trotskyists in Palestine led by Ygael Gluckstein, known later as Tony Cliff, who could not adopt a revolutionary position in support of the Palestinians.

The group *Revolutionary Communist League* wrote:

"The two camps today mobilize the masses under the mask of "self-defense." "We have been attacked, let us defend ourselves!" – say the Zionists. "Let us ward off the danger of a Jewish conquest!" – declares the Arab Higher Committee. Where does the truth lie?

War is the continuation of politics by other means. The war led by the Arab feudalists is but the continuation of their reactionary war on the worker and the fellah who are striving to shake off oppression and exploitation. For the feudal effendis "Salvation of Palestine" means safeguarding their revenues at the expense of the fellahin, maintaining their autocratic rule in town and country, smashing the proletarian organizations and international class solidarity.

The war waged by the Zionists is the continuation of their expansionist policy based on discrimination between the two peoples: they defend kibbush avoda (ousting of Arab labor), kibbush adama (ousting of the fellah), boycott of Arab goods, "Hebrew rule." The military conflict is a direct result of the policy of the Zionist conquerors.

This war can on neither side be said to bear a progressive character. The war does not release progressive forces or do away with social and economic obstacles in the path of development of the two nations. Quite the opposite

is true. It is apt to obscure the class antagonism and to open the gate for nationalist excesses. It weakens the proletariat and strengthens imperialism in both camps." [16]

This position has three main mistakes. First of all, the Arab semi-colonies were not feudal as feudalism did not exist in the Middle East. The mode of production under the Ottoman was the Asian mode of Production. In 1948 the Arab states were underdeveloped capitalist colonies or semi-colonies, super exploited by the imperialists.

Secondly, the essence of the 1948 war was the Zionists' ethnic cleansing of Palestine, not a war against British imperialism. A war similar to the American white colonialist settlers against the native nations.

Thirdly, a victory in a war of semi-colonies against settler colonialists in the epoch of imperialism would have been a victory against the main enemy of the working class - the imperialists and would encourage other workers and oppressed people to fight against imperialism. [17]

The British government supported the Zionists in the war. In April 1948, British forces, which had hitherto acted as a buffer between Jews and Arabs forces in Haifa, the largest port town, announced to the Jewish authorities there that they would be withdrawing. This sent a green light to proceed with the city's 'de-Arabisation', which involved expelling its 75,000 Palestinian residents, and is described by the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé as "*one of the most shameful chapters in the history of the British empire in the Middle East*".

The same fate befell the city of Jaffa, which was taken in May 1948 after a three-week long siege by Israeli forces, who succeeded in expelling the entire population of 50,000 with the 'help' of British mediation. In parts of Jerusalem, the British even disarmed the few Arab residents defending themselves against Jewish attacks on their neighborhoods. The British also aided Israel's annexation of Palestine in other ways, such as handing over land ownership deeds for villages, which provided vital information to aid the depopulation process. [18]

The Jordanian legion, in spite of the fact that it was commanded by British officers, and in spite the secret deal of King Abdulla with the Zionists of dividing the lands that according to the partition plan was supposed to be an independent Palestinian state, fought against Israel because of the pressures of the Arab masses, including Arab officers of the legion, who felt solidarity with the Palestinians. For this reason the policy of revolutionary defense of the Arab armies was the only correct revolutionary position.

The victory of Israel in the war of 1948 set back the economy of the Arab states and strengthened the control of British and American imperialists in the region. It also set back the workers struggle in the Arab states.

On this the Trotskyist Gabriel Baer wrote in 1949:

"However, the creation of the State of Israel as a diversion for the Arab masses of the Middle East from the anti-imperialist struggle, was not the only gain for Anglo-American imperialism from the war and the new balance of power. An important by-product of last year's events was the exhaustion of resources and reserves of almost all the Middle Eastern governments. Benefiting from the war-time prosperity of World War II, the Arab bourgeoisie all over the Middle East and especially in Egypt gained strength and resources, considerably improving their bargaining position vis-a-vis British imperialism.

... It would be futile to deny that the period of the last year, from May 1948 to May 1949, has been a period of stagnation of the labor movement in the Arab East, except perhaps for some countries on the fringe of the Arab states like the Sudan (where strong trade unions came into being and took part in the political struggle of the Sudanese anti-imperialist movement.)" [19]

Thus the Israeli victory in the war of 1948 set back the forces of production in the Arab states and the struggle of the working class and the oppressed. For this reason it was necessary to defend the armies of the semi-colonies regardless of the reactionary leadership of the Arabs, without giving them political support.

The right centrist of the CWI and the IMT take a similar wrong position to the Trotskyists in Palestine in 1948. They see the Israeli working class as the key for a socialist transformation of Palestine and they call for two "socialist states". This position reflects their pro Zionist politics.

5. The Inability of Reformists and Centrists to Apply Dialectical Materialism

Reformists and some centrists (the British SWP for example or the American "Trotskyists") avoid the use of dialectical materialism and their method of thinking is a form of western Pragmatism and formal logic. Other centrists, like Alan Woods of the IMT and Peter Taaffe of the CWI explain the dialectics method in general, but they are unable to apply it to revolutionary politics.

For example in the war of imperialist Britain and the semi-colony of Argentina in 1982 they did not take the side of Argentina. The same in the war between the US imperialism and the Afghan people led by the reactionary Taliban. They have refused to stand with the Syrian revolution because it has been led by Islamists. When Fatah backed by Israel attacked Hamas, Alan Woods refused to defend Hamas and stated that in a war between two factions in Palestine, the IMT does not choose sides.

To conclude, Marxists must take into account the consequences of the victory of each side in a war, the potential gains of the imperialists or the struggle of the working class and the oppressed masses against it, the advancement or destruction of the forces of production of the colonies and semi-colonies, the strengthening or weakening of the control of the imperialists and the super exploitation of the working class, etc. For revolutionary politics it is necessary to use materialist dialectics which is the philosophical basis of our scientific observation, thought and action.

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[13] See on this e.g. RCIT: On the 100th Anniversary of the Outbreak of World War I: The Struggle against Imperialism and War. The Marxist Understanding of Modern Imperialism and the

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[14] See on this e.g. 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, chapter 12 and 13, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>; Michael Pröbsting: Liberation Struggles and Imperialist Interference. The failure of sectarian “anti-imperialism” in the West: Some general considerations from the Marxist point of view and the example of the democratic revolution in Libya in 2011, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/liberation-struggle-and-imperialism/>

[15] See on this e.g. <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-iran-iraq-war-generalised-defeatism-not-the-marxist-method-1980/>

[16] <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol09/no03/kolhamaad.htm>

[17] See on this e.g. Yossi Schwartz: Israel’s Six-Day War of 1967. On the Character of the War, the Marxist Analysis and the Position of the Israeli Left, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 12, July/August 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/israel-s-war-of-1967/>

[18] <http://markcurtis.info/2017/03/16/britains-role-in-the-war-in-palestine-1948/>

[19] <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol10/no09/munier.htm>