



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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## The Reformist Pipe Dream of a “Socialist” European Union

PLUS: Stalinist Chauvinism: The Example of the Greek KKE

Russia & China: Neither Capitalist nor Great Powers? (Reply to PO/CRFI)

by Michael Pröbsting

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## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.14, January 2019

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# The Reformist Pipe Dream of a "Socialist" European Union

## Is A Socialist Transformation of the Imperialist EU Possible?

### A Marxist Analysis on the L5I's Latest Opportunistic Adaptation to Reformism

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 01.10.2018

#### Introduction

"Red Flag", the paper of the British supporters of the "League for the 5th International" (formerly known as "Workers Power"), has published an, let's put it this way, odd article. <sup>1</sup> Titled "The workers' answer to Brexit", the article polemicizes against various Stalinist and centrist proponents of Britain leaving the European Union. <sup>2</sup>

Red Flag (RF) and the League for the 5th International (L5I) rightly reject the backward illusions of sectors of the left that leaving the EU and returning to the imperialist nation-state would be a step forward for the working class. As the RCIT and its British supporters have explained in numerous documents, socialists must not lend support to any imperialist form of rule – neither the "sovereign" imperialist nation state (like Britain or other Western European countries) nor the imperialist European Union. Likewise, socialists can not support any camp in an inner-imperialist conflict – like e.g. the current Global Trade War <sup>3</sup> or in military conflicts between such powers. <sup>4</sup> And it is equally impermissible for socialists to lend support to any faction of the imperialist bourgeoisie when they are competing at elections – like e.g. the Republicans vs. the Democrats in the U.S. <sup>5</sup>

Consequently, RCIT and its British supporters call upon workers, socialists and revolutionaries to cast neither a YES nor a NO vote in referenda on EU membership, but to actively abstain. <sup>6</sup>

While RF/L5I correctly criticize those reformists and centrists who are calling for Brexit and who are thereby adapting to the imperialist nation state (like e.g. Stalinists CPB, the CWI or the SWP/IST), they unfortunately fall into the other, no less opportunistic, extreme. They defend their revisionist position that joining an imperialist alliance like the EU would represent a progressive step forward for the working class which must be supported. Here is what the comrades say:

*"The interests of the working class includes not just our pay and conditions today, but the impact of any given event on our ability to fight in the future, and in particular our ability to free ourselves from capital once and for all, by creating an international commonwealth of socialist republics in which production is planned democratically for need not greed. Viewed from this perspective, socialists should oppose Brexit 100% and use any principled means to stop it. Why? Because:*

1) It imposes massive restrictions on the previous freedom of workers from EU countries to travel to and work in the UK, and vice versa. This is against the interests of the working class now and in the future

2) It imposes further barriers to capitalist trade between the UK and EU countries, which in turn mean:

a. Higher prices and job losses arising from tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade that will definitely ensue should Brexit take place on anything other than 'Norwegian' terms ie Single Market membership. There is and will be no tariff-free access to the

single market for non-members of it

b. More limited interaction and integration of the working class of Britain with the working class of Europe, weakening the development of a Pan-European fightback against capital and a pan-European movement of workers for socialism."

RF/L5I also claims, once again, that "the principal issue [of Brexit is] a massive disruption to trade and economic life that turns countries against each other, pushes our culture backwards instead of forwards, harms working class living standards and sets back the fight for socialism."

#### Adapting to EU Imperialism

All these arguments of the L5I are demonstrably wrong as we have shown in detail in several pamphlets and articles. <sup>7</sup> At this point we limit ourselves to summarize our main arguments. We have demonstrated extensively on a factual as well as theoretical level that the formation of the European Union has not led to a growth of the productive forces (let alone cultural progress!). We have shown that the rise of free trade in the epoch of imperialism does not lead to the advance of the productive forces not to mention the living conditions of the working class. Likewise we have demonstrated that increase and decline of migration is basically not related to the existence of the European Union. All these phenomena – with their inner contradictions and dynamics – are a result of the fundamental laws of the political economy of capitalism and not specifically related to the EU or a free trade treaty.

Nevertheless, the RF/L5I "critically" supports the creation and advance of imperialist federations like the EU or of free trade agreements as a "lesser evil" than national states. This contrasts sharply not only with the program of the RCIT but also with the position of the Marxist classics. As we have shown in detail in past pamphlets, the leading Marxist theoreticians – from Rudolf Hilferding (in his groundbreaking work "Finance Capital") to Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky – repudiated support for imperialist free trade over imperialist protectionism, for imperialist federations over national states.

Consequently, they all rejected any form of support – however critically – for the imperialist unification of Europe. In the words of Lenin: "From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism – i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the "advanced" and "civilised" colonial powers – a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary. (...) A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. (...) Of course, temporary agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists . . . but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against



Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile. Compared with the United States of America, Europe as a whole denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America's more rapid development.”<sup>8</sup>

It is not surprisingly that until today RF/L5I has made no effort to prove their claims about the progressive character of the EU in real life. Limiting themselves to silly polemics against the RCIT, they have not even dared to refute the numerous arguments, facts, and quotes which we have provided.<sup>9</sup>

Basically, the comrades of RF/L5I fail to understand that the European Union – like the British nation-state – is first and foremost a *political* project of the imperialist ruling class. It is not a project to advance the productive forces or to increase migration (see the barbaric Frontex regime at the borders of the EU). It is a project to improve the conditions for the European imperialist monopolies to exploit the working class and oppressed and to give them more leverage against other Great Powers like the U.S., Russia or China.

The key task for Marxists is to help the workers vanguard taking an *independent class position*. Hence the RCIT steadfastly defends the orthodox Marxist position – which until 2015 was also supported by the L5I itself – to reject support either for the imperialist EU or for the imperialist nation-state. We stand for an independent position of the working class and, therefore, refuse to support both the pro-EU faction and the anti-EU faction of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

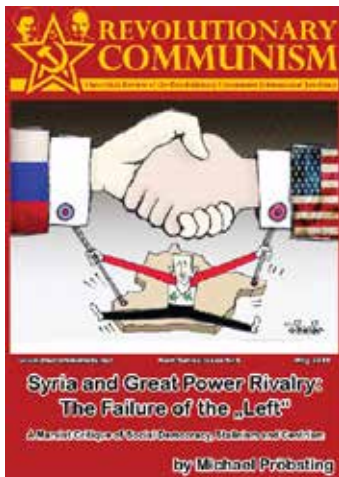
Unfortunately, RF/L5I is defending and even deepening its social-imperialist adaption to the European Union.

### Is “Neoliberal Globalization a Lesser Evil”?

In this article we want to limit ourselves to two new arguments, or rather, more explicitly articulated arguments which the RF/L5I comrades are advancing in defense of their pro-EU position. First, they openly state now that they consider protectionism as “worse” than neoliberal globalization:

“Neoliberal globalisation was a phase in the imperialist epoch in which its principal powers sought to create and administer a rules-based international order based on nominally free trade in which the US and its allies were dominant. That rested on the rule of a coalition of centre-right neoliberal politicians who lost their electoral base after the effect of the 2008 crisis finally filtered through, allowing rightwing populists to win mass support around a new programme of protectionism and economic nationalism. That is Trump. And that is Brexit. What we are talking about is not a progressive challenge to neoliberal globalisation, but its decay and collapse into something even worse, into the nationalism of ‘America First’ and the dystopian project of a Hard Brexit complete with tariffs, price hikes, job losses, deportations and heightened rivalry between states as the ideologues of nationalism look for someone to blame for the disasters their own policies bring.” (our emphasize)

This outrageous statement comes as no surprise to us. We have already warned in our past critique that the logic of their arguments forces the L5I to “critically” support all forms of transnational imperialism compared with the nation-state. “The same opportunistic logic would then also lead the L5I to support the various free trade agreements between the EU and the US (TTIP), between the EU and Canada (CETA), between the US and several Asian and Latin American countries (TPP), or between China and a number of Asian countries (RCEP) – of course extremely “critical” support and naturally in conjunction with their call for “international class struggle.””<sup>10</sup>



## Publications of the RCIT

# Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018

*The bleeding Syrian Revolution and the recent Escalation  
of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry between the US and Russia –  
A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism*

Introduction \* The liberation struggle of the Syrian people against Assad retains its just character \* Against all imperialist aggressors! \* Old and new Great Powers \* The Ex-Stalinist turned social democrats: “God save the United Nations” \* The Stalinists (and some caricatures in Trotskyist camouflage): social-imperialist servants of Assad and Putin \* The Morenoite LIT, UIT and FLTI: the heart on the right place but not their brains \* CWI and FT: failure to understand the imperialist nature of China and Russia \* CWI / SWP(UK) / FT: refusing to support the Syrian Revolution \* Conclusion \* Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

The latest article of RF/L5I proves that our warning was absolutely justified. We repeat that Marxists must not fight against imperialist protectionism and nationalism by "critically" supporting imperialist globalization and imperialist supra-national institutions like the EU, WTO, IMF, etc. Both represent reactionary forms of imperialist exploitation. How can the RF/L5I comrades ignore the fact that imperialist globalization has created the socio-economic conditions which, in turn, generated the climate for right-wing nationalists to spread their chauvinist poison?! Do they really believe that siding with the pro-EU liberal urban middle class and the majority of the big bourgeoisie supporting membership in the EU can advance the struggle and the consciousness of the working class by an single inch?!

Imperialist nationalism is only one form of the inherent drive to expansion of imperialist monopoly capital. Imperialist globalization and creating of empires (like the EU) is another form. But socialists can not lend support (not even super-critical) to any of these forms of imperialist expansionism. Supporting Brexit or Remain is equivalent to supporting one of these two forms of imperialist political rule. Both are impermissible for revolutionaries. This is why the RCIT has always advocated a revolutionary, independent, defeatist position directed against both political forms of imperialist rule.

#### Can a "Socialist Government" Transform the EU?

The second, to put it mildly, "unorthodox" argument of the RF/L5I comrades is that they not only "critically" prefer membership in the EU compared to leaving it. They also claim now that even a "socialist government" should have no desire to leave the imperialist European Union! It would rather, according to the new pro-EU gospel of the RF/L5I, try to transform the EU!

*"A socialist government would swiftly set out a programme of nationalisations, taxes on the rich and controls on capital that would enable a massive redistribution of wealth. It would immediately be attacked by capitalists at home and abroad. That would definitely include attacks from the imperialist ruling class in Britain and the imperialist ruling class in the EU.*

*The EU would of course rush to point to various treaties and*

*rules against expropriations and state aid – not just EU rules, by the way, but pretty much every one of Britain's 110 bilateral investment treaties and of course also – dun dun daaaaaa – the WTO's rules. So, we'd have a choice. Comply or defy. We could comply like Syriza did in Greece and end up administering horrible austerity and cuts. Or we could defy.*

*We propose the latter course. Defy all these rules and fight. Appeal to the working class movement in the EU and every other country. Say 'look, this is what the rules are designed to do, let's rise up and defy them together.' Build an international movement around an international programme of socialist measures and international defiance of the capitalists.*

*What could the EU do then? Well, they could sue us in the EU courts. So what, we could still defy. They could try to expel us. But guess what. There is no expulsion mechanism provision in the treaty, no Article X that says 'Get Out'.*

*So they'd be left with their only weapon: renegotiate the treaty and impose trade restrictions on us. They'd need a unanimous vote of all member states, including all the Belgian regional parliaments, some of which are controlled by the left. But it'd be a real threat. Remember, trade embargos are what have impoverished Cuba, and are causing chaos in Venezuela today. Remember: the early Soviet Republic fought for years precisely to secure trade agreements with other countries against a world embargo.*

*Er – so why on earth would we want to walk out of a trade bloc. Why make it easier for the bosses to embargo us? Syriza's mistake was not that they stayed in, it's that they \*caved\* in and carried out austerity.*

*We don't propose giving in. We propose staying in and fighting. Fighting alongside the victims of austerity in France, Germany, Spain, Italy and yes Greece. Fighting not to break it up and walk out one by one into a hell of competing national capitalist blocs, nor for some milquetoast programme of 'reforming' the EU, but fighting together to OVERTHROW the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the institutions of the EU \*and the Member States\* and to replace them with a Socialist United States of Europe."*

#### An Opportunist Pipe Dream!

This is certainly one of the most bizarre statements of the L5I in the last years! Basically, the comrades transform the classic Marxist conception of seizing power by the work-

## Two Pamphlets on the EU and Brexit

\* **Marxism, European Union and Brexit**

\* **The British Left and the EU-Referendum**

*Written by Michael Pröbsting  
(International Secretary of the RCIT)*

*Price for one pamphlet: 2 Pound (plus delivery charges)  
Order the pamphlet via our contact addresses*



ing class into a legalistic vision of wrangling inside the EU in order to abolish the EU institutions and to transform it into a Socialist United States of Europe.

As a matter of fact, a socialist government can not expropriate the bourgeoisie in a peaceful way. Marxists have always insisted that this will trigger a violent response from the ruling class and open a civil war. The imperialist bourgeoisie – both in Britain (or any other state) as well as in the EU – will resort to all political, economic and military means in order to defeat the insurrectional working class. A socialist government can not help but to closely control the border so that it knows who wants to enter the country. It can not help but to impose a foreign trade monopoly in order to stop imperialist attempts of economic sabotage. It can not help but to mobilize its Red Army in order to fight back the imperialist invaders (or to support insurrections of the workers and oppressed abroad).

The leading Marxist theoreticians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been unambiguously clear on this issue as we have elaborated many times.<sup>11</sup> Let us, at this point, give just one quote from Trotsky in which he dealt with the revolutionary strategy for Britain:

*"In preparing to take state power it is thus necessary to prepare for all the consequences that flow from the inevitable resistance of the possessing classes. It must be firmly understood: if a truly workers' government came to power in Britain even in an ultra-democratic way, civil war would become unavoidable. The workers' government would be forced to suppress the resistance of the privileged classes. To do this by means of the old state apparatus, the old police, the old courts, the old army would be impossible. A workers' government created by parliamentary means would be forced to construct new revolutionary organs for itself, resting upon the trade unions and working-class organizations in general. This would lead to an exceptional growth in the activity and initiative of the working masses. On the basis of a direct struggle against the exploiting classes the trade unions would actively draw closer together not only in their top layers but at the bottom levels as well, and would arrive at the necessity of creating local delegate meetings, i.e. councils (Soviets) of workers' deputies. A truly Labour government, that is to say, a government dedicated to the end to the interests of the proletariat would find itself in this way compelled to smash the old state apparatus as the instrument of the possessing classes and oppose it with workers' councils. That means that the democratic origin of the Labour government – even had this proved possible – would lead to the necessity of counterposing revolutionary class force to the reactionary opposition."*<sup>12</sup>

Needless to say, that one can find hundreds of such statements in the writings of the revolutionary Communist International and later the Fourth International. Only stubborn right-wing centrists like the Peter Taffees' CWI or Alan Woods' IMT have always claimed that a peaceful road to socialism would be possible. It seems that the ex-revolutionary L5I is adapting to such revisionist nonsense. Could this be related to the fact that they are now already entrenching themselves inside the reformist Labour Party for more than three years?!

How is it possible to imagine such a silly scenario like the one outlined by RF/L5I in which a socialist state would not decisively break with the imperialist states which are waging economic or military war against it?! No, such a pacifist pipe dream is impossible in real life! It is unavoidable for a socialist Britain (or any other European state) to

break with the imperialist EU!

Unfortunately, the RF/L5I is trapped in its new centrist method and "forgets" all this fundamental truth of Marxism. Instead it starts silly reformist speculations about defying the EU while remaining part of it. It claims that the EU would have basically no means to bring down a socialist government! You see, the expropriation of the capitalist class, can be a simple affair: When the EU wants to destroy the socialist government, just *"defy all these rules and fight. (...) What could the EU do then? Well, they could sue us in the EU courts. So what, we could still defy. They could try to expel us. But guess what. There is no expulsion mechanism provision in the treaty, no Article X that says 'Get Out'. So they'd be left with their only weapon: renegotiate the treaty and impose trade restrictions on us."*

How silly were we orthodox Marxists when we imagined the expropriation of the capitalist class as a violent affair! No, according to the new theory of RF/L5I, it is simply a question of putting pressure on the imperialists and entering negotiations because the EU has no legal mechanism to expel a socialist member state! Meanwhile, one could undisturbed appeal to the working class inside the EU and to help bringing one socialist government after the other into power!

At the recent UN General Assembly, Iran's Rouhani (rightly) accused Trump of a *"weakness of intellect"*. Unfortunately, Trump seems not to be the only one with such a deficit!

No, this new theory is nothing but a reformist pipe dream of the RF/L5I! A socialist Britain and an imperialist EU are antagonistic entities with diametrically opposed class interests. The working class in power must immediately break with the imperialist institutions (like the EU, the WTO, the IMF, etc.) in order to cut all political, economic or military means which could be utilized by the imperialists to sabotage and defeat the working class in power! The imperialist ruling class – both in Britain as well as in the EU – will always find ways to throw its might against the insurrectional working class. They will do so irrespectively if this is legally allowed by the EU de-facto constitution (the so-called *Treaty of Lisbon*) or not.

The iron logic of opportunist adaption to the liberal pro EU middle class (inside and outside the Labour Party) pushes the RF/L5I deeper and deeper into the direction of social-imperialism. Initially, they "only" advocated a "critical vote" for Britain remaining in the EU. Later they claimed that the EU would represent *"bourgeois democratic progress"* and that it would objectively help in the *"development of productive forces and of the international consciousness of the working class."* Now, they claim that imperialist protectionism is "worse" than imperialist neoliberal globalization, i.e. indicating that they would "critically" defend all institutions representing imperialist globalization against the threat of protectionism. And they fantasize about a socialist government in Britain which would stay inside the imperialist EU, block their counterrevolutionary attempts (as the latter supposedly lacks legal means for this) and transform it into a Socialist United States of Europe.



### Would Communists have "Critically" Defended the Existence of the British Empire? Surely Not!

The idea of such a socialist transformation of imperialist institutions is not new. In 1920, Sidney and Beatrice Webb – internationally renowned proponents of revisionism at their time – wrote a whole book about "A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain". This famous Fabian couple outlined, in 400 pages, a detailed conception how the British Empire could be transformed towards socialism.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, today the British Empire exists only in the nostalgic dreams of some English aristocrats. However, instead, there exists another imperialist Empire called the European Union. The communists in the time of Lenin and Trotsky never desired to keep the British Empire and transform it towards socialism. They rather desired to smash the British Empire in order to open the road to the liberation of the working class and the oppressed people and the creation of a federation of workers (and peasants) republics. This view was reflected, for example, in an article by the British communists in 1923. It attacked the revisionist vision of the Webbs and called for an anti-imperialist strategy. Instead of striving to keep the Empire (today we would say European Union), the communists called to "repudiate the bonds of Empire and liberate the exploited masses"!

*"What, then, is the Communist answer to the questions arising out of the existence of the Empire? If the workers come to power in this country what ought they to do? The answer is clear and definite. Repudiate the bonds of Empire and liberate the exploited masses and join in the fight to crush their enemies by helping to form workers' and peasants' Governments in the*

*liberated countries. But the imperialists would attack? Then join in the defensive fight and use the situation to spread the revolution in the camp of the attackers. To hold aloof in the class war in the name of "self-determination" may be good pacifism. In our opinion, it is rank cowardice and certainly not the way to win victory for the workers.*

*But it may be asserted that by the act of liberation from the Empire it may not follow that the workers' and peasants' Government would come to power. Very well, the workers' Government of Britain would have to use its economic, political and agitational power to ripen the conditions to secure such a consummation whilst being prepared to defend the liberated nation from the attacks of external forces. (...) The Communist alternative which can be put to that of the Imperial Conference and their understudies of the Labour Party and I.L.P. briefly stated is as follows:*

*(1) Support every measure to organise the workers of the countries within the Empire, that will enable them to struggle for improvements as a means to developing their forces to secure self-government by the seizure of power.*

*(2) To conduct strenuous agitation in this country in support of these workers and peasants with a view to exposing the ramifications and implications of imperialism and uniting the workers of this country with the exploited workers throughout the Empire.*

*(3) To aid by every possible means, whether in the colonies or here, in securing the liberation of these countries from the control of the Empire and assist in their struggle against all the imperialists.*

*These are the tasks which provide the workers in the Empire with their answer to the Imperial Conference and the special obligations which history places upon the working class in Great Britain in the revolutionary struggle against international imperialism."*<sup>14</sup>

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018 - A World Pregnant With Wars And Popular Uprisings

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – WORLD PERSPECTIVES 2018: A WORLD PREGNANT WITH WARS AND POPULAR UPRISINGS. The book's subtitle is: Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries.

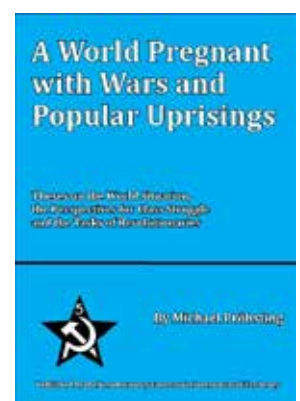
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists' analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic period. Without such an understanding it is impossible for socialists, indeed for all liberation fighters, to possess the necessary political compass on which they can base their program, strategy and tactics.

Since several years does the RCIT publish annual studies on the world situation in which it analysis its most important developments and changes. This book updates the Marxist analysis of the state of the world economy, of the relations between the Great Powers, of the struggle between the classes and the tactics of revolutionaries. We also deal in depth with new issues respectively extend our theoretical analysis on several questions. In particular we have deepened in this book,

among others, our understanding of the nature respectively the transitional character of the present world political phase, of the nature of different types of wars and the tactical conclusions arriving from this, of the complex nature of the conflicts in the Middle East, of the capitalist restoration in North Korea and, finally, we have elaborated a new proposal for an international platform for the unification of revolutionary forces in the present phase.

The book contains a preface, introduction and seven eight chapters plus an appendix (118 pages) and includes 23 figures, 9 tables and 2 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>



What a gulf between the British communist politics in the time of Lenin and Trotsky and the politics of the British L5I supporters today!

Communists *always* oppose the existence of imperialist Empires – in the past as well as the present! Following the new social-imperialist logic of the L5I, Marxists would have had to view the British Empire (renamed into *British Commonwealth of Nations* in 1931) as a step forward compared with the existence of Britain as a nation state only. Consequently, they would had to "critically" defend the survival of the British Empire against its dissolution since, in the logic of the comrades, such an Empire represented a much larger entity than the British nation state alone and, hence, it would allow much better conditions for the development of the productive forces.

Naturally, such a reactionary position has nothing in common with Marxism. It has rather everything in common with Labourite social-imperialism. But with the new centrist logic of the L5I such a conclusion is the only possible one! They must "critically" support all forms of imperialist expansionism – starting from free trade agreements like NAFTA, TTIP, CETA, etc. up to the existence of the EU – as they allegedly constitute "progress" in relation to the nation state.

### Conclusions

As we have already warned in past works, it is only a small step from such a social-chauvinist position to the support for imperialist wars (albeit very "critically")! Lenin often cited the famous principle of the Prussian military theorist von Clausewitz according to which the "*war is nothing but the continuation of politics by other means.*"<sup>15</sup> If the alleged advantages of larger imperialist countries and business associations for the development of productive forces and of the international consciousness of the working class are actually so important for the L5I leadership, so much so that they are in favor of EU membership – then why not support achieving such greater political and economic state organizations by military means?

Surely, the L5I comrades currently oppose such conclusions. But the inner logic of such an approach is merciless: if one supports or defends the creation of larger imperialist entities (like the EU) why not supporting it also via military means?! We repeat: anyone who extends even a little finger to the program of social imperialism is inevitably caught in the net of its political chasms.

Communists must defend a consistent, revolutionary, internationalist and defeatist position when it comes to projects of imperialist expansionism. They must oppose imperialist free trade agreements and they must oppose the imperialist European Union. At the same time they must also oppose the imperialist nation state as it basically represents only a smaller version of the same beast: reactionary institutions of the imperialist ruling class.

Therefore, the RCIT considers the EU, like the British state, as an imperialist enemy and calls the workers vanguard not to support either of them. In the past, when the L5I was a revolutionary organization, it shared this outlook. Today, it has repudiated its own tradition and program without openly explaining why it threw its traditional position over board.

We repeat our conclusion written two years ago: "*All these*

*examples show that the new position of the L5I on the EU and its justification inevitably drive them in the direction of social-imperialism. Despite their anti-imperialist rhetoric, they would support the concrete central projects of the EU and other imperialist powers – in the name of the "development of productive forces and of the international consciousness of the working class." Ultimately, the group would degenerate to becoming "critical" (of course) cheerleaders for the imperialist powers and their expansionism. What a sad end for a group that once embodied a proud revolutionary tradition!"*<sup>16</sup>

Authentic revolutionaries must revolt against such a pro-EU social-imperialist orientation! It is crucial break with such centrism and to unite on the basis of a consistent Marxist program. It is more urgent than ever to build an international revolutionary organization in order to fight against all forms of social-chauvinism – both pro-EU as well as pro-UK! Only a strong revolutionary force can effectively combat centrist confusion! This is the task of the RCIT and we call all authentic revolutionaries to join us!

### Endnotes

1 The founding cadres of the RCIT were bureaucratically expelled in 2011 by the majority of L5I leadership for their opposition to the centrist degeneration of this erstwhile organization. Since then, there has been an acceleration of the L5I's right-wing shift. The RCIT, founded soon after our expulsion, continues to defend the revolutionary tradition of our predecessor organization. Today the RCIT has sections and activists in 13 countries and fraternal organizations in several other countries. On the history of the RCIT as well as the L5I, see our book by Michael Pröbsting: *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*, December 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/>. For our critique of the L5I's centrist degeneration see in particular chapter III. In addition reader should refer to our letter to the L5I in which we critically analyze its degeneration away from revolutionary Marxism: RCIT: Where is the LFI drifting? A Letter from the RCIT to the LFI comrades, 11.5.2012, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/centrist-degeneration-of-lfi/>

2 Red Flag: The workers' answer to Brexit, September 25, 2018, <http://www.redflagonline.org/2018/09/the-workers-answer-to-brexit/>. All quotes, unless stated otherwise, are from this article.

3 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *The Global Trade War is Escalating. Trump's new Tariffs on about \$200bn worth of Chinese Imports Reflect the Accelerating Rivalry between the Great Powers*, 19 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-global-trade-war-is-escalating/>; *Global Trade War: No to Great Power Jingoism in West and East! Neither Imperialist Globalization nor Imperialist Protectionism! For International Solidarity and Joint Struggle of the Working Class and Oppressed People! Joint Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), Marxist Group 'Class Politics' (Russia), Alkebulan School of Black Studies (Kenya), Pan-Afrikan Consciousness Renaissance (Nigeria), Courant des Jeunes Penseurs Congolais (Democratic Republic of Congo), and Sınıf Savaşı (Turkey)*, 4 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-on-the-looming-global-trade-war/>; Michael Pröbsting: *The Global Trade War has Begun. What is its Meaning and what should be the Response of Socialists?* 13 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-global-trade-war-has-begun/>; Yossi Schwartz: *Capitalist Trade and the Looming 3rd World War*, 15 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/capitalist-trade-and-looming-3rd-world-war/>; Michael Pröbsting: *Where Do Socialists Stand in Face of the Looming Global Trade War? A Showcase of the Practical Consequences*



of the Assessment of the Class Character of the Chinese State, 17 June 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/where-do-socialists-stand-in-face-of-the-looming-global-trade-war/>; Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, RCIT Books, Vienna 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>

4 See on this e.g. RCIT: Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States, 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>; Joint Statement: Warmongering in the Middle East: Down with all Imperialist Great Powers and Capitalist Dictatorships! 13 May 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/joint-statement-warmongering-in-the-middle-east/>; 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, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>; see also our writings collected at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

5 See on this e.g. Yossi Schwarz: Why Not to Vote for the Democratic Party in the Forthcoming US Elections OR AT ANY OTHER TIME, 2.3.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/no-vote-sanders/>; Yossi Schwarz: Once Again: Opportunism of US Left Exposed. An Analysis of the US 2016 Elections Campaign, 14 August 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/left-and-us-election/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Meaning, Consequences and Lessons of Trump's Victory. On the Lessons of the US Presidential Election Outcome and the Perspectives for the Domestic and International Class Struggle, 24.November 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/meaning-of-trump/>

6 The RCIT has elaborated its Position on the EU in a number of articles, statements and pamphlets: RCIT: After the

BREXIT Vote – Stormy times ahead for the workers and oppressed in Britain, 24.6.2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/brexit-vote-results/>; RED\*LIBERATION (Bulletin of Socialists in the Labour Party): UK: No to Cameron's Trap: Neither YES nor NO to UK membership in the EU! For Abstention in the Referendum! We call on Momentum to create a "Third Camp" and to launch a socialist and internationalist campaign! For international Unity of the British, Migrant and European Workers! 25 February 2016, <https://redliberation.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/100/>; RCIT und RCIT Britain: Boycott Cameron's Trap: Neither Brussels, nor Downing Street! For Abstention in Britain's EU-Referendum! For international Unity and Struggle of the Workers and Oppressed! Fight against both British as well as European Imperialism! Forward to the United Socialist States of Europe, 2 August 2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/eu-referendum-in-uk/>; Michael Pröbsting: The British Left and the EU-Referendum: The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism. An analysis of the left's failure to fight for an independent, internationalist and socialist stance both against British as well as European imperialism, Revolutionary Communism Nr. 40, August 2015 <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/british-left-and-eu-referendum/>; RKOB: The European Union and the issue of the accession of semi-colonial countries, 14.10.2012, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 6, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/eu-and-semi-colonies/>

7 See Michael Pröbsting: Marxism, the European Union and Brexit. The L5I and the European Union: A Right Turn away from Marxism. The recent change in the L5I's position towards the support for EU membership represents a shift away from its own tradition, of the Marxist method, and of the facts; August 2016, in: Revolutionary Communist No. 55, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-and-brexit/>; Michael Pröbsting: Does the EU Represent "Bourgeois Democratic Progress"? Once again, on the EU and the Tactics of the Working Class – An Addendum to our Criticism of the L5I's Turn to the Right and Its Support for EU Membership, 16.09.2016, <https://www.thecommu->

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today.

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – MARXISM AND THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC TODAY. The book's subtitle is: 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. It contains eight chapters plus an appendix (172 pages) and includes 9 tables and 5 figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

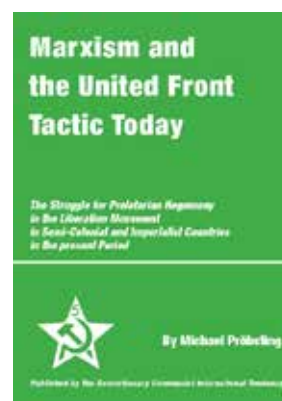
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

The united front tactic is a crucial instrument for revolutionaries under today's circumstances in which the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed are dominated by social democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois-populist forces.

The purpose of this document is both to summarize the main ideas of the Marxist united front tactic while at the same time explaining its development and modification which have become necessary due to political changes which have transpired in the

working class liberation movement since the tactic's original formulation.

In this book we initially summarize the main characteristics of the united front tactic and elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics to this issue. We then outline important social developments in the working class and the popular masses as well as in their political formations in recent decades. From there we will discuss how the united front tactic should be applied in light of a number of new developments (the rise of petty-bourgeois populist parties, the decline of the classic reformist parties, the role of national minorities and migrants in imperialist countries, etc.). The eight chapters of the book are accompanied by nine tables and five figures.



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8 V. I. Lenin: On the Slogan for a United States of Europe; in: LCW Vol. 21, pp. 340-342

9 Ben Zimmer: Nach dem Brexit: Folgen und Perspektiven, REVOLUTION Deutschland, 21. Juli 2016, <http://www.one-solutionrevolution.de/allgemein/nach-dem-brexite-folgen-und-perspektiven/>

10 Michael Pröbsting: Marxism, the European Union and Brexit. The L5I and the European Union: A Right Turn away from Marxism. On these free trade agreements see e.g. RCIT: Advanc-

ing Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contradictions Mark the Opening of a New Political Phase. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries (January 2016), chapter IV.1, <http://www.the-communists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/part5/>

11 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Five days that shook Britain but didn't wake up the left. The bankruptcy of the left during the August uprising of the oppressed in Britain: Its features, its roots and the way forward, 01.09.2011, Chapter: Socialist Party / Committee for a Workers International, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/britain-left-and-the-uprising/sp-and-committee-for-a-workers-international/>

12 Leon Trotsky: Where is Britain Going? (1925), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/britain/wibg/ch05.htm>

13 Sidney and Beatrice Webb: A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain, London, New York, Bombay 1920

14 J. T. Murphy: The Empire Conference and the Workers, in: The Communist Review, November 1923, Vol. 4, No. 7, published by the Communist Party of Great Britain, [https://www.marxists.org/archive/murphy-jt/1923/11/empire\\_conference.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/murphy-jt/1923/11/empire_conference.htm)

15 Carl von Clausewitz: Vom Kriege (1832), Hamburg 1963, p. 22; in English: Carl von Clausewitz: On War, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1946/1946-h/1946-h.htm>

16 Michael Pröbsting: Marxism, the European Union and Brexit. The L5I and the European Union: A Right Turn away from Marxism



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences

*What are the background and the nature of the tensions between China and India in the Sikkim border region? What should be the tactical conclusions for Socialists and Activists of the Liberation Movements?*

*A Pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)*

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A4 Format*

Introductory Remarks \* I. Recent Developments \* II. The Struggle for Domination of Bhutan \* III. The Background: Accelerating Rivalry between China and India in a Period of Capitalist Decay \* China's Belt and Road Initiative \* India's OCOR as an Alternative to OBOR? \* India's Increasing Ties with US and Japanese Imperialism \* How are the chances in a military confrontation between India and China? \* IV. China as an Emerging Great Imperialist Power \* China's Monopolies \* Super-Exploitation of the Working Class \* China's Capital Export \* China as a Military Power \* V. India: A Peculiar Semi-Colony in the Role of a Regional Power \* A Brief Historical Review \* The Characteristics of India's Semi-Colonial Economy \* India's Economic Elites: Many ... and at the same time Few \* The Parasitic Nature of the Indian Bourgeoisie \* India as a Regional Power and an Oppressor State \* Brief Remarks on an Historic Analogy: The Ottoman Empire \* VI. Revolutionary Tactics in the China-India Conflict \* Appendix: Imperialist vs. Semi-Colonial State: Some Theoretical Considerations \* 1. What are the Respective Characteristics of an Imperialist vs. a Semi-Colonial State? \* 2. Is a Transition from Being One Type of State to Another Possible? \* 3. Is the Category of "Sub-Imperialism" Useful? \* Footnotes

# Stalinist Chauvinism: The Example of the Greek KKE

## Is "Defending the Sovereign Rights of Greece" against Turkey and Macedonia Legitimate? Marxist Internationalism versus Bourgeois Social-Chauvinism

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12.11.2018

**Preface of the Editorial Board:** *The following article is an edited excerpt from a chapter of a forthcoming book by Michael Pröbsting. The author analysis in this book changes in the modern system of imperialism. As an important component of these, he discusses the accelerating Great Power Rivalry, the decline of the U.S. and the rise of China and Russia as new imperialist powers. He criticizes the fundamental flaws in the analysis of various reformist and centrist left tendencies and answers their arguments. Furthermore, Michael Pröbsting elaborates the Marxist program of revolutionary defeatism in the struggle against imperialism and compares this with the positions of the left. The RCIT looks forward to publish this book as an important contribution to the theory and strategy of Marxism which shall help to defend it against its falsifiers and diluters.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The Greek Communist Party KKE plays a key role in the European and world-wide Stalinist milieu. (1) Being one of the few orthodox Stalinist parties in Europe with a regular presence in parliament, it has become the initiator of the conferences called "International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties" which take pace annually since 1998. These conferences are attended by numerous Stalinist parties – from small groups to mass parties or even governing parties like the Communist parties of China, Cuba, South Africa, India, Russia, Laos, Vietnam, Syria, etc. The KKE is also the driving force in publishing the *International Communist Review* – the organ of this Stalinist loose alliance. (2) It has also initiated various joint statements of Stalinist parties on important international events – among them also such which denounce the "so-called 'Arab Spring'" and popular uprising of the Syrian people ("the so-called Syrian opposition funded and armed by the imperialist powers"). (3) In

short, the KKE is not an irrelevant sect but an influential and representative force of the global Stalinist movement. The KKE is a classic example of traditional Stalinism, i.e. national-centered reformism. (4) It condemns imperialism and monopoly capital – in general declarations. However, when it comes to its own bourgeois state and the chauvinism of its "own" bourgeoisie, the KKE swaps it internationalism with social-chauvinism. Internationalism is excellent – when it is directed against foreign enemies. However, it is rather an obstacle when the KKE has to deal with the holy "sovereign rights of Greece". It doesn't matter for this issue that Greece is an advanced semi-colonial country which, in the 1990s, failed to become an imperialist state. (5) It is not relevant in this context because the KKE leadership itself denies the semi-colonial nature of Greece and (wrongly) emphasizes that it has become an imperialist state. (6) Furthermore, it is also not relevant because the "enemies" against which the social-chauvinist KKE defends the "sovereign rights of Greece" are not imperialist powers attacking the country but rather its long-standing enemies and neighboring countries – in particular Turkey and Macedonia. These two latter countries are themselves semi-colonial states and Macedonia has experienced bullying and exploitative relations with Greece since it declared its independence in 1991. (7) In fact, the bourgeois state of Greece has a long and disgraceful history of oppression and ethnic cleansing of national minorities on its territory. In fact, Athens has expelled hundreds of thousands of Turkish, Macedonian and other citizens from its territory since the 1920s. Marxists have always categorically opposed any form of Greek chauvinism against these minorities and defended their right of national self-determination. (8)

### REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION - The RCIT's Monthly Journal

<p>www.thecomunists.net Issue No:76 December 2017</p>	<p>www.thecomunists.net Issue No:77 January 2018</p>	<p>www.thecomunists.net Issue No:78 February 2018</p>	<p>www.thecomunists.net Issue No:79 March 2018</p>
<p><b>Kenya: Down with the pro-imperialist Kenyatta Regime!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Gnassingbé Regime in Togo</li> <li>* Zambia: Still Not Free</li> <li>* Interview with Ghana's CPP</li> <li>* Interview with Ghana's CPP</li> </ul>	<p><b>support the Liberation Struggle of the Palestinian People!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Interview with Ghana's CPP</li> <li>* Syria: Liberation Struggle at a Crossroad</li> <li>* Brazil: The Shadow of a Military Coup</li> <li>* Catalonia's Struggle for Independence</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Imperialists Enslave the African People - Then as Now!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Successful 2nd RCIT World Congress</li> <li>* MDCIP (Russia) &amp; RCIT collaborate</li> <li>* Syria: No to Turkey's Attack on Afrin!</li> <li>* Tunisia: Solidarity with the Protestas!</li> <li>* Palestine: Free Ahead Tamimi NOW!</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Syrian Revolution is in mortal Danger!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Balfour's Declaration - Myths vs. Fac</li> <li>* Six Points for Revolutionary Unity</li> <li>* Alkibulain (Kenya) &amp; RCIT collaborate</li> <li>* Syria: Turkey's hidden war vs. HTS</li> <li>* Syria: Solidarity with East Ghouta!</li> <li>* Israeli Warplane Shot Down over Syria</li> </ul>
<p>Workers and Oppressed Unite! Price: €3   \$3.5   £2 /s and Oppressed Unite!</p>		<p>Workers and Oppressed Unite! Price: €2   \$2.5   £rkers and Oppressed Unite!</p>	



**The KKE promises to “annihilate any foreign intruder who dares to attack Greece”**

However, the Stalinist KKE is far away from such a communist anti-chauvinist position. In its program, adopted at a congress in 2013, it declared categorically that its program for “socialism” in Greece is inextricably linked with the defense of its present borders and the “sovereign rights of Greece”. “*The struggle for the defence of the borders, the sovereign rights of Greece, from the standpoint of the working class and the popular strata is integral to the struggle for the overthrow of the power of capital.*” (9)

This means nothing else than the defense of the capitalist state against any “enemy” as well as the defense of this state against the national rights of any oppressed minorities since this would endanger the chauvinist “sovereign rights of Greece”! In other words, the KKE’s “anti-imperialist” shell conceals a bourgeois social-chauvinist core.

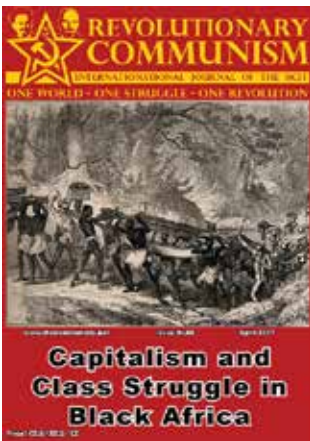
This becomes evident at any occasion when the alleged “sovereign rights of Greece” are at risk – at least when such risk exists according to the hysterical bourgeois media. We will demonstrate this with two recent examples. During a period of tensions between Greece and Turkey in 2018, the Greek fascists accused the KKE that they would, in case of a war with Turkey, not defend their country. In response, the KKE voiced its indignation. Its General Secretary, Dimitris Koutsoumbas, literally said at a public rally in Thessaloniki: “*We communists will, as we have always done in our century-long history, stand in the front row defending our territorial integrity and our sovereign rights. We are doing this so that any foreign intruder who dares to attack Greece will be annihilated.*” (10)

We see that the KKE has no problems in praising Marx-

ism-Leninism and the principles of anti-imperialist internationalism. However, when the “territorial integrity and sovereign rights” of its homeland are (supposedly) endangered by Turkey, the KKE leadership transforms in a split second into ferocious chauvinists who are ready to annihilate its neighbors.

The speech of the KKE leader was not a rhetorical gaffe since the party reprinted it approvingly in its press as the quote above demonstrates. This is also confirmed by the fact that the party repeated this social-chauvinist line in programmatic theses which it published for an international conference in April 2018.

“*Particularly in our region, the sharpening of the situation between Greece and Turkey with the involvement of other countries as well is possible. The questioning of the borders and sovereign rights of Greece on the part of the Turkish bourgeois class is integrated in the framework of its competitive relations with the Greek bourgeois class in the region. The Greek bourgeois class actively participates in the imperialist plans, interventions, competition and wars, guided by its aim to strategically enhance its position in the wider region. It bears responsibilities for the possible entanglement of the country in a war. The Programme of the Party has determined our position concerning the imperialist war and the line of our activity, where it is notes that: “The struggle for the defence of the borders, the sovereign rights of Greece, from the standpoint of the working class and the popular strata is integral to the struggle for the overthrow of the power of capital. It does not have any relation with the defence of the plans of one or the other imperialist pole and the profitability of one or the other monopoly group. In the instance of Greece’s involvement in an imperialist war, either in a defensive or aggressive war, the Party must lead the independent organization of the workers’-people’s struggle in all its forms, so as to lead to*



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa

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

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*

**Introduction \* Some Background Notes on Black Africa’s Modern History: How Colonial Plunder and Oppression Blocked Independent Development \* Popular Struggles against Colonialism Led to Formal Independence \* Formal Independence as Disguised Imperialist Dependency \* The Reactionary Role of White Settlers \* Is Capitalist Black Africa Rising? \* Africa in the Grip of Imperialism \* China as a new Imperialist Great Power Challenging the Western Domination \* The Working Class and the Oppressed \* Rising Class Struggle \* Key Lessons for a Revolutionary Strategy in Black Africa \* Imperialist Domination and Authoritarian Regimes Remain in Place despite Formal Changes \* Breaking the Capitalist Chain – The Program of Permanent Revolution \* The Revolutionary Struggle against Imperialism \* Imperialist Chauvinism and the Anti-Imperialist Patriotism of the Oppressed \* The Independence of the Working Class and the Struggle against the Popular Front \* The Struggle for Pan-African Unity \* The Revolutionary World Party and its African Sections \* Footnotes**

*the complete defeat of the bourgeois class, both the domestic one and the foreign invader, and link it in practice with the conquest of power.” (11)*

All the talk about opposition “against imperialist wars” and for “the conquest of power” is empty rhetoric in order to conceal its social-patriotic capitulation to Greek chauvinism. The KKE is a long way from conquering power. This has been proven once more by its utter failure to increase its influence – not to speak about taking power – during the pre-revolutionary crisis in Greece in the last decade. In fact, after 35 general strikes and numerous ferocious class struggles, the KKE receives fewer votes at elections than it did before!

While conquering power is an uncertain possibility in the distant future, the tensions with Turkey or with Macedonia, and the chauvinist propaganda of Greece’s public opinion, take place today. And today, in such conflicts, the KKE promises to defend the “territorial integrity and sovereign rights” of the Greek capitalist state against any “foreign invader”.

Authentic communists must not lend support either to Greece or to Turkey. Both are capitalist semi-colonial states dominated by a reactionary bourgeoisie which are collaborating with imperialist powers like the U.S., the EU and Russia. None of them is “the lesser evil”. The Leninist program of revolutionary defeatism is fully applicable in such a case, as our comrades in Occupied Palestine stated already some time ago:

*“To reiterate, in a case of war just between Turkey and Greece the RCIT calls for revolutionary defeatism on both sides. This means socialists must not support the war efforts in each country and stand for the defeat of “their” state. Naturally, the involvement of imperialist powers on each side (not excluded given the close relationships both countries have with Great Powers)*

*could alter the character of the war. As a general principle we state that the RCIT opposes both US, EU as well as Russian imperialism.” (12)*

### The KKE denies the national rights of Macedonia

The KKE displayed the same disgusting chauvinism when Macedonia held its referendum about the change of its official name. We do not discuss the issue of this referendum at this point and refer readers to the statement of the Trotskyist comrades of the Greek OKDE which we published (with a brief preface) on our website. (13) What is of interest here is the position and the arguments of the KKE.

In a recently published official statement, the KKE criticizes the agreement between the Greek and Macedonian governments not only because of its pro-NATO content (which revolutionaries naturally also reject) but also because it supposedly opened the door for “Macedonian irredentism”!

*“The agreement between the governments of Greece and FYROM was achieved by the overt intervention of the USA, of NATO and the EU, bears their seal and has been signed on the premises of the deadlines and agendas that these organizations have determined, in order for the euroatlantic integration to advance in the Western Balkans. This objective derives clearly from the text of the agreement. It is not by chance that the first to greet this agreement were the State Department, NATO and the EU. That is why the whole process focused on the issue of the name of the neighboring country, while a series of critical issues, such as countering irredentism, making necessary changes in the Constitution of the neighboring country, not only are postponed to an uncertain future, but also the situation becomes more complicated with the acceptance by the Greek government*

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Greece - A Modern Semi-Colony

#### The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – *GREECE: A MODERN SEMI-COLONY*. The book’s subtitle is: *The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features*. It contains six chapters (144 pages) and includes 12 tables, 35 figures and 4 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

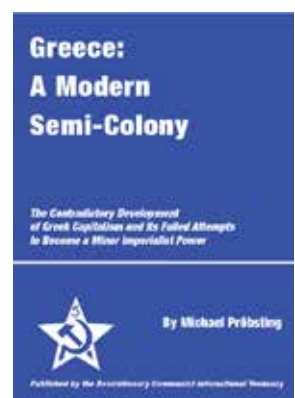
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

Greece is at the forefront both of the capitalist crisis in Europe as well as of the class struggle. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that what the Arab Revolution has been for the world in the past few years, Greece has been for Europe.

Subsequently, the question of the class character of Greece is of crucial importance both for the domestic as well as for the international workers movement: Is it an imperialist

state, a semi-colonial country or something else, and what are its specific features?

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Marxists’ theoretical conception of imperialist respectively semi-colonial states. In Chapter II we give a brief historical overview of the development of Greek capitalism. In Chapter III we deal with Greece’s failed attempt to become a minor imperialist power. In Chapter IV we outline the historic crisis of Greek capitalism from 2008 until today. In Chapter V we elaborate the most important programmatic conclusions and in the last Chapter we present a summary in the form of theses. The book contains 12 Tables, 35 Figures and 4 Maps. ■



of positions regarding “Macedonian citizens” and “Macedonian language”, positions that constitute the essence of irredentism. Consequently, it is an agreement that cannot guarantee a solution in favor of the Greek people, of the people of the neighboring country nor of the peoples of the region.” (14)

Nothing could be more absurd! The Greek state has a long history of brutal oppression of the Macedonian people which resulted in the expulsion of nearly all of them. Today, only a small minority of Macedonians continue to live in northern Greece. Macedonia is a small and poor country, exploited by foreign capitalist monopolies (among them not a few from Greece). Greece has a long and disgraceful tradition of anti-Macedonian chauvinism. (For example the biggest demonstrations in the country’s history took place in 1992 and 1994 in protest against the fact that the independent republic Macedonia dared to choose the name “Macedonia” in its official designation!)

Irrespective of this chauvinist tradition, or rather because of it, the KKE joins the Greek nationalist mainstream and accuses Macedonia of “irredentism” (instead of accusing the Greek state for its unbearable chauvinism)! It even accuses the reformist SYRIZA government of making concessions to “Macedonian irredentism” because it accepts talking about “Macedonian citizens” and a “Macedonian language”!

This statement reflects, once more, that the KKE fully supports the most reactionary lies which Greek chauvinism has disseminated throughout its whole history and which simply deny the existence (not to speak about the rights) of the Macedonian nation!

This is also confirmed by a recently published article in its theoretical journal which states: “A real solution means guarantees of the elimination of irredentism, nationalism, [territorial] claims, ensuring the inviolability of the borders, which means changes now, not in the near future, to the Constitution of the FYROM.” The KKE insists that any name adopted by the Republic “must have a strictly geographical definition.”

Furthermore, the KKE repeats, with no shame, the classic Greek chauvinist myth denying the national existence of other Balkan peoples: “A historically formed ‘Macedonian’ nation, ‘Macedonian’ ethnicity, ‘Macedonian’ language, which form the basis of irredentism and raise questions of the existence of a minority, claims and defense of its rights etc., do not exist.” (15)

## Conclusions

Lenin used to say about Russian communists who failed to consistently oppose chauvinism: “Scratch some Communists and you will find Great Russian chauvinists.” (16) It is obvious that it is not necessary to scratch at all in order to see the unrestrained reactionary Greek chauvinism of the KKE leadership!

In summary, the Greek KKE is an excellent example for our analysis of Stalinism as a bourgeois reformist trend. When it comes to imperialism and war, the Stalinist might refer to the Marxist classics and recite one or another quote of Lenin on imperialism. But in essence, they follow a reactionary social-chauvinist line and defend the capitalist state of Greece and its present borders against any “foreign invader”. They are not defeatist against their own bourgeoisie. They are only defeatist against the international working class and the oppressed peoples! (17)

## Footnotes

(1) For the RCIT’s assessment of the KKE see e.g. RKOB: Perspectives on the Greek Revolution, 10.11.2011, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/greece-revolution-or-tragedy/>; Michael Pröbsting: Greece: For a Workers’ Government! Critical electoral support for SYRIZA and KKE! Workers: Organize and prepare yourselves for the struggle for power! 6.6.2012, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/greece-for-a-workers-government/>; Michael Pröbsting: After SYRIZA’s victory in the Greek elections: The question of a Workers Government and the revolutionary way forward, June 2012, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/after-the-greek-elections/>; Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony. The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features (chapter IV.4 Excuse: The KKE and the Class Character of Greece), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/greece-semi-colony/>

(2) See their website: <https://www.iccr.gr/en/home/>

(3) See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“. The bleeding Syrian Revolution and the recent Escalation of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry between the US and Russia – A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism, 21 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syria-great-power-rivalry-and-the-failure-of-the-left/>; An informative overview of the Islamophobic views of large sectors of the Greek reformist and centrist left is provided in Kostas Kousiantas and Pantelis Afthinos: The Syrian revolution and the failure of the “anti-imperialist” left, 22 October 2018, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article5756>

(4) The RCIT and its predecessor organization have analysed Stalinism – a fester on the workers movement – on numerous occasions. See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Cuba’s Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism, August 2013, RCIT Books, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cuba-s-revolution-sold-out/>. See also LRCI: The Degenerated Revolution: The Origin and Nature of the Stalinist States, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/stalinism-and-the-degeneration-of-the-revolution/>

(5) See on this Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony (see chapter III and IV), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/greece-semi-colony/>

(6) Such the KKE states in its program, adopted in 2013: “Capitalism in Greece is in the imperialist stage of its development, in an intermediate position in the international imperialist system, with strong uneven dependencies on the USA and the EU. (...) The participation of Greece in NATO, the economic-political and political-military dependencies on the EU and the USA limit the room of the Greek bourgeoisie to manoeuvre independently, as all the alliance relations of capital are governed by competition, unevenness and consequently the advantageous position of the strongest; they are formed as relations of uneven interdependence.” (Programme of the KKE, adopted in 2013, <http://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/Programme-of-the-KKE/>)

Likewise, Aleka Parariga, the KKE General Secretary at that time, wrote: „The basic position of opportunism in Greece is that the country is under German occupation, that it is being transformed or has been transformed into a colony and is being plundered primarily by Mrs. Merkel, the creditors. The triad of the representatives of the EU, the European Central Bank and the IMF which supervise and determine the management of the internal or external debt, the fiscal deficits is seen as the main enemy apart from Germany itself. They accuse the bourgeois class of the country and the governmental parties as being treacherous, unpatriotic, subordinate and subservient towards Germany, the creditors or the bankers.

Those who talk of subordination and occupation do not acknowledge the export of capital from Greece (a characteristic feature of capitalism in the imperialist stage), which was significant before the crisis and continues undiminished in the conditions of the crisis. The export of capital



is being carried out for productive investments in other countries and of course in European banks until conditions are formed so that they can re-enter the process of ensuring the maximum possible profit. They see a shortage of capital and not over-accumulation.

They do not see the issue of over-accumulation because they will be forced to admit the character of the capitalist economic crisis, something which blows to smithereens their pro-monopoly political proposal. The bourgeois parties as well as the opportunists, despite the differences they have, support the safeguarding of the competitiveness of the domestic monopolies which inevitably brings the reactionary restructurings to the forefront, ensuring cheaper labour power, intensification of state intimidation, repression and anti-communism, and at the same time particularly focus on expanding Greek capital in the wider region (the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea area). This is amongst other things a vicious circle which leads to a new and deeper crisis cycle.

Lenin and his work on imperialism adds that the comparison cannot be made between developed capitalist countries and backward capitalist countries but between capital exports, an issue which opportunists everywhere do not want and do not dare to acknowledge because their view regarding the occupation of Greece, that Greece is a colony, is refuted by this criterion alone. (...)

Consequently the position of the KKE that Greece belongs to the imperialist system, is organically incorporated and plays an active role in the war as an ally of the leading players is absolutely vindicated. This is the choice in the interests of the bourgeoisie that has twice invited British and US imperialism to smash the armed people with military forces, weapons and direct military operations." (Aleka Parariga (KKE General Secretary): The Position of Greece within International Capitalism, Article for "El Machete," the Theoretical and Political Review of the CP of Mexico, <http://mltoday.com/the-position-of-greece-within-international-capitalism>)

For the RCIT critique of the KKE's analysis of Greek capitalism see chapter IV.4 Excurse: The KKE and the Class Character of Greece in our book *Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony* mentioned above.

(7) On the RCIT's analysis of Turkey as an advanced semi-colony see: Michael Pröbsting: *World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries* (Chapter V), RCIT Books, Vienna 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>; 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* (Chapter 9), RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>; TEK YOL DEVRİM! Action Program for Turkey by Sinif Savaşı (Section of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency in Turkey), October 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/program-turkey/>; On Macedonia see RCIT: *Macedonia: Stop the Police Violence! Support the National Self-Determination of the Albanian Minority! For a Workers and Peasants Government! For a Socialist Federation of the Balkan People!* 8.5.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/macedonia-state-ment/>; see also chapter II.3 Excurse: *Greek Chauvinism and the Macedonian Question* in our book *Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony* mentioned above.

(8) See on this Michael Pröbsting: *Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony* (see chapter II.3 Excurse: *Greek Chauvinism and the Macedonian Question* as well as chapter V.3 *The Struggle against Greek Chauvinism: The Macedonian Question*), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/greece-semi-colony/>. As we show in this book, Leon Trotsky and the Greek Trotskyists always took a consistent internationalist position on this issue. They opposed Greek chauvinism and defended the rights of the national minorities. For example, Trotsky advised the Greek Marxists concerning the Macedonian question: "We merely say that if the Macedonians want it, we will then side with them, that they should be allowed to decide, and we will also support their decision. What disturbs me is not so much the question of the Macedonian peasants, but rather

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE*. The book's subtitle is: *Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. The book is in English-language. It contains four chapters on 148 pages and includes 42 pictures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

A few months ago, our movement commemorated its 25th anniversary. In the summer of 1989 our predecessor organization, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) was founded as a democratic-centralist international tendency based on an elaborated program. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) continues the revolutionary tradition of the LRCI. Below we give an overview of our history, an evaluation of its achievements as well as mistakes, and a summary of the lessons for the struggles ahead. This book summarizes our theoretical and practical experience of the past

25 years.

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Bolshevik-Communists' theoretical conception of the role of the revolutionary party and its relation to the working class. In Chapter II we elaborate on the essential characteristics of revolutionary party respective of the pre-party organization. In Chapter III we deal with the history of our movement – the RCIT and its predecessor organization. Finally, in Chapter IV we outline the main lessons of our 25 years of organized struggle for building a Bolshevik party and their meaning for our future work.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/> ■

**Building the  
Revolutionary Party  
in Theory  
and Practice**

*Looking Back and Ahead after  
25 Years of organized Struggle for Bolshevism*



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

whether there isn't a touch of chauvinist poison in Greek workers. That is very dangerous. For us, who are for a Balkan federation of soviet states, it is all the same if Macedonia belongs to this federation as an autonomous whole or part of another state. However, if the Macedonians are oppressed by the bourgeois government, or feel that they are oppressed, we must give them support." (Leon Trotsky: A Discussion on Greece (Spring 1932), In: Writings of Leon Trotsky: Supplement (1929-33), Pathfinder, New York 1979, pp. 129-130)

Pantelis Pouliopoulos, the first General Secretary of the KKE and historic leader of Greek Trotskyism in the 1920s and 1930s, also stated categorically: "Whoever refutes the existence, unresolved until today, of a national Macedonian question in Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian Macedonia, is without a doubt a lapdog of the bourgeoisie. Whoever refutes the historical liberation movement of the Macedonians, is either ignorant and must learn the history of that movement and its national heroes, or is again a lapdog of one of the three oppressing bourgeoisies." (Pantelis Pouliopoulos: Communists and the Macedonian Question [May 1940], Republished in Spartakos No. 30, 1991, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/pouliop/works/1940/05/commac.htm>)

(9) Programme of the KKE, adopted at the 19th Congress of the KKE, 11-14 April 2013, <http://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/Programme-of-the-KKE/>

(10) Quoted in Nikos Mottas: Was werden die griechischen Kommunisten im Falle eines Krieges tun?; in: Einheit und Widerspruch (Theoretisches und Diskussionsorgan der Partei der Arbeit Österreichs), Heft 6, Juni 2018, p. 117, [http://parteiderarbeit.at/?page\\_id=1915](http://parteiderarbeit.at/?page_id=1915) (our translation)

(11) The danger of the imperialist war and the stance of the Communists, Theses of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) at the 12th International Conference "V.I. Lenin and the Con-

temporary World", 20.04.2018, <https://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/THESES-OF-THE-COMMUNIST-PARTY-OF-GREECE-KKE-AT-THE-12TH-INTERNATIONAL-CONFERENCE-V.I.LENIN-AND-THE-CONTEMPORARY-WORLD/>

(12) See on this, in addition to our book on capitalist Greece mentioned above, e.g. Max Bonham: On the Escalating Greek-Turkish Tensions, Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine), 30 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/escalating-greek-turkish-tensions/>

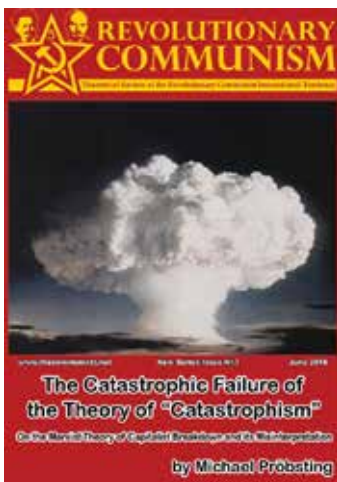
(13) OKDE: Prespa Agreement – Referendum in neighboring Macedonia, 24.9.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/forum/okde-greece-referendum-in-neighboring-macedonia/>

(14) KKE: On the agreement between Greece-FYROM, 14/6/2018, Press Office of the CC of the KKE, <http://www.solidnet.org/article/CP-of-Greece-On-the-agreement-between-Greece-FYROM/>

(15) Kommounistiki Epitheorisi (No. 2, 2018), quoted in SL: For a Socialist Federation of the Balkans! Greece: Chauvinist Frenzy over Macedonia, Part One, Workers Vanguard No. 1142, 19 October 2018, <https://www.icl-fi.org/english/wv/1142/macedonia.html>

(16) V. I. Lenin: Speech Closing The Debate On The Party Programme, Eight Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) March 18-23, 1919, in: LCW Vol. 29, p. 194, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/rcp8th/04.htm>

(17) RCIT: Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States. Resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>



## NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

# The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of "Catastrophism"

By Michael Pröbsting, May 2018

*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"*

**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*

# Russia and China: Neither Capitalist nor Great Powers?

## A Reply to the PO/CRFI and their Revisionist Whitewashing of Chinese and Russian imperialism

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28.11.2018

Some months ago, the RCIT published a pamphlet which critically assessed the theoretical foundations of the current called *Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International* (CRFI) of which the Argentine *Partido Obrero* (PO, Workers Party) is the dominant component.<sup>1</sup> Other components of the CRFI are the PT (Uruguay), the EEK (Greece) and the DIP (Turkey).

In reply to our document, the PO/CRFI has published an article in its new journal *“World Revolution”*.<sup>2</sup> We are currently working on a book about the Great Power rivalry which we hope to publish soon. In this book we will deal extensively with the background of the antagonism between the imperialist powers and the program of struggle against imperialism and militarism (*“revolutionary defeatism”*). As part of this analysis we will also discuss the positions of various left-wing parties and organizations, among them also the PO/CRFI current.

Below we publish a short summary of our reply to the critique of the PO/CRFI. For a more extensive elaboration of our criticism of the PO/CRFI current we refer readers to the book which, as stated above, we plan to publish soon.

\*\*\*\*\*

In our pamphlet mentioned above we have dealt with the central theses of PO/CRFI on Russia and China. The PO/CRFI comrades claim that *“the process of capitalist restoration is not completed in these countries”* and that *“they are still not integrated into the imperialist world system”*.

As we have demonstrated in our pamphlet these theses are unfounded. Both countries are dominated by capitalist monopolies and its economies are operating on the basis of the capitalist law of value. They are fully integrated into the world market and, in fact, China plays a leading role both in world trade as well as foreign investments.

In their reply, the comrades prefer to sidestep our arguments. This is hardly surprising as their positions are really difficult to defend. However, they deal with our, related, position on the class character of China and Russia, namely that these states have become imperialist Great Powers. Their article reiterates the fundamental position of the PO/CRFI:

\* that they consider China and Russia not as capitalist Great Powers and, as a consequence,

\* that they side with China and Russia against their Western rivals.

On such a basis the PO/CRFI seeks a theoretical foundation for their political alliance with a Stalinist party in Russia – the *United Communist Party* (OKPI). One of its central leaders, Darya Mitina, participated as a key speaker at a major international conference of this tendency in Buenos Aires in April 2018. The OKPI supports Russian imperialism in various foreign political adventures like in the Ukraine. It also sides with the reactionary Assad dictatorship against the Syrian insurrectional people. We see: theoretical confusion and abysmal failure to recognize social-historical developments of world politics inevitable results in taking the wrong side in the class struggle as well as betraying the cause of the liberation of the international proletariat and oppressed people! Revisionist theory creates revisionist whitewashing of Chinese and Russian imperialism.

Contrary to the assertion of PO/CRFI, China and Russia have become Great Powers in the recent past. We have demonstrated in a number of studies that their economies are dominated by domestic monopolies and they play a key role on the world market and in world politics.<sup>3</sup>

China has become the largest manufacturer, the largest exporter, and one of the largest foreign investors. (See Table 1) It is the second-largest home of multi-national corporations as well as of billionaires (only behind the U.S.).<sup>4</sup>

Analyzing Great Powers, Marxists have to base themselves on a scientific definition for an imperialist state. As we have elaborated in a number of works, the RCIT considers the following definition as most appropriate: *An imperialist state is a capitalist state whose monopolies and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost dominate other states and nations. As a result they gain extra-profits and other economic, political and/or military advantages from such a relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.*

Let us now deal with the arguments of the PO/CRFI comrades in detail.

**Table 1. Economy: US Decline and China’s Rise between 1985 and 2018**<sup>5</sup>

	Global Share (in %)							
	1985		1998/2001		2011		2016/18	
	US	CHN	US	CHN	US	CHN	US	CHN
Manufacturing Production	32.4%	4.3%	25.4%	6.3%	20.5%	16.4%	16.3%	23.5%
Top 500 Corporations	-	-	43.0%	2%	26.0%	14.6%	25.2%	24%



### A Stalinophile Falsification of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism

A key thesis of PO/CRFI is that Russia and China can not possess an imperialist class character because of their (alleged) backwardness in terms of capital export. Since the PO/CRFI formally adheres to Lenin's theory of imperialism, they face the problem – like all supporters of the “Russia and China are not imperialist”-thesis – to explain why the leader of the Bolsheviks counted at his time countries like Russia, Japan, Italy or Austria-Hungary among the imperialist states. Obviously they exported much less capital than Britain, France or Germany and they often imported more capital than they exported.

As we have shown in detail somewhere else, the imperialist powers at the time of Lenin and Trotsky differed both in their political superstructure as well as in the specific configuration of their economic basis.<sup>6</sup> However, what united them was that they oppressed and exploited, directly or indirectly, other nations. Lenin summarized his definition of an imperialist state in one of his writings on imperialism in 1916 in the following way: „... imperialist Great Powers (i.e., powers that oppress a whole number of nations and enmesh them in dependence on finance capital, etc.)...”<sup>7</sup>

Hence, the revisionist deniers of Russia's and China's imperialist character today have to “re-interpret”, i.e. falsify, Lenin's theory of imperialism. They have to claim that in fact Lenin did not consider states like Russia as imperialist. The PO/CRFI is not the first and probably not the last to revise the Marxist theory of imperialism. Let's see how they are arguing their case:

*“In the age of imperialism, great powers define the act of war and carry out the territorial division of the world. However, the analysis of imperialism requires making distinctions between these great powers. According to Lenin, among the six great powers that divided the world, the United States, Germany, and Japan were young and emerging capitalist (imperialist) states and England and France were the old capitalist (imperialist) states. With a socio-economic structure dominated by pre capitalist relations and surrounded by modern capitalist imperialist forces, Russia was quite different from others. While defining Russia's position in the World War I as imperialist, Lenin stressed this crucial difference: “In Russia, capitalist imperialism of the latest type has fully revealed itself in the policy of tsarism towards Persia, Manchuria and Mongolia; but, in general, military and feudal imperialism predominates in Russia.”*

*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. Hence, the imperialism of Russia and the Ottomans resembled the imperialism of the Greater Rome rather than capitalist imperialism.*

*The emphases on monopoly capitalism, finance-capital, and capital export in Lenin's theory of imperialism displays the main foundations of the great powers struggling for the division and re-division of the world. Large armies, expansive territories, and relatively high populations were the sources of power of the pre-capitalist empires. In the age of imperialism, the export of*

*capital took the place of military campaigns and finance-capital invading the markets took the place of invading armies. On the international plane, imperialist armies (that are financed by super profits derived from the plunder of raw materials and exploitation of cheap labor power and using the technical and technological capabilities supplied by capitalist industry) became dominant in every field. The armies of the pre-capitalist empires proud of their almighty past were either defeated by the imperialist invaders (as seen in the case of China) or became auxiliary powers in the service of imperialism (as seen in the cases of Russia, the Ottomans, and Austria-Hungary).”*

So we see how the PO/CRFI turns the Marxist theory of imperialist states on its head in only three paragraphs. While Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks always consistently argued that Russia (or the Austria-Hungarian Empire) were imperialist powers, the PO/CRFI comrades now claim that these were semi-colonies (like the Ottoman Empire)!

The Bolsheviks' characterization of Russia as “imperialist” is presented as an a-historical category suggesting that they considered Russia only as “imperialist” like the Roman Empire 2000 years ago, i.e. not as imperialist in the sense of a capitalist power! This is a bizarre distortion of truth!

We have already shown in several works that Lenin viewed Russia as an imperialist power. One can find dozens of quotes which make clear beyond any doubt that the Bolsheviks never ever characterized Russia as a semi-colony (like the Ottoman Empire) but as an imperialist Great Power. They were certainly aware of the differences between various Great Powers (more and less independent powers, economically advanced and backward, etc). But they saw Russia in the same broad category as other imperialist Great Powers!

Lenin himself drew attention to such unevenness repeatedly. In his *Notebooks on Imperialism*, for example, he suggested a “hierarchization” among the Great Powers. In one of his notes, he differentiated between three categories of imperialist states:

*“I. Three chief (fully independent) countries: Great Britain, Germany, United States*

*II. Secondary (first class, but not fully independent): France, Russia, Japan*

*III. Italy, Austria-Hungary”<sup>8</sup>*

In place of many more we reproduce here just a few quotes which demonstrate that Lenin and Trotsky characterized Russia before 1917 as an imperialist and not as a semi-colonial state:

*„Its meaning is that Russia was the most backward and economically weakest of all the imperialist states. That is precisely why her ruling classes were the first to collapse as they had loaded an unbearable burden on the insufficient productive forces of the country. Uneven, sporadic development thus compelled the proletariat of the most backward imperialist country to be the first to seize power.”<sup>9</sup>*

*“The Russian bourgeoisie was the bourgeoisie of an imperialist oppressor state; the Chinese bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie of an oppressed colonial country.”<sup>10</sup>*

*“The last third of the nineteenth century saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital not of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc.,*

partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.)”<sup>11</sup>

„The character of this war between the bourgeois and imperialist Great Powers would not change a jot were the military-autocratic and feudal imperialism to be swept away in one of these countries. That is because, in such conditions, a purely bourgeois imperialism would not vanish, but would only gain strength.“<sup>12</sup>

We could provide many more quotes which all demonstrate the same: While Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks were fully aware of the important role of the absolutist Tsar regime and the consequences for the specific, combined character of the Russian state (fusing semi-feudal and capitalist elements), they unambiguously insisted on Russia’s character as an *imperialist* Great Power (and not a *semi-colony*)!

Let us give another example: A few weeks after the February Revolution in Russia in 1917, when the autocratic Tsar regime was overthrown and replaced by the bourgeois-liberal popular front government, Trotsky characterized the latter as a “*liberal imperialistic government*”. He described the continuity, changes and transition of Russian imperialism from the years 1905-07 (when the *régime of June 3<sup>rd</sup>* came to power) to 1917 in the following way:

“*The capitalist classes, reconciled with the régime of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, turned their attention to the usurpation of foreign markets. A new era of Russian imperialism ensues, an imperialism accompanied by a disorderly financial and military system and by insatiable appetites. Gutchkov, the present War Minister, was formerly a member of the Committee on National Defense, helping to make the army and the navy complete. Milukov, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, worked out a program of world*

*conquests which he advocated on his trips to Europe. Russian imperialism and his Octobrist and Cadet representatives bear a great part of the responsibility for the present war. By the grace of the Revolution which they had not wanted and which they had fought, Gutchkov and Milukov are now in power. (...) This transition from an imperialism of the dynasty and the nobility to an imperialism of a purely bourgeois character, can never reconcile the Russian proletariat to the war.”*<sup>13</sup>

As we see Trotsky does not speak about a semi-colonial Russia but about an imperialist Russia. He characterized the liberal Provisional Government in March 1917 as representing “*an imperialism of purely bourgeois character*”.

How do the PO/CRFI comrades reconcile this with their view that Russia was a semi-colony? Do they want to suggest that Russia was a semi-colony as long as the Tsar ruled and then, between February and October 1917, it suddenly would have become an imperialist state? Leaving aside that this would a) be absurd and b) in contradiction to what the Bolsheviks said, it would also contradict the method of the PO/CRFI itself. The comrades insist, as we have shown above, that Russia did not meet the criteria of Lenin’s theory of imperialism (“*emphases on monopoly capitalism, finance-capital, and capital export*”). This had not, and could hardly have, changed in February/March 1917!

So how does PO/CRFI explain Trotsky assessment of Russia as a “*purely bourgeois imperialism*” in March 1917? Is it not much more logical, as we always have argued, that Russia was in essence an imperialist Great Power before 1917 (similarly like Austria-Hungary, Japan, Italy, etc.) and that the February Revolution, resulting in the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy, led to an important change in the political superstructure of Russian capitalism but

## Books of the RCIT

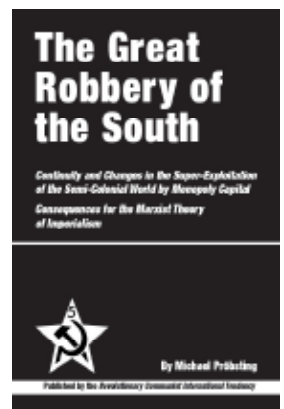
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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



not in its economic basis?!

In fact, the PO/CRFI is not the inventor of the idea that Russia before 1917 was not an imperialist power but rather a “semi-colony”. While this thesis was roundly rejected by Russian Marxists in the time of Lenin and Trotsky, it originated among the Stalinists in the 1930s.

As we have already noted in the past, it was the notorious “theory” of Stalin in the 1930s which declared that Russia before 1917 was not an imperialist power but rather a “semi-colony”. Such he instructed the Russian historians to rewrite the Marxist analysis of Russia’s class character.

*“That Russia entered the imperialist war on the side of the Entente, on the side of France and Great Britain, was not accidental. It should be borne in mind that before 1914 the most important branches of Russian industry were in the hands of foreign capitalists, chiefly those of France, Great Britain and Belgium, that is, the Entente countries. The most important of Russia’s metal works were in the hands of French capitalists. In all, about three-quarters (72 per cent) of the metal industry depended on foreign capital. The same was true of the coal industry of the Donetz Basin. Oilfields owned by British and French capital accounted for about half the oil output of the country. A considerable part of the profits of Russian industry flowed into foreign banks, chiefly British and French. All these circumstances, in addition to the thousands of millions borrowed by the tsar from France and Britain in loans, chained tsardom to British and French imperialism and converted Russia into a tributary, a semi-colony of these countries.”*<sup>14</sup>

In summary, the PO/CRFI comrades fail to understand that the law of uneven and combined development resulted in a contradictory development and nature of Russia as a backward, imperialist power. It was this law which allowed the Bolsheviks to explain why Russian imperialism combined both modern as well as backward-absolutist (tsarist autocracy) features of imperialism.

This whole question is not limited to Tsarist Russia. As we said above, there existed also other backward imperialist powers at that time like Japan, Italy or Austria-Hungary. Lenin and Trotsky considered all these powers, despite their economic backwardness, as imperialist. In contrast, the PO/CRFI, following its falsification of Lenin’s theory of imperialism, would be forced to revise the position of the Marxist classics on this issue too and would need to consider all these states as “semi-colonies” as they do in the case of Russia.

### Capital Export – Myth and Reality

*“Imperialism is a stage of capitalism in which the export of capital, rather than that of commodities, becomes determinant.”* This is a key statement in the argument of the PO/CRFI which the comrades distort as a feature of the world imperialist system into a caricatural criteria to characterize individual countries. But let us first continue with the quote:

*“Imperialist countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands, plus the European Union as a whole and Japan are net capital exporters in terms of the foreign direct investment stock. On the other hand, Russia and China are net capital importers in terms of the foreign direct investment stock. Whereas the stock of the foreign direct investment of China is equal to 24 per cent of its GDP, its export of capital reaches only 12 per cent of its GDP. This percentage, for Russia, is respectively 30 per cent and 26 per cent, and this despite it being the unrivalled*

*number one exporter of capital to the former Soviet republics, which demonstrates that it is also a net capital importer. A close scrutiny of both China and Russia shows that the character of their economies is defined not by the export of capital but by the export of commodities.”*

As he have already stated, the PO/CRFI’s method suffers from its complete lack of the dialectic of the law of uneven and combined development. From the general truth – that in the epoch of imperialism capital export becomes more important than commodity export – the comrades wrongly conclude that powers can be qualified as imperialist only if their capital export is substantially larger than their commodity export. However, this was never the method of Lenin and Trotsky and for good reason.

Japan, for example, was a backward Great Power with significant semi-feudal characteristics. By 1914, its capital export was still marginal with a share of only 0.1% of the global stock of outward foreign direct investment.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Lenin and Trotsky considered it at that time as an imperialist state.

In Germany, certainly also an imperialist power at that time, capital export did not play a larger role than its commodity trade. And in the case of the United States we see a picture where commodity production and trade played a significantly larger role than its capital export.

To a certain degree the U.S. was at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a similar position like China has been in the past decade. It was a newcomer and its capital export lagged behind the established imperialist powers. Until 1914, US imperialism received more than double as much investment from foreign sources as U.S. nationals invested abroad. In the logic of the PO/CRFI, the U.S. in 1914 would not have qualified as an imperialist power. (See Table 2)

Furthermore, the PO/CRFI’s approach ignores the fundamental fact that a significant role of a country in the world’s commodity trade can reflect simply the fact that it is an important homeland of capitalist value production. This, in turn, usually is an indicator of capitalist economic power.

Let us move further. In several cases, the PO/CRFI author uses inaccurate figures. For example, it is not true that China exports significantly less capital than it imports. While this was indeed the case in the early period of capitalist restoration, it is no longer the case. The figures from the annual UNCTAD *World Investment Report*, the most authoritative source in this field, demonstrate very clearly the rapid catch-up process of China in terms of capital export. In Table 3 we can see that China’s foreign investment has increased so much in the last decade that its outward FDI stock already equals its inward FDI stock today.

Germany is another example demonstrating the absurd character of the PO/CRFI argument that a country can not be imperialist if its capital export is not more important than its commodity export. It’s share in world merchandise exports is 8.4% (2017) while its share in global FDI outflows as well as stocks is significantly less (5.6% respectively 5.2% in the same year).<sup>18</sup> Following the undialectical PO/CRFI method, we could not characterize Germany as an imperialist Great Power.

It is worth noting that even the oldest imperialist Great Powers contradict the criteria of PO/CRFI. Britain, the world’s oldest imperialist state, not only has a FDI stock of the same size like China. It also imports slightly more



capital than it exports! According to the latest UNCTAD figures, Britain’s Inward FDI stock is \$1,563,867 Mil. and its Outward FDI stock is \$1,531,683. The same proportion between Inward and Outward FDI stock exists for the United States: \$7,807,032 respectively \$7,799,045. As we see, the whole PO/CRFI theory is based on nonsensical arguments, distortion of the Marxist theory and false figures!

**Confusion on China’s Foreign Investments**

Let us move to the next attempt of the PO/CRFI author to save their failing theory. “While 40% of Chinese direct capital export concentrates on the mining, oil and energy sectors, only 4% of it goes to manufacturing industry. China is one of the major customers of raw materials and energy and this demand emerges out of export-oriented production within the borders of China, that is, out of the impetus for the export of commodities. The determinant variable in China’s direct investments abroad is the national income of the country into which the Chinese capital is exported. Foreign investments of China target not cheap labor but large markets. Large markets mean more demand for Chinese goods, which demonstrates that the export of Chinese capital is an extension of its export of commodities and that this characteristic of the Chinese economy cannot be defined as an indicator of imperialism.”

Again, one confusion follows the other. The author notes that China’s capital export has a focus on the mining, oil and energy sectors and suggests that this would be indicator for China’s non-imperialist character. (By the way, he makes a similar remark concerning Russia.) So what?! Can it be the case the PO/CRFI author is not aware that oil, gas and the whole energy sector is a crucial part of the capitalist world economy?

This is true not only for semi-colonial but also for imperialist countries. According to a recently published study, energy (and hence any price fluctuations of it) affects over 60% of the total production costs in France.<sup>19</sup> Among the top 10 companies on the Fortune Global 500 list of year 2018 six were operating in the energy sector (and two others in the automobile sector which is strongly affected by energy prices). The whole history of world capitalism is marked by the important role of the energy sector (one just

has to remember the role of the oil barons in the U.S. history)!

Furthermore, have the PO/CRFI comrades forgotten that Lenin himself named the search for raw materials one of the five key characteristics of imperialism?! He wrote in his key essay on imperialism: „We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is monopoly capitalism; parasitic, or decaying capitalism; moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the quintessence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (...) (3) seizure of the sources of raw material by the trusts and the financial oligarchy...”<sup>20</sup>

In short, we can not understand why the PO/CRFI author interprets China’s strong capital export in the energy sector as an indicator to disprove its imperialist character.

Let’s move ahead. The author claims. “Foreign investments of China target not cheap labor but large markets.” Really?! We have shown in past studies that China has become a leading investor in many semi-colonial countries. In 2010 China became the third-largest investor in Latin America behind the US and the Netherlands.<sup>21</sup> According to a study from McKinsey Chinese corporations already play a dominant role in Africa. About 10,000 Chinese corporations (90% of which are private capitalist firms) operate in Africa. They control about 12% of the continent’s total industrial production and about half of Africa’s internationally contracted construction market. In Africa, China is also a leader in “green field investment” (i.e., when a parent company begins a new venture by constructing new facilities outside of its home country); in 2015-16, China invested USD 38.4 billion (24% of total green field investment in Africa).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, China is a leading foreign investor in many Asian countries.

Certainly, we do not deny that China’s corporations are interested in access to “large markets.” This seems to us a pretty common desire for capitalists – despite the fact that the PO/CRFI leaders want to convince us that capitalism still has not been restored in China! As far as we know, there are also many Western imperialist corporations which are interested in access to “large markets.”

In fact, searching for raw materials, for new markets, etc.

**Table 2. Foreign Investment Position of the United States, 1914 (in billions of U.S. dollars)**<sup>16</sup>

Total	U.S. investments abroad		Total	Foreign investments in U.S.	
	Government lending	Private accounts (Portfolio investments and Direct investments)		Government borrowings	Private obligations (Portfolio investments and Direct investments)
3.5	0	3.5	7.1	0.1	7.0

**Table 3. China’s Foreign Direct Investment (in Million US-Dollars), 2000-2017**<sup>17</sup>

FDI inward stock			FDI outward stock		
2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
193,348	587,817	1,490,933	27,768	317,211	1,482,020

has always been a feature of imperialist monopolies as Lenin already explained in his book on imperialism.

Anyway, does the PO/CRFI author seriously want to suggest that Chinese capitalists are not exploiting cheap labor force in these countries?! Who is working in all those enterprises? True, some Chinese corporations bring their own labor force but this is hardly the case for the majority of foreign investments!

### What is the Character of China's and Russia's State-Owned Corporations?

Let's deal with the next argument of PO/CRFI. The comrades are forced to admit *"that finance-capital, characteristic of the age of imperialism, exists in Russia and China."* But they make an important relativization which supposedly undermines the thesis that China and Russia are imperialist states: *"However, almost all of those companies are either state-owned corporations or joint-stock companies in which the state is the main share-holder."*

*"Three petroleum and natural gas giants, Gazprom, Lukoil and Rosneft, and two publicly traded national banks, Sberbank and VTB Bank, are the Russian companies which are amongst the world's biggest 500 companies list. China, on the other hand, enters the list as one of the leading countries, with approximately 20 companies in the top 500 list. Thus, if we add the increasing stock market activity in both China and Russia to the increasing importance of the banks' capital, we can easily say that finance-capital, characteristic of the age of imperialism, exists in Russia and China. However, almost all of those companies are either*

*state-owned corporations or joint-stock companies in which the state is the main share-holder. The only private Chinese company which made it to the list is the Hong-Kong based Noble Group, which is in fact a British company founded by a big coal trader named Richard Elman. The reason why those companies are among the top 500 in the world is not the developed capitalism of China and Russia, but Russian leadership in natural resources and China's huge market due to the fact that it has the biggest population in the world"*

We note in passing that, unfortunately, the comrades don't recognize the irony implied in this statement: despite admitting the existence of finance capital, the PO/CRFI insists that capitalism still has not been restored in these countries! But unintended self-mockery is certainly not the biggest misfortune of the comrades! In fact, the PO/CRFI's assertion reveals that it is unaware of Lenin's thesis of *"state monopoly capitalism"*. In his theory of imperialism, Lenin stated that advanced capitalism, in the age of its decline, is increasingly characterized by a central role of the state. This results in the increasing role of state (or partly state) corporations, indirect state intervention in the economy, etc.

*„The question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism.“*<sup>23</sup>

It is a widespread myth of neoliberalism to claim that state-owned corporations could not operate profitably. As we have demonstrated in past studies, China's state-



## Publications of the RCIT

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By Michael Pröbsting, April 2017

*An essay on the organs of popular power in the liberated area of Syria, on the character of the different sectors of the Syrian rebels, and on the failure of those leftists who deserted the Syrian Revolution*

**Introduction \* The Nature of the Local Coordination Councils in Syria \* The Contradictory Nature of the Petty-Bourgeois Rebel Factions \* A note on the adjectival juxtaposition of "progressive" to liberal democrats versus "reactionary" to Islamists \* Hayyat Tahrir al-Sham and Other Islamist Militias \* The Role of Religion in Democratic and National Liberation Struggles \* Some Arguments on the Ongoing Progressive Character of the Syrian Revolution \* Have the Rebels Become Agents of US Imperialism and Regional Powers? \* On Foreign Powers' Support for Liberation Movements p\* Lenin and Trotsky on Liberation Struggles and Imperialist Interference \* What Did Lenin and Trotsky Say about Getting Support from Imperialists? \* Imagining Two Different Scenarios of the Revolution's Success & Failure \* A Period of Defeats and Retreats: What Are the Reasons? \* Some Thoughts on the Future Prospects of the Arab Revolution \* The Urgent Need for a Revolutionary Party \* Footnotes**

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owned enterprises underwent massive restructuring, mass lay-offs, abolishing of social benefits so that, as a result, the majority of them make profit since years. And the Western capitalists themselves have to admit this implicitly when they include numerous state or semi-state owned corporations in the annual *Global Fortune 500* list.

### The Role of Migration

Let us now deal with the last argument of PO/CRFI why Russia and China supposedly are not imperialist powers. The author claims that China is no imperialist country because there is no migration to China where such migrant workers would be super-exploited as cheap labor.

*“Additionally, it is impossible for China to rise up to the league of imperialist countries as long as it does not seek cheap labor beyond its borders, but continues to offer wages among the lowest in the world and remains a country into which capital flows and out of which its own population moves. In connection with this, we must mention that Lenin also added the phenomenon of migration to the indicators of imperialism: “One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts I am describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid.” In today’s world if there is no such thing as American, German, Danish, Dutch, Canadian, British or French migrant workers, the reason is that these countries are imperialist powers. And the converse relation must also be taken to be true.”*

The first sentence is simply nonsense as we have shown. Yes, capital flows into China (as it is also flowing into many North American and European imperialist countries). But a lot of capital also flows out of China as foreign investment of Chinese corporations. This is why they are among the leading foreign investors in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Contrary to the PO/CRFI myth, these corporations are exploiting the local, cheap labor forces. The author seems to suggest that there is a significant emigration of Chinese people from China to other countries. This is simple nonsense. There is no significant migration from China to other countries.

The only thing which is true is that there is indeed little

migration to China. But before dealing with this issue, we want to draw attention to the fact that the author furtively left out the case of Russia. This is most likely the case because PO/CRFI denies the imperialist character of Russia. Nevertheless, as we have shown in past studies, Russian imperialism enormously gains from super-exploitation of migrants. According to official statistics approximately 12.3 million legal migrants currently reside inside Russia. In addition, another 5-8 million migrants have illegally entered the country in order to work there. Estimates of the percent of foreign migrants among all employed in Russia is about 8-10 %, which is close to levels in various European countries. However, this appears to be an underestimation. Most of these migrants come from Central Asia and Caucasus. In addition, this figure does *not* include the migrants from oppressed nations within Russia.<sup>24</sup>

In general, the author is right to say that migration plays an important role in imperialist countries. In fact, this is a central feature of imperialism particularly in the current historic period of its decay.<sup>25</sup> However, it is useful to bear in mind that there are *exceptions* and not every imperialist country experiences strong migration. This is, for example, the case with Japan, one of the strongest imperialist powers in the world. Japan has only a small share of migrants among its population (1.7% in 2007).<sup>26</sup>

The case of China has its peculiarities as we have pointed in past studies. The Stalinist-capitalist ruling class utilizes effectively the sheer size of the country’s population – China’s 1.4 billion people are the equivalent to 18.5% of the total world population! Furthermore, it utilizes the old household registration system which was set up by the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1958. According to this system (called *hukou* in China) *“residents were not allowed to work or live outside the administrative boundaries of their household registration without approval of the authorities. Once they left their place of registration, they would also leave behind all of their rights and benefits.”*<sup>27</sup>

Given rural poverty and opportunities for jobs in the cities, millions and millions of rural, mostly young, peasants moved to the cities to find employment. These former peasants or peasant youth who moved to the cities are called *migrants* in China. This category is misleading since

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it is usually used for people who move to another country. In fact they are rural-to-urban migrant workers. However it is no accident that these people are called migrants, because there is an important similarity between them and those who internationally are called migrants: they move to areas where they live often illegal and without rights and claim to social security.

Living in very poor conditions, these migrants soon became a major driving force for the capitalist process of super-exploitation. The number of migrant workers in China rose from about 30 million (1989), to 62 million (1993), 131.8 million (2006) and by the end of 2010, their number rose to an estimated 242 million. In the capital city, Beijing, about 40% of the total population are migrant workers, while in Shenzhen nearly 12 million of the total 14 million population are migrants. These migrant workers are usually pushed into hard-labor, low-wage jobs. According to the *China Labour Bulletin* migrants make up 58% of all workers in the industry and 52% in the service sector. The proportion of migrant workers in manufacturing industries and in construction reached as high as 68% and 80% respectively.<sup>28</sup>

In short, Chinese imperialism does not need to import migrants because it already can super-exploit vast human resources of cheap labor. In fact, this system of super-exploiting internal migrants is one of the sources for the rapid process of capital accumulation which resulted in the rise of Chinese capitalism. The PO/CRFI comrades are therefore completely wrong to conclude from China's lack of migration that this would reflect China's non-imperialism.

### Anti-Imperialism or Pro-Eastern Social-Imperialism?

Lenin liked to say: „*Our doctrine is not a dogma, but a guide to action.*“<sup>29</sup> A correct theory guides a party to a correct practice. In reverse, we can say that a revisionist theory guides a party to a revisionist practice.

Unfortunately, this is the case with the PO/CRFI. From their analysis – that Russia and China are not imperialist power – they draw the strategic conclusion to support these Eastern powers against their Western rivals.

*“What determines the character of war in the 21st century is the encirclement of Russia and China by US imperialism, in alliance with its subordinate allies of European and Japanese imperialism, in order to integrate the former countries into the imperialist world system in unrestrained fashion by bringing the process of capitalist restoration in these countries to its completion. (...) The interest of the world proletariat lies in the defeat of imperialism. The military power of Russia and China reduces the possibility of an imperialist invasion to almost impossible. However, prior to a military attack, these countries are faced with the risk of an economic and political collapse, resulting from the destruction of all the achievements of the proletarian revolution and the sharp mobilization of all the capitalist crisis dynamics into those countries. That is to say that, even though those powers may resist imperialism, they cannot defeat it. On the other hand, the defeat of Russia and China at the hands of imperialism would give rise to retrogressive results worldwide. Thus, no impartiality is possible between imperialism and these countries. On the contrary, each blow received by imperialism would pave the way for revolutionary dynamics.”*

The same position is expressed in a statement adopted at

a congress of the CRFI in April 2018. In it they proclaim that Russia and China have not become imperialist and can not become such. They state that these countries only have the alternative to either become colonies of Western imperialism or socialist states. From this, the PO/CRFI comrades draw the inevitable conclusion that they are siding with Russia and China against the U.S., EU and Japan.

*“An imperialist capital has not been created in Russia or China, and the likelihood of an exclusively state-based imperialism is a flimsy hypothesis. These regimes of transition to capitalism face, on the one hand, imperialist colonization (and wars) and, on the other, proletarian revolution. Given a hypothesis of imperialist war against Russia and / or China, to carry out a capitalist restoration of a colonial nature, revolutionary socialists will fight for the complete defeat of imperialism and will take advantage of this struggle to promote the resurgence of the soviets, as the independent political power of the working class; to expropriate the oligarchy and the bureaucracy and develop a socialist revolution, defending the free self-determination of the peoples, in the perspective of the reconstruction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [inspired] in the revolutionary and internationalist origin of the October revolution.”*<sup>30</sup>

This closes the circle. From denial of the imperialist class character of China and Russia, the PO/CRFI and their Russian Stalinist allies in the *United Communist Party* end up in siding with these Great Powers against their Western rivals. And all this in the name of “Marxism” and “Anti-Imperialism”!

Nevertheless, one has to thank the PO/CRFI comrades for one thing: as we have shown in other works, many self-proclaimed “Trotskyist” organizations share the thesis that Russia and China are not imperialist states.<sup>31</sup> However, only few are prepared to articulate so consistently and explicitly the devastating consequences of this position in calling to support China and Russia against their Western rivals.

We conclude in reiterating our position which we have outlined in our recently published programmatic document *“Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States”*: “*In cases of conflicts between imperialist states, the RCIT calls workers and popular organizations around the world to act decisively on the basis of the principles of international working class solidarity. This means that they must not support either camp. They must refuse to side with their own ruling class as well as with that of the opposing imperialist camp: Down with all imperialist Great Powers – whether the US, EU, Japan, China or Russia!*”

*“Refusal to recognize the Great Power rivalry as a key feature of the present period and, related to this, refusal to recognize the imperialist character of China and Russia”* inevitable results in *“supporting Russian and Chinese imperialism.”*<sup>32</sup>

Authentic Marxists draw a dividing line between consistent anti-imperialism and pro-Eastern social-imperialism. The former opposes all Great Powers and supports the liberation struggle of oppressed people against them. The latter sides with China and Russia against their Western rivals and refuses to support those liberation struggles of oppressed people which are directed against the Putin and Xi regimes resp. their local allies (e.g. Assad).

Obviously revolutionary Marxists are sharply opposed to such revisionist whitewashing of Chinese and Russian imperialism.

**Endnotes**

1 Michael Pröbsting: 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", 27 May 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-catastrophic-failure-of-the-theory-of-catastrophism/>

2 Levent Dölek: The Character of War in 21st Century: Are China and Russia a target or a side of the war? In: World Revolution / Revolución Mundial Issue 1 (Autumn 2018), pp. 49-59. All quotes from the PO/CRFI reproduced in this essay are from this article if not mentioned otherwise.

3 On the RCIT's analysis of China and Russia as emerging imperialist powers see the literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. Concerning China we refer readers in particular to Michael Pröbsting: The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences. What are the background and the nature of the tensions between China and India in the Sikkim border region? What should be the tactical conclusions for Socialists and Activists of the Liberation Movements? 18 August 2017, Revolutionary Communism No. 71, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-india-rivalry/>; Michael Pröbsting: The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, December 2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-csr-pcon-china/>; Michael Pröbsting: China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>. Concerning Russia we refer readers in particular to Michael Pröbsting: Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia

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4 See on this, in addition to the RCIT literature mentioned above: See also our article on this report: Michael Pröbsting China: A Paradise for Billionaires. The latest UBS/PwC Report about the Global Super-Rich Delivers another Crushing Blow to the Stalinist Myth of China's "Socialism", 27.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-is-a-paradise-for-billionaires/>

5 For the figures on manufacturing see UNIOD Industrial Development Report 2002/2003, p. 152 (for the years 1985 and 1998), UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2013, p. 196 resp. 202 (for the year 2011) and UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2018, p. 205 resp. 209 (for the year 2016). Note that manufacturing is not identical with industrial production since the later also includes mining and the construction sector.

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6 We have dealt with this argument in detail in our pamphlet *Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power* (Chapter II, pp. 6-32)

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## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# The Meaning, Consequences and Lessons of Trump's Victory

By Michael Pröbsting, November 2016

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# What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*

