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PLUS: Marxismand the Independence of Kashmir & Global Trade War

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Revolutionaries and the Slogan of "Azadi Kashmir" Should Marxists advocate the independence of Kashmir?

An Essay by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, 13.09.2019

Introduction

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its comrades in South Asia have always considered the liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people as a key question of the revolutionary struggle in the region. Kashmir is divided and occupied by three powers – India, Pakistan, and China. The majority of the 14 million people live under Indian occupation; most of the rest live under in the area controlled by the Pakistani state.

In the past decades, and particularly in recent weeks, the oppression in Indian-Occupied Kashmir has dramatically accelerated. The right-wing chauvinist Modi government abolished on 5 August the formal autonomy rights of Muslim-majority province and transformed Kashmir into a huge concentration camp. People are locked up in their houses for most of the time and all communication means are cut. According to government reports, the authorities in Indian-Occupied Kashmir have arrested nearly 4,000 people since the scrapping of its special status last month. ¹ As we have stated repeatedly: Kashmir has become a second Palestine! ²

Hence, our movement has always supported the liberation struggle of the workers and poor peasants in Kashmir and combined this with a socialist perspective. We integrated our support for an independent and united Kashmir into our program from the very beginning. In our Manifesto, adopted at the foundation of the RCIT in 2012, we state:

"For the right to self-determination of oppressed peoples includ-

ing the right to form their own state, if they wish so! Wherever oppressed people have already clearly stated their desire for a separate state, we support this and combine this with the slogan for a workers 'and peasants' republic. This applies for example for a socialist Tamil Eelam, a united Ireland, a united Kashmir, an independent Kurdistan, Chechnya, Tibet, etc. Unconditional support for the liberation struggle – including in its armed form!" ³

In this essay, we will explain both the theoretical considerations as well as the concrete reasons why the RCIT supports the slogan of "Azadi Kashmir", i.e. a free and independent Kashmir. In later articles we intend to deal with other aspects of the program of the Kashmiri liberation struggle, the positions of the Indian left on Kashmir, etc.

1. The Marxist classics on national self-determination of oppressed peoples

Our support for the slogan of "Azadi Kashmir" is first and foremost based on the fundamental principles of Marxism. A key concept of Marxism is the recognition that the national question has become a central feature of the epoch of imperialism. V. I. Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik Party and leader of the young Soviet Union, emphasized this point numerous times.

"The programme of Social-Democracy (this is how the Marxists called themselves at that time, Ed.), as a counter-balance to this petty-bourgeois, opportunist utopia, must postulate the division of nations into oppressor and oppressed as basic, significant and inevitable under imperialism." ⁴

RCIT Publications on Kashmir & India

- * "Azadi Kashmir": Marxists and the Independence of Kashmir
- * The Kashmir Question and the Indian Left Today
- * India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes
- * India: A Peculiar Semi-Colony in the Role of a Regional Power

Written by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

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Lenin concluded from this that Marxists have to support unequivocally the struggles of oppressed nations to determine freely their future. It is up to the oppressed people to decide if they want to continue living in the same state but with specific provisions (local self-government, autonomy, etc.), if they prefer to join another state or if they want to separate and to live in an independent state.

"Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. They must, therefore, unequivocally demand that the Social-Democratic parties of the oppressor countries (especially of the so-called "Great" Powers) should recognise and champion the oppressed nation's right to self-determination, in the specifically political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The socialist of a ruling or a colonial nation who does not stand for that right is a chauvinist." ⁵

"The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means that they must fight for the right to self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by "their own" nation." ⁶

The Bolsheviks have always insisted that advocating freedom of an oppressed nation is crucial for several reasons. First, international unity between the workers of different nations is only possible on the basis of freedom, i.e. the absence of any state coercion of one nation by another. It is an old Stalinist illusion to imagine that one can build trust between nations by putting a gun on the head of oppressed people. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the desire of the oppressed nations to have their own states once the Soviet army was forced to retreat has been a powerful confirmation of this fact!

The famous statement of Friedrich Engels has not lost its importance: "A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations." ⁷ Lenin strongly supported this idea and repeated its spirit many times: "On the other hand, in contrast to the Proudhonists, who "repudiated" the national problem "in the name of the social revolution," Marx, having in mind mainly the interests of the proletarian class struggle in the advanced countries, put into the forefront the fundamental principle of internationalism and socialism, viz., that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations." ⁸

Secondly, unequivocally advocating the cause of freedom of an oppressed nation is also important in order to allow revolutionaries to achieve a leading role in a given liberation movement of an oppressed nation and to win them for a socialist perspective. If revolutionaries do not actively support such a movement and fight *within* it for a proletarian strategy, they will inevitable isolate themselves and allow various petty-bourgeois nationalist and Islamist forces to gain hegemony in such movements.

Leon Trotsky, the most important collaborator of Lenin from the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917 until the latter's death, explained this fact in an article, written in 1939, in which he defended the slogan of independence for the Ukraine.

"The sectarian simply ignores the fact that the national struggle, one of the most labyrinthine and complex but at the same time extremely important forms of the class struggle, cannot be suspended by bare references to the future world revolution. With their eyes turned away from the USSR, and failing to receive support and leadership from the international proletariat, the petty-bourgeois and even working-class masses of Western Ukraine are falling victim to reactionary demagogy. Similar processes are undoubtedly also taking place in the Soviet Ukraine, only it is more difficult to lay them bare. The slogan of an independent Ukraine advanced in time by the proletarian vanguard will lead to the unavoidable stratification of the petty bourgeoisie and render it easier for its lower tiers to ally themselves with the proletariat. Only thus is it possible to prepare the proletarian revolution." 9

Thirdly, supporting the struggles of oppressed nations is essential so that socialists of an oppressor nation can win the trust of the masses of an oppressed nation. Hence, the Communist Party of Russia, at the instigation of Lenin, codified in its program adopted in 1919 the following programmatic statement: "In order to remove mistrust on the part of the working masses of the oppressed countries toward the proletariat of those states which oppressed them, it is necessary to abolish all privileges of any national group, to proclaim the full equality of nations and to recognize the rights of colonies and dependent nations to state separation." ¹⁰

And finally, the unambiguous and bold advocacy of the cause of national self-determination is particular important in order to educate the working class of the oppressor nation. Lenin repeatedly pointed out that the ruling class of an oppressor nation often succeeds to poison the political consciousness of the working class with chauvinist ide-

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as. In an essay on the national question he explained that the workers of an oppressor nation "are taught, at school and in life, disdain and contempt for the workers of the oppressed nations. This has been experienced, for example, by every Great Russian who has been brought up or who has lived among Great Russians." ¹¹

In order to counter this chauvinist manipulation, it is crucial that Marxists openly support the right of oppressed nations to determine their political future independently. Lenin emphasized this repeatedly: "The important thing is not whether one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of the small nations are liberated before the socialist revolution, but the fact that in the epoch of imperialism, owing to objective causes, the proletariat has been split into two international camps, one of which has been corrupted by the crumbs that fall from the table of the dominantnation bourgeoisie—obtained, among other things, from the double or triple exploitation of small nations—while the other cannot liberate itself without liberating the small nations, without educating the masses in an anti-chauvinist, i.e., anti-annexationist, i.e., "selfdeterminationist", spirit." ¹²

2. The algebraic slogan of the "right of national self-determination" and the specific slogan of "independence"

Marxists *always* advocate the right of national self-determination for oppressed nations. This is a fundamental democratic principle and as such it is part of the comprehensive program of socialist revolution. Of course, there can be situations where a given principle can be superseded by a higher principle. For example if a war takes place between two powers, the right of national self-determina-

tion of a small nation might, depending on the concrete conditions, become subordinated to the tactics in such a war. This was, for example, the case during World War I when the defence of Serbia against the Austrian-Hungarian Empire or the right of national self-determination of the Polish people became subordinated to the necessary revolutionary tactics of defeatism, i.e. the task for socialists to oppose all Great Powers. ¹³ However, such subordination will take place only in exceptional and temporary circumstances.

To give an analogy: a medic will always help a person whose arm has been broken in the accident. However, if another person suffered a fractured skull in the same accident, the medic will focus all his or her attention this victim. He or she will "subordinate" the treatment of the person with the broken arm and deal with it at a later point.

As said, in general, the Marxist position is to advocate the right of national self-determination for oppressed nations. We say that it is up to this people to decide *how* the wish to realize this right. Do they prefer to remain within the state they are currently living and to invoke some form of local self-government? Or do they want to live under some kind of autonomy? Or do they wish to separate and join another state or to have their own, independent state? It is up to the oppressed people, and not to the oppressor nation, to decide about these questions!

If an oppressed people want to realize its right of national self-determination in the form of state separation, it is the duty of Marxists to unconditionally support this. This has always been the method of Marxists. Hence, the Communist International stated in a resolution adopted at its Fourth Congress in 1922: "The communist workers' parties

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South

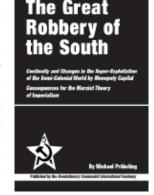
Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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 Englishlanguage. 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.

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of the colonial and semi-colonial countries \dots fight for the most radical possible solution of the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, which aims at the conquest of political independence." 14

When Trotsky, after the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern, was educating and organizing the forces of the Fourth International in the 1930s, he applied this principle to various struggles of oppressed nations. He did so not only in the case of nations which fought against imperialist colonialism but also in other cases. For example he advocated support for the national struggle of the Macedonian people which were oppressed by Greece (a semi-colonial state at that time):

"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 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." ¹⁵

Likewise, he developed the program of an independent Soviet-Ukraine in 1939 when the national oppression by the Stalinist bureaucracy alienated the Ukrainian people from the USSR:

"If our critic were capable of thinking politically, he would have surmised without much difficulty the arguments of the Stalinists against the slogan of an independent Ukraine: "It negates the position of the defense of the Soviet Union"; "disrupts the unity of the revolutionary masses"; "serves not the interests of revolution but those cf imperialism." In other words, the Stalinists would repeat all the three arguments of our author. They will unfailingly do so on the morrow.

The Kremlin bureaucracy, tells the Soviet woman: Inasmuch as there is socialism in our country, you must be happy and you must give up abortions (or suffer the penalty). To the Ukrainian they say: Inasmuch as the socialist revolution has solved the national question, it is your duty to be happy in the USSR and to renounce all thought of separation (or face the firing squad).

What does a revolutionist say to the woman? "You will decide yourself whether you want a child: I will defend your right to abortion against the Kremlin police." To the Ukrainian people he says: "Of importance to me is your attitude toward your national destiny and not the 'socialistic' sophistries of the Kremlin police; I will support your struggle for independence with all my might!"" ¹⁶

How shall Marxists estimate if an oppressed people desires for state separation and independence? This question is undoubtedly not always easy to answer and necessitates a concrete analysis by Marxists. It is in the very nature of national oppression that the ruling class of the oppressor state usually does not allow the oppressed people to freely express their wishes. However, this does not mean that it is not possible for Marxists to determine the preferences of an oppressed people. Mass struggles, the influence of political forces, popular slogans at mass demonstrations, history and tradition of the liberation struggle, etc. – all these can be clear indicators of the consciousness and the mood of an oppressed people.

The RCIT has summarized its approach to the issue of the

struggle of oppressed nations in its programmatic Manifesto adopted in 2016 as follows:

"The growing importance of the democratic question is also reflected in the increasing number of struggles of national and ethnic minorities against national oppression. There have been important struggles of oppressed nations both in imperialist countries (...) as well as in semi-colonial countries (e.g., the Palestinians, the Kurdish people, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Kashmiri in India, etc.). (...) The RCIT strives to achieve the closest unity between the workers and oppressed of different nations and religious beliefs. However, this goal is impossible to achieve by simply denying existing national oppression or by abstract appeals to "class unity." This task can only succeed if revolutionaries acknowledge the oppression and fight for the full equality of the oppressed group. Thus, the RCIT calls upon the workers' vanguard to oppose all forms of chauvinism, pressure to assimilate, etc., and to implement the program of revolutionary equality. Socialists unconditionally defend the right to national self-determination for all oppressed peoples. Socialists must support the struggle for full equality (equality of their native language, equality of citizenship rights, equal wages, etc.), local self-government and territorial autonomy. Whenever an oppressed people wishes to have an independent state, socialists are obligated to support this demand." 17

3. Not only opposition *against* oppression but active support *for* the struggle of oppressed nations!

Furthermore, it is essential to understand that the Marxists' support for the right of national self-determination for oppressed nations always includes support for the actual liberation struggle of these peoples. For authentic revolutionaries it is not sufficient to oppose the oppression, it is also necessary to side with the oppressed people and to support their struggle.

The Communist International in the times of Lenin and Trotsky was unequivocally clear on this: "In regard to the more backward states and nations, primarily feudal or patriarchal or patriarchal-peasant in character, the following considerations must be kept specially in mind: All communist parties must support by action the revolutionary liberation movements in these countries. The form which this support shall take should be discussed with the communist party of the country in question, if there is one. This obligation refers in the first place to the active support of the workers in that country on which the backward nation is financially, or as a colony, dependent." ¹⁸

It was in this same spirit that the Communist International in 1920 called the active support of the national liberation struggle as a duty of every revolutionary in the imperialist states:

"A particularly explicit and clear attitude on the question of the colonies and the oppressed peoples is necessary for the parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose the tricks and dodges of 'its' imperialists in the colonies, to support every colonial liberation movement not merely in words but in deeds, to demand the expulsion of their own imperialists from these colonies, to inculcate among the workers of their country a genuinely fraternal attitude to the working people of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and to carry on systematic agitation among the troops of their country against any oppression of the colonial peoples."

Trotsky aptly summarized the different approaches between Bolshevism which advocates such acive support for the struggle of oppressed nations and pseudo-revolutionary centrism which confines itself to vague "opposition" against national oppression:

"Nevertheless, Ledebour's position even on this question does not leave the precincts of centrism. Ledebour demands that a battle be waged against colonial oppression; he is ready to vote in parliament against colonial credits; he is ready to take upon himself a fearless defense of the victims of a crushed colonial insurrection. But Ledebour will not participate in preparing a colonial insurrection. Such work he considers putschism, adventurism, Bolshevism. And therein is the whole gist of the matter. What characterizes Bolshevism on the national question is that in its attitude toward oppressed nations, even the most backward, it considers them not only the object but also the subject of politics. Bolshevism does not confine itself to recognizing their "right" to self-determination and to parliamentary protests against the trampling upon of this right. Bolshevism penetrates into the midst of the oppressed nations; it raises them up against their oppressors; it ties up their struggle with the struggle of the proletariat in capitalist countries; it instructs the oppressed Chinese, Hindus, or Arabs in the art of insurrection and it assumes full responsibility for this work in the face of civilized executioners. Here only does Bolshevism begin, that is, revolutionary Marxism in action. Everything that does not step over this boundary remains centrism." 20

Marxists must energetically *support* such struggles irrespective of the fact that they take place under a non-Marxist, petty-bourgeois leadership (usually nationalists, Islamists or populists) and despite the fact that the masses still have a politically less developed consciousness. Numerous centrists arrogantly glance down to the "backward" masses and prefer to stand aside of such struggles (or even

support the counter-revolution). In contrast, revolutionaries wholeheartedly side with and join such liberation struggles of the workers and oppressed. The centrists say that such masses are hopelessly backward and one should wait until they have learned and only than one could join forces with them. In contrast, the Marxists insist on joining the fighting masses already now while they still follow wrong ideologies but struggle against their oppressors and, during and in the midst of such struggles, we will help them to politically learn and to advance their consciousness

In summary, the RCIT follows the following approach: "On the basis of these principles, Marxists always supported the liberation struggle of oppressed people even if they took place under the leadership of (petty-)bourgeois forces. Naturally they supported only the practical, military struggle without giving an inch of political support for those (petty-) bourgeois forces." ²¹

4. The occupation of Kashmir: A casualty of the colonial legacy

For socialists it is decisive for the future state form of Kashmir what its people wish for and not what is the geopolitical power-political calculus of the ruling elites in Delhi or Islamabad. Here is not the place to elaborate on the history of Kashmir – an issue about which a vast literature already exists. ²²

However, it is sufficient to state that the people of Kashmir were never allowed to freely express their preference! When British imperialism was forced to retreat from its colonies in South Asia after World War II, it left a devastating legacy. The colonial occupation had opened a period of sustained stagnation and super-exploitation. According to the distinguished economic historian Angus Maddis-

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.

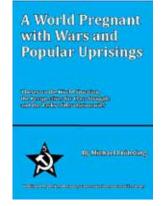
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists' analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic 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/



son, "India's per capita income in 1750 was probably similar to that in 1950". ²³ India's share in global output dramatically declined to 4.2% in 1950, i.e. at the end of Britain's colonial occupation. A study by the economic historians Clingingsmith and Williamson calculates that India's share in world manufacturing output collapsed from 24.5% (1750) in the pre-colonial era to only 2.4% in 1938. ²⁴

The people suffered terrible consequences. It is estimated that up to 19 million people died of starvation and disease in India between the years 1896 and 1903. ²⁵ According to another estimate, more than 30 million people died in India owing to plague, influenza, cholera and other kinds of disease between 1901 and 1947. ²⁶ The notorious Bengal famine of 1943 was a 'manmade famine' of British rule. More than 3 million people died during that calamity.

When the ruling class in London was forced to recognize the independence in 1947, it instigated divisions and communal hatred between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in order to keep the former colonial slaves weak and divided – following the old maxim of the Roman Empire "divide et impera". It found willing collaborators among the emerging bourgeoisie which had its political expression in Mohandas Gandhi's *Indian National Congress* resp. Muhammad Ali Jinnah's *Muslim League*. The result was a painful division of the region and horrible pogroms and expulsions. In a short period of time more than fifteen million people were uprooted, and between one and two million were killed. On the basis of this tragedy the country became partitioned between Hindu-dominated India and Muslim-dominated Pakistan. ²⁷

Kashmir became a casualty of this devastating process. It was a princely state during the British colonial rule. It was ruled by a Hindu monarch despite the fact that, according to the British census of 1941, its population had a majority of 77% Muslims (plus 20% Hindu, and 3% others, mostly Sikhs, with a sprinkling of Buddhists). ²⁸ Maharaja Hari Singh, a thoroughly dissolute and corrupt autocrat, refused to allow the population to express their will. According to the India Independence Act of 1947, the princely states had the right to remain independent or to accede to either of the then two new fully sovereign dominions of India and Pakistan. Initially, the Maharaja hoped to keep an independent state by playing off India versus Pakistan. However, after a short period of formal independence of Kashmir (between August and October 1947), Singh faced a popular revolt in Poonch (as a result of punitive taxes imposed on the region's Muslim peasantry) which was later supported by the Pakistan army. The Maharaja called the Indian army in order to save his reign and declared the accession of Kashmir to India. The war between India and Pakistan resulted in a partition of the region which lasts until today. 29

According to a resolution of the UN Security Council (Resolution 47, adopted on 21 April 1948), a commission should facilitate "a free and impartial plebiscite to decide whether the State of Jammu and Kashmir is to accede to India or Pakistan." ³⁰ (We note in passing that this resolution did no longer allow the people of Kashmir to choose independence – a reactionary decision of the Great Powers dominating the UN Security Council!) While this UN resolution was formally accepted by the Indian government, it never allowed holding such a plebiscite to this day.

5. Kashmir: What do the people want?

It is no accident that the Indian government never allowed such a plebiscite to take place. The reason is that India's ruling class was always aware that the majority of the Kashmiri people would never agree to be part of India. In 1966 Jayaprakash Narayan, an Indian opposition leader, wrote to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi: "We profess democracy, but rule by force in Kashmir. We profess secularism, but let Hindu nationalism stampede us into establishing it by repression. Kashmir has distorted India's image in the world as nothing else has done. The problem exists not because Pakistan wants to grab Kashmir, but because there is deep and widespread discontent among the people."

Prem Nath Bazaz, a Kashmiri Pandit (as the Hindu people in the region are called) writer, argued at the time that while "India may reject the plebiscite and turn down UN resolutions as outdated and impractical, India cannot forever defraud the State [Indian-Occupied Kashmir, Ed.] people of their constitutional right to free elections." He added that "if free elections are held, it may be taken for granted that the majority of seats will be captured by those unfriendly to India." ³¹ At this point, we would also like to quote the argument of

At this point, we would also like to quote the argument of Prithivi Nath Kaul Bamzai. Bamzai was a staunch Indian chauvinist who worked for the government in India and wrote a number of books on Kashmir. To illustrate his pro-Indian bias, we refer to his claim that the Kashmiri population enthusiastically welcomed (!) the military intervention of the Indian army in late October 1947. 32

However, even such an Indian chauvinist has difficulties to justify why the Indian government never allowed a plebiscite of the Kashmiri population. He claims that by the early 1960s, the Indian government has brought numerous benefits to Kashmir: "Conditions in Kashmir had materially altered since the day the Security Council was seized of the question. During these 15 years Kashmir, the part of the State that is free (!), had made allround progress politically, economically and socially. Land reforms were implemented, canals dug, a network of roads built. The tourist trade was flourishing. Education was free from the primary to the post-graduate classes. New schools and colleges were opened, dispensaries and hospitals established, refugees rehabilitated and development plans implemented courageously and with enthusiasm. The conditions prevailing were thus quite different from those in 1947. To have a plebiscite now would amount to throwing all this progress to the wind by creating uncertainty and chaos which might throw open the floodgates of communal disorder not only in Kashmir but in India and Pakistan." ³³

This is a somehow better articulated version of an "argument" a la Donald Trump! If India has brought "freedom" and many material and economic benefits to the region, how on earth could a plebiscite have caused "uncertainty, chaos and communal disorder"?! Many plebiscites have taken place around the world and usually they do not provoke "chaos and disorder". So why should this be the case in Kashmir?! If Bamzai's claim would have been true, the Kashmiri population would have overwhelmingly voted to remain part of India! Why should they have wished to leave all these supposed blessings of the Indian state?! In fact, of course, this whole claim has been silly nonsense and the opposite is true: the Kashmiri people never wanted to be part of India. This is the real reason why Delhi has refused holding such a plebiscite to this day. As we have

shown above, more honest Indian politicians have been always aware of these real reasons.

If the majority of the Kashmiri people didn't want to remain within the Indian state in the past, this is even more true today! When the people of Indian-Occupied Kashmir launched a popular uprising in 1989, the Indian state responded with unprecedented brutality. In a report from 2010, the International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-administered Kashmir stated: "The actions of military and paramilitary forces in Kashmir inflict terror on the local population, disbursed through "extrajudicial" means and those authorized by law. In the enduring conflict, 667,000 military and paramilitary personnel act with impunity to regulate movement, law, and order across Kashmir. Between 1989-2009, the actions of India's military and paramilitary forces in Kashmir have resulted in 70,000+ deaths, including through extrajudicial or "fake encounter" executions, custodial brutality, and other means." 34

Kashmir's largest independence movement, the *All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference*, reported in 2008 that more than 100,000 people had died since the insurgency broke out in 1989. Even the Indian authorities had to admit at that time that the death toll in that period was more than 47,000 people! ³⁵ In addition, thousands of women have been gang raped by marauding bands of Indian soldiers. ³⁶ Already before the latest escalation, Kashmir has been the

Already before the latest escalation, Kashmir has been the world's most militarized zones. The Indian state has stationed about 750,000 soldiers and police forces - in an area with a population of only 8 million people! And since 5 August, Delhi has sent an additional 50,000 Indian troops into Kashmir! This means there is roughly one Indian troop for every 10 Kashmiri citizens! ³⁷

The Indian state is using such massive oppression because it faces a population which in its huge majority is

hostile to it! As we have already said, it is hardly surprising that Dehli never allowed holding a plebiscite: despite its hundreds of thousands occupation troops it expects to lose a popular referendum!

There have been various surveys of Western institutes about the opinion of the Kashmiri people. Since these surveys can not take place under free conditions, it is clear that many people fear to express their anti-Indian views openly. Nevertheless, these surveys show very clearly that the Kashmiri people in their majority do not want to remain part of the Indian state.

An Indian paper published a survey in 2007 about the views of the population of Srinagar, Indian Kashmir's summer capital. According to this survey 87% of people questioned wanted independence. ³⁸ Another survey published in 2010 by Chatham House, a British think-tank, revealed that on average 44% of people in Pakistani-administered Kashmir and 43% in Indian-administered Kashmir favoured independence. The rest (in both regions combined) was divided between joining Pakistan (15%) and India (21%). ³⁹

As we mentioned above, such surveys certainly do not fully express the popular desire for separating from India. For example, according to this study, only 2% of the respondents in Indian-Occupied Kashmir preferred joining Pakistan. This seems to us a very understated figure given the fact that slogans like "Kashmir banega Pakistan" ("Kashmir will become part of Pakistan") and "Pakistan Zindabad" ("Long Live Pakistan") are very popular at mass demonstrations in Kashmir. Furthermore, the largest guerrilla force in Kashmir, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, openly advocates Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

In addition to such surveys, the people of Kashmir have unequivocally demonstrated their desire to separate from

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People.

A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz provides a critical analysis of numerous Zionist myths about the Jews as well as about the Palestinians. He demonstrates that the Zionist claim that Palestine is the historic homeland of the Jews lacks any serious basis.

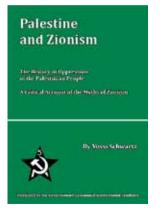
Palestine and Zionism shows that the history of Zionism in the 20th century is a history of colonialism in the service of the Great Powers and directed against the native population – the Arabs. In Palestine and Zionism Yossi Schwartz deals with key events – the "Nakba" in 1948, the wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973, more recent events like the Lebanon War, etc. – which were decisive for the expulsion of most Palestinians from their homeland.

Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership by signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993.

In Palestine and Zionism Yossi Schwartz defends the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian people and outlines a socialist perspective. He emphasizes that the only solution is the right of millions of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland and to replace the Zionist entity with one democratic state from the river to the sea – a *Free Red Palestine* with equal civil rights to the Arabs and the Israeli Jews.

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

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



10

India in numerous mass actions – despite the extraordinary presence of Indian occupation troops. They have staged many general strikes, mass demonstration, a decades-long insurgency in which this small people scarified 100,000 martyrs, etc.!

There can be no doubt that the Kashmiri people do not want to live any longer within the Indian oppressor state! This is why the RCIT strongly and unconditionally supports the liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people to win independence!

6. Independence or joining Pakistan?

An important issue of the perspective of the Kashmiri liberation struggle is the question if Kashmir should become an independent republic or if it should join Pakistan. The RCIT states that such a decision must be left to the people of Kashmir – of all its parts. They must decide freely in a referendum, without the presence of any non-Kashmiri troops (Indian or Pakistani).

Nevertheless, it is our position that Indian-Occupied Kashmir should join with the Pakistani and the Chinese part to constitute an independent republic. More precisely, we advocate a *united, independent and socialist Kashmir* in which the workers and poor peasant take power and expropriate all big capitalists and landlords. Naturally, such an independent Kashmir should respect the rights of all ethnic and religious minorities on its territory.

What are our reasons for preferring independence to joining Pakistan? First, independence is clearly the more popular perspective among Kashmiri people by all accounts (see also the surveys mentioned above). It has been the traditional and historical based slogan of the Kashmiri liberation movement. and it has been the rallying cry of the insurgency since 1989 and was the official slogan of its leading force – the *Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front*.

We have explained in various documents that India is a "prison house of nations" and the Kashmiri people are not the only one oppressed by the ruling class in Delhi. ⁴⁰ However, Pakistan is also a state which oppresses and discriminates a number of nations and nationalities (e.g. the Baloch people, the Kashmiri people, etc.) ⁴¹

In our opinion it is important for Marxists in South Asia to recognize that the states in the region (like India, Pakistan and others) are not organically developed nation states but rather artificial products dominated by semi-colonial capitalist classes in collaboration with imperialist Great Powers. These borders were deliberately created by the decaying British Empire in order to foster hatred and divisions.

The RCIT considers that all socialists in South Asia should aim for overcoming these artificial borders. Obviously, the goal is not to force any nation or any ethnical group to join (or to remain part of) a state against its wish. The task is rather to combine two central issues.

First, all nations and nationalities must have the right of national self-determination. They must have the freedom to choose without any force if they want to live in a larger state or if they want to become independent. Secondly, revolutionaries should advocate the creation of a *Socialist Federation of the Peoples of South Asia*.

7. The Perspective of a Socialist Federation of the Peoples of South Asia

It is important to emphasize that such a federation must be constituted on a *completely voluntary basis*. ⁴² No nation must be forced to join it against its will. However, it is equally clear that our model is not the division of different people into many small states but rather a process of (voluntary) convergence and unification.

Such a perspective for a socialist federation is incompatible with insisting on keeping the current frontiers of India, Pakistan and other South Asian states! Such a federation will most likely not be the result of a mechanical merger of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal etc. It will be rather the result of a voluntary affiliation of the numerous nations and nationalities of the sub-continent which, at that point, will have partly their own independent states partly will live already together in larger states.

In advocating the model of a socialist federation, we also take into account the conclusions which the Communist International in the times of Lenin and Trotsky drew: "Federation is a transitional form on the way to the complete unification of the toilers of all nations. Federation has already showed its expediency in practice, not only in the relations between the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the other Soviet Republics (the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian in the past, those of Aserbaijan and the Ukraine at present), but also within the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, even in relation to nationalities who possessed neither political existence nor self-government (for example the Bashkir and Tartar Republics in the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, which were set up in 1919 and 1920). The task of the Communist International in this respect consists not only in the further development of this federation based on the soviet order and the soviet movement, but also in its study and the testing of our experiences with it. Recognising that Federation is a form in the transition to complete unification, we must strive for an ever closer federal link." 43

8. The importance of the Kashmiri liberation struggle for the Indian workers movement and left

At the end of this essay, we want to emphasize that the liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people is not only important for the Kashmiris or for the people in Pakistan (most of whom are full of sympathy for their brothers and sisters across the border). It is our firm belief that the Kashmiri struggle against the Indian occupation is also of crucial importance for the Indian workers movement and left.

The support of the Indian state in its present borders, i.e. the support of its nature as a prison house of nations, is a dangerous poison which has contaminated the Indian workers movement and left since the foundation of this state. We intend to deal with the disastrous role of Stalinism in opportunist adaption to Indian chauvinism in more detail at a future essay. At this point we limit ourselves to the observation that the RCIT considers it as a crucial task for Marxists in India to patiently explain to the workers and poor peasants that the ruling class in Delhi is its main enemy – and not the "terrorists" in Kashmir or any neighboring state.

The Indian bourgeoisie has always utilized chauvinism, the myth of a "united and secular India", as an ideological

fetter to bind the masses to the capitalist Indian state. To free themselves from these social-chauvinist ideological shackles, the Indian workers and poor peasants must view the Kashmiri as their class brothers and sisters and should fully support their struggle for freedom. The Indian Marxists must explain the Indian masses that the freedom of Kashmir is also their own freedom!

In this context, it important to draw attention to those few forces in India which are willing to swim against the chauvinist stream. An example for this is Arundhati Roy, a prominent progressive writer and a courageous female activist. She emphasized the need to support the freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people on various occasions. In a passionate article with the self-explaining title "Azadi: The Only Thing Kashmiris Want" she wrote: "The Indian military occupation of Kashmir makes monsters of us all. It allows Hindu chauvinists to target and victimize Muslims in India by holding them hostage to the freedom struggle being waged by Muslims in Kashmir. It's all being stirred into a poisonous brew and administered intravenously, straight into our bloodstream. At the heart of it all is a moral question. Does any government have the right to take away people's liberty with military force? India needs azadi from Kashmir just as much - if not more - than Kashmir needs azadi from India." 44

We conclude by repeating once more: All socialists, all democrats, all righteous people must support the struggle of the Kashmiri people for freedom. Kashmir is our second Palestine! Their liberation is our liberation!

Footnotes

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- 3 RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 49, https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/. In this context, we refer readers also to a recently published pamphlet of the RCIT, written by our comrade Yossi Schwartz: The National Question. The Marxist approach to the struggle of the oppressed people, August 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-national-question/.
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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

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

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11 V. I. Lenin: A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism; in: CW Vol. 23, p. 56

12 V. I. Lenin: The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up (1916); in: LCW Vol. 22, p. 343

13 For the RCIT's program of revolutionary defeatism against all imperialist Great Powers see 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/; see also Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019. The book can be read online or downloaded for free here: https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/

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26 D.N. Panigrahi: India's Partition. The story of imperialism in retreat, Routledge, New York 2004, p. 251

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Sumantra Bose: Kashmir, p. 16Sumantra Bose: Kashmir, p. 32

30 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, p. 8

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"There was widespread jubilation among the citizens of Srinagar and the inhabitants of neighbouring towns and villages. For five anxious days they had carried on with normal life, kept the essential services going, and maintained a strict discipline. Their morale was high; they did not give way to panic, and they organised bands of volunteers to maintain law and order and keep a strict watch on strategic points. For five days they faced manfully the alarming reports of the raiders* advance and their eyes were constantly cast to the skies in the hope of seeing the first Indian plane coming with the sorely needed help and relief. They had collected all available motor vehicles and kept them ready to carry the first troops to the front. Local drivers were at the wheels ready to risk their lives in defending their land." (Prithivi Nath Kaul Bamzai: Culture and Political History of Kashmir. Vol. 3, p. 761)

33 Prithivi Nath Kaul Bamzai: Culture and Political History of Kashmir. Vol. 3, p. 790

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39 Robert W. Bradnock: Kashmir: Paths to Peace, Chatham House, May 2010, p. 19. I allow myself to point out a peculiar

detail of this study. Since it was published in 2010, this was a period in which British (and other Western) imperialism still had a friendly relationship with the Libyan dictator Gaddafi. Hence, there existed many business deals between the two countries, the EU paid the Libyan dictator for stopping migrants entering Europe and Gaddafi spent millions of Dollar to support Sarkozy's election campaign in France. Another expression of this collaboration is the fact that this study of Chatham House states at its front page "A project sponsored by Saif al Islam al Qadhafi" (i.e. the son of Gaddafi)! Surely, the bosses of Chatham House might feel some embarrassment about this today, but what the hell, "business is business" as the saying goes!

See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes (On the Reasons for Modi's Coup in Kashmir). Essay on the social and national contradictions of Indian capitalism and the rise of Hindutva chauvinism, 16 August 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/ india-is-a-a-prison-house-of-nations-and-lower-castes/. We also refer readers to chapter V of a pamphlet in which we elaborate a substantial analysis of India's contradictory development as a capitalist regional power, albeit we consider it not as an imperialist but rather as a semi-colonial state. (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? August 2017, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/ china-india-rivalry/)

41 See on this e.g. the *Action Program* of the *Revolutionary Workers Organisation* (the Pakistani section of the RCIT), https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/pakistan-action-program/.

We point out in this context the interesting study of our comrade Yossi Schwartz in which he elaborated the development of Lenin's concept of the national question and his conclusion in the final years about the superiority of the model of a federation. (See chapter 6 of his above mentioned pamphlet *The National Ouestion.*)

Communist International: Theses on the National and Colonial Question, 1920, Second Congress of the Communist International, in: Jane Degras: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents Volume I 1919-1922, p. 141

Arundhati Roy: Azadi: The Only Thing Kashmiris 44 Want, in: Tariq Ali, Hilal Bhatt, Angana P. Chatterji, Habbah Khatun, Pankaj Mishra, Arundhati Roy: Kashmir. The Case for Freedom, Verso, London 2011. It is worth pointing out the contrast between the opportunist Stalinists who oppose the liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people and Arundhati Roy who takes a much more principled stand on this issue. To underline we present also another quote from an interview with Roy: "The second part of the question - yes, I am among those who are very uncomfortable with the idea of a nation state, but that questioning has to start from those who live in the secure heart of powerful states, not from those struggling to overthrow the yoke of a brutal occupation. Sure, an independent Kashmiri nation may be a flawed entity, but is independent India perfect? Are we not asking Kashmiris the same question that our old colonial masters asked us: are the natives ready for freedom?" (Arundhati Roy: 'An independent Kashmiri nation may be a flawed entity, but is independent India perfect?', Tehelka Magazine, Vol 7, Issue 44, November 06, 2010, http://www.tehelka. com/story_main47.asp?filename=Ne061110CoverstoryII.asp)

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 Englishlanguage. 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.

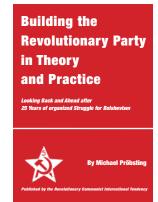
A few months ago, our movement commemorated its 25th anniversary. In the summer of 1989 our predecessor organization, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) was founded as a democratic-centralist international tendency based on an elaborated program. The *Revolutionary Communist 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/



Global Trade War: "If That Takes a Decade, So Be It!"

A telling statement of Trump's economic adviser Larry Kudlow about the U.S.-China Cold War

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 09.09.2019

Regular readers of our publications will know that the RCIT has pointed out for a long time that the acceleration of the inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers is a key feature of the present historic period. The most important element of this development is the Cold War between the U.S. and China as the two largest and most influential Great Powers. ¹

As we have demonstrated in numerous documents, the Global Trade War, which started in March 2018, is a crucial element in this Cold War between the old, decaying hegemon (U.S.) and the new, ascending power (China). ²

A recent statement by Larry Kudlow, the White House economic adviser and a key figure in the trade war cabinet of the U.S. Administration, confirms our analysis once more. Speaking to reporters, Kudlow said that although the United States and China have been negotiating on trade and intellectual property issues for 18 months, that was a short period of time in terms of what was at stake and negotiations could go on much longer: "A deal of this size and scope and central global importance, I don't think 18 months is a very long time. (...) The stakes are so high, we have to get it right, and if that takes a decade, so be it." ³

Furthermore, Kudlow compared the trade conflict between the U.S. and China with the Cold War between Washington and Moscow which began after World War II and lasted until 1991. "I remember President Reagan waging a similar fight against the Soviet Union. (...) Sometimes you have to stick with it. And I think you will find this president's commitment is unlimited because he believes he is defending the country and its workers and its security. (...) President Trump has persuaded people in America of the importance of this. This is a major economic security issue, this is a major human rights issue and maybe, most of all, it's a major national security issue." ⁴

The meaning of Kudlow's statement

Kudlow's remarks should be taken seriously since he distinguishes himself from his boss by two things: a) he can think and b) he can articulate coherent sentences. His statement is an official acknowledgment how silly Trump's famous statement has been ("Trade Wars are easy to win"). However, the purpose of this article is not to make jokes about the 24/7 clown who evokes mockery and ridicule nearly on a daily basis.

True, Kudlow's analogy with the Cold War between U.S. imperialism and the Soviet Union is only partly correct since the USSR was not an imperialist power. It was rather a degenerated workers state where a Stalinist bureaucracy dictatorially ruled a country which had its economic basis in planned, non-capitalist property relations. ⁵ It was only after the collapse of Stalinism in 1989-91 that the USSR ceased to be such a degenerated workers state. ⁶ During the 1990s Russia experienced a traumatic process of capitalist restoration and social decay which, however, resulted eventually in its emergence as a new imperialist Great

Power. ⁷ In contrast, China was able to combine the restoration of capitalism in the 1990s with the continuation of the dictatorial state apparatus led by the "Communist" Party. ⁸

However, one should not expect a Marxist class analysis of an economic advisor of the U.S. monopoly bourgeoisie! We think that Kudlow's statement is remarkable since it reflects a full acknowledgment of the deep, systemic character of the Global Trade War and its long-lasting nature by a serious representative of U.S. imperialism. It reflects that Washington is fully aware of the fact that China has become a Great Power able to challenge the imperialist hegemon which dominated the capitalist world for nearly ³/₄ of a century! It reflects that U.S. imperialism considers China as a worthy rival which it expects to be capable of resisting the pressure of Washington for at least a decade. This mean, translated into the language of Marxism, that Washington recognizes the fact that China is not a weak capitalist state but rather an imperialist Great Power.

The failure of many socialists to understand the China Question

In other words, leading representatives of U.S. imperialism are capable to understand what many socialists still fail to recognize! It is a regrettable fact that a number of Trotskyist organization still refuse to recognize the imperialist nature of China but rather claim that it would be something qualitative weaker (e.g. a semi-colonial or sub-imperialist state). Hence they believe that China is a weaker power than Japan, Germany of France despite the fact that China has become the undisputed number one or two in the fields of economic power, trade, capitalist monopolies, billionaires, etc. ⁹ (See the Tables in the Appendix.)

It is high time for these comrades to correct this significant error! As we have said numerous times, the precondition for a correct understanding of world developments lies in recognition of the imperialist nature not only of the old powers – the U.S., Western Europe and Japan – but also of the emerging imperialist powers, China and Russia. Such a recognition, in turn, is the precondition for Marxists to take a consistent revolutionary and anti-imperialist stance in conflicts between the Great Powers like the U.S. and China

Consistently thought through, a position which views China and Russia as semi-colonial or sub-imperialist states would obligate socialists to side with these powers against the U.S., Japan or the European Union. Indeed, some Semi-Stalinists and so-called "Trotskyists" arrive to such pro-Eastern social-imperialist conclusions. Such people are lost for the cause of socialism as they have crossed the barricades and serve an imperialist class enemy.

Fortunately, a number of socialists refuse such devastating tactical conclusions and oppose siding with Moscow and Beijing. However, they justify this by claiming that

Table 1. Great Powers' Share in Aggregate GDP and Exports of Goods & Services, 2016 and 2018 10

	(Percent of total for world)			
	GDP	GDP	Exports of Goods & Services	
	(MER, 2016)	(PPP, 2018)	(PPP, 2018)	
United States	24.6	15.2	10.1	
China	14.8	18.7	10.7	
Japan	6.5	4.1	3.7	
Germany	-	3.2	7.6	
France	-	2.2	3.6	
United Kingdom	_	2.2	3.4	

Table 2. National Composition of the World's 2000 Largest Corporations, 2003 and 2017 (*Forbes Global 2000* List) 11

	2003	3	201	17
	Number	Share	Number	Share
USA	776	38.8%	565	28.2%
China	13	0.6%	263	13.1%
Japan	331	16.5%	229	11.4%
United Kingdom	132	6.6%	91	4.5%
France	67	3.3%	59	2.9%
Canada	50	2.5%	58	2.9%
Germany	64	3.2%	51	2.5%

Table 3. The Rich and the Super-Rich by Country, 2018 12

Country		Wealth Range (in Million US-Dollar)				
	1-5m	5–10m	10–50m	50–100m	100–500m	500+m
United States	14,520,885	1,855,679	902,736	50,144	19,253	1,144
China	3,094,768	235,858	132,701	10,113	5,690	708
Japan	2,627,845	125,377	51,947	2,478	1,027	71
United Kingdom	2,247,529	124,244	56,535	3,125	1,422	117
Germany	1,985,627	127,157	63,678	4,078	2,042	203
France	2,002,967	99,252	42,117	2,087	886	64

Table 4. World Nuclear Forces, 2018 13

Country	Deployed Warheads	Other Warheads	Total Inventory
USA	1,750	4,435	6,185
Russia	1,600	4,900	6,500
France	280	20	300
China	_	290	290
UK	120	80	200

no serious conflict between the U.S. and China (or Russia) would exist. However, it is increasingly impossible to defend such a misconception. The reality of the new Cold War – as we can see in substantial economic sanctions, tariffs, armament race, military provocations etc. – confirms the Marxist thesis of the accelerating rivalry between the Great Powers!

True, Washington, Beijing, Brussels, Moscow and Tokyo often collaborate against the international working class and the oppressed people. However, there exists no united "super-imperialist" world alliance. This is a misconception originating from the German revisionist Karl Kautsky against which Lenin sharply polemicised. In fact, we rather see an irremovable antagonism between the imperialist Great Powers which unavoidable results in repeated clashes and conflicts between the U.S., China, EU, Russia and Japan. In the long run, such antagonism between the Great Powers could result in World War III if the international working class does not succeed in time in overthrowing the capitalist class.

Recognizing these dynamics of the world situation is essential for all socialists and constitutes a crucial basis for uniting the revolutionary forces today in the struggle for a socialist future that will liberate humanity from the heel of the imperialist powers in both the East and West!

Footnotes

- The RCIT has published numerous books, pamphlets and articles on the rivalry between the imperialist powers. See on this e.g. our recently published book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019. The book can be read online or downloaded for free here: https://www.the-communists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/. 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/.
- The RCIT's documents on the Global Trade War have been collected at a special sub-page on our website: see https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/; the latest essay is by Michael Pröbsting: The Point of No Return Seems to Have Been Passed. Intensified Global Trade War, currency war and arms race open a new stage in the U.S.-China Cold War, 7 August 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/point-of-no-return-in-u-s-china-cold-war/
- 3 Quoted in David Lawder, Roberta Rampton: U.S.-China trade conflict could take years to resolve: Kudlow, September 6, 2019 / <a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-china-meetings/us-china-trade-conflict-could-take-years-to-resolve-kudlow-take-years-take-years-to-resolve-kudlow-take-years-to-resolve-kudlow-take-years-take-yea

idUSKCN1VR1S7

- 4 Quoted in The Associated Press: White House Adviser Compares China Trade Talks to Cold War, Sept. 6, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2019/09/06/us/politics/ap-us-white-house-china-trade.html
- For the Trotskyist theory of the Stalinist states we refer to Leon Trotsky: The Revolution Betrayed (1936), Pathfinder Press 1972. The RCIT's analysis is summarized in chapter II in our book Michael Pröbsting: Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism, Vienna 2013, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cuba-s-revolution-sold-out/. See also Yossi Schwartz: Was the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen a Deformed Workers State? August 2015, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/south-yemen/
- We have analyzed the restoration of capitalism in various places. 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 chapter VI (dealing with capitalist restoration in North Korea) in the above mention book Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings; concerning capitalist restoration in China we refer to Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South (Chapter X).
- 7 See on this Michael Pröbsting: Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire, Special Issue of Revolutionary Communism No. 21 (March 2014), https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/
- 8 See on this 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; see also a document which we published in our predecessor organization LRCI: Restoring Capitalism in China (2000), https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/restoring-capitalism-in-china-2000/
- 9 For a critique of the analysis of China and Russia by various Trotskyist organizations see the chapters IX-XI in our above mentioned book "Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry".
- The first column represents figures for GDP measured by Market Exchange Rate (MER) in the year 2016. Figures for Germany, France and UK are not available in this statistic. (Source: Eurostat: The EU in the world 2018 edition, p. 68). The second and third column represent figures calculated in Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) in the year 2018. (Source: IMF: World Economic Outlook: Growth Slowdown, Precarious Recovery, Washington, April 2019, p. 135)
- 11 Forbes Global 2000 List (2017), https://www.forbes.com/global2000/list/45/#tab:overall
- 12 Credit Suisse Research Institute: Global Wealth Databook 2018, October 2018, p. 125
- 13 SIPRI Yearbook 2019, Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, Summary, p. 11

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Semi-Colonial Intermediate Powers and the Theory of Sub-Imperialism

A contribution to an ongoing debate amongst Marxists and a proposal to tackle a theoretical problem

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 1 August 2019

enin once noted "that the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." ¹ In order to fulfil such a role Marxists have to constantly review their theoretical arsenal and, if necessary, develop it further.

In the recent period, the theory of sub-imperialism has become increasingly fashionable among Marxists. The notion of "sub-imperialist" has been used to characterize such diverse various states as China, Russia, Brazil, India, South Africa, Iran, Greece and Turkey.

The RCIT considers this theory of sub-imperialism as mistaken and incompatible with Marxist theory as articulated by V. I. Lenin. We have discussed this theory and elaborated our critique in various documents. ² We have also demonstrated in a number of special studies that countries like China and Russia are imperialist Great Powers. ³ We have also alternately shown that the countries in question are semi-colonial states (albeit often with peculiar features). ⁴

Brief summary of the main defects and dangers of the theory of sub-imperialism

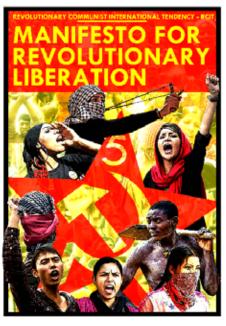
Leaving aside its methodological flaws, the theory of sub-imperialism suggests that states (like China and Russia) are qualitatively weaker than and, consequently, subordinate to imperialist Great Powers. Such a conclusion has always been essential to the theory of sub-imperialism as it was developed by its originator, the Brazilian socialist, Ruy Mauro Marini. He insisted that "[t]he tensions which arise among these various integrationist centers cannot today, as they did in the past, reach open hostilities, and must remain within the framework of antagonistic cooperation." ⁵ Or, to put it in the words of another author standing in the tradition

of Marini: "Antagonistic cooperation means that a sub-imperialist country never leaves the state of a dependent economy. It is not an imperialist country: 'Without being able to question imperialist dominion itself (otherwise it would mean questioning capitalism itself) the national bourgeoisie can only bargain for better relations within its subordinate status – better prices, better agreements, the appropriate areas for exploitation, etc.'." 6 In short, such a theory is incapable of understanding the role of China and Russia as imperialist rivals that have emerged to challenge the U.S. status as long-time world hegemon. Worse, it encounters obvious difficulties when confrontations between these rival Great Powers actually occur (in contrast to their own theory). Such theories misdirect socialists into siding with the "sub-imperialist" camp (i.e. China and Russia) – a consequence that immediately becomes a social-patriotic capitulation to an imperialist power.

We are aware, and appreciate, that not all supporters of the theory of sub-imperialism draw such tactical conclusions for the class struggle. But we think that such dangerous and wrong-headed conclusions are implicit.

In the case of countries that are actually semi-colonies, the theory of sub-imperialism negates their relationship of subordination and super-exploitation by imperialism. From this it follows (and this is the most important issue in the whole debate) that such a theory can mislead supporters into abandoning the defense of such "sub-imperialist" (actually semi-colonial) countries against imperialist aggression.

We have seen this in the case of the British *Socialist Workers Party* and its affiliates in the *International Socialist Tendency* (SWP/IST). This centrist current, known as "Cliffites" (after their founder, Tony Cliff) has argued that many coun-



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Adopted at the 1st World Congress of the RCIT in October 2016

Introduction * I. Decaying Capitalism * II. Today's Worldwide Historic Revolutionary Period * III. The Reactionary Offensive of the Ruling Class * IV. A Program for Socialist Revolution to Halt Humanity's Collapse into Barbarism * V. The Crisis of Leadership and the Construction of a Revolutionary World Party * VI. Work in Mass Organizations and the United Front Tactic * VII. The Semi-Colonial South * VIII. The Emerging Imperialist Great Powers of the East: China and Russia * IX. The Old Imperialist Great Powers: The EU, North America and Japan * X. Conclusion

A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A5 Format

tries in the South have actually become "sub-imperialist" states. Alex Callinicos, their leading theoretician, characterized in 1991 the following countries as "sub-imperialist": "Israel, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey (...) India, Vietnam, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil and Argentina." ⁷ One can easily imagine that he could continue adding to this hodge-podge list, nearly three decades later.

This crude theory was used by the Cliffite SWP/IST to refuse support for a supposed "sub-imperialist" country when it faced aggression by an imperialist Great Power. This was the case in 1982 when Britain attacked Argentina in the Malvinas War. ⁸ The Cliffites used their version of sub-imperialism to justify their neutral position when the actual duty of anti-imperialist Marxists was to side with Argentina and advocate the defeat of the British: "It was neither an anti-colonial struggle nor a struggle between oppressed and oppressor nations. The contending parties were an emergent capitalist country with regional and continental imperialist features, and a longstanding imperialist power which, though in marked decline, is still a powerful force. There was not a progressive and a reactionary camp." ⁹

The same approach inevitably led to a similar, treacherous position of neutrality in the instance of US aggression against Iraq in 1990/91 and 2003 or during the present imperialist provocations with Iran. ¹⁰

A similar and very actual example is the approach taken by sections of the *Committee for a Workers' International* (CWI) which currently experiences a devastating split into three parts. Its U.S. section, *Socialist Alternative*, recently published an article on the accelerating conflict between Washington and Teheran and the threat of war in the Middle East. In this article, the CWI characterizes not only the U.S. as "imperialist" but also Iran. "While the Iranian government is responding to threats from U.S. imperialism, Iran also plays a regional imperialist role in the Middle East." ¹¹ While the CWI correctly opposes the warmongering by the Trump Administration and the sanctions imposed against Iran, it refuses to say a single word about the necessity for socialists to defend the Middle Eastern country against the U.S. in any military confrontation.

Not only this, the CWI goes even further and opposes military armament of Iran: "Nor do we support Iran developing nuclear weapons." As is well known, opposition to developing nuclear weapons by Iran is one of the key demands of US as well as Israeli imperialism.

In short, here is another example of a centrist organization which invents the label "imperialist" ("sub" or "regional") in order to justify its refusal to defend a semicolonial country against the aggression of an imperialist Great Power.

Approximation to the problem

There are a number of Marxists who sympathize with the theory of sub-imperialism but refrain from drawing such treacherous conclusions. With such comrades we wish to enter a dialogue.

In this essay we will not repeat our arguments against the theory of sub-imperialism. We would like to discuss, however, a proposal for a new category that may better characterize rising semi-colonial states.

First, it's essential to differentiate between China and Russia and countries with significantly different histories and attributes. In the case of the former, it's undisputable that China and Russia have become rivals to the Western Great Powers. In fact, there are adherents to the theory of sub-imperialism who accept this fact and who also agree that this challenge from China and Russia does not possess a "progressive" nature. Such an approach implies that Marxists not only do not side with one camp or another but also take a revolutionary defeatist position against *all* Great Powers. We consider agreement on this point as fundamental. With this presumption as a foundation we can progress to the further challenge of theoretical analysis and related conceptual categories.

It is helpful in this regard to probe the specifics of Iran, India, and Greece. In the case of Iran it plays the role of a regional power. This is evident from the political influence it has exercised in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. In the case of India it is clear that this state – based, at the very least, on the sheer size of its population in relation to its South Asian neighbors – is a factor in regional and even global politics. In the case of Greece we have seen a significant penetration of Greek capital into several poor countries of the Balkans. The supporters of the theory of sub-imperialism see a basis in such countries for that conception. ¹² We think that these thinkers overestimate the "imperialist" features of these countries and underestimate their

ist" features of these countries and underestimate their profoundly semi-colonial status. This contradiction deserves further examination.

On some requirements of dialectical categories

Theoretical clarity is an essential precondition for Marxists, not only in general matters of philosophy but in politics quite specifically. A Marxist category must help in clarifying a given phenomenon and address potential confusion.

The purpose of a category, from the standpoint of the materialist dialectic, is to serve as a "reflection of real things" as Abram Deborin, the leading Marxist Soviet philosopher in the 1920s (before Stalin's purge) accurately formulated it. ¹³ This means viewing "things" not as static and isolated from each other, but as things in relation to each other and, as result of that interaction, things in their movement, in their development. This is what Engels meant when he wrote in Anti-Dühring: "Dialectics, on the other hand, comprehends things and their representations, ideas, in their essential connection, concatenation, motion, origin, and ending. Such processes as those mentioned above are, therefore, so many corroborations of its own method of procedure" ¹⁴

Furthermore, a category must encapsulate the essence of a matter without negating its particularity, i.e. it should identify the main character of a given phenomenon as well as specific features (the "concrete totality, the unity of the universal and the particular" as Deborin puts it). ¹⁵

Such specific features must include contradictory elements, not only for principal reasons ("the thinking of contradiction is the essential moment of the Notion" as Hegel wrote ¹⁶) but also because only such a reflection of the contradictory nature of a given phenomenon can aid revolutionaries in grasping its specific nature and its possible process of development (as Lenin emphasized, development is based on "the unity and struggle of opposites" ¹⁷).

This brief summary of the requirements of notions for Marxists should help us to understand that the category of "sub-imperialism" frustrates the development of truth. It suggests that such states are qualitatively weaker than and subordinate to the imperialist Great Powers. This is a fundamentally wrong characterization when we take China and Russia (and their relationship with the old imperialist powers). Or it suggests that the respective countries are primarily not oppressed and super-exploited by imperialism but rather primarily themselves oppressors and exploiters of other countries. This, again, is misleading if we talk about position of countries like Greece, Turkey, India, Brazil, etc.... from a *global* point of view.

Proposal of new category

The RCIT has always emphasized the importance of understanding the dialectical and contradictory nature of political and economic developments. We have done so when we differentiated between *new*, *emerging imperialist powers* (like China and Russia) that have been, because of their late-coming status, more backward in their general capitalist development than the *old imperialist powers* of the West. ¹⁸ We also differentiated "between advanced or industrialized semi-colonies such as Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Turkey, Iran or Thailand on one hand and poorer or semi-industrialized semi-colonies like Bolivia, Peru, the Sub-Saharan African countries (except South Africa), Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia etc." ¹⁹

We dealt with the contradictory nature of India and Iran by characterising them as *non-imperialist* or *semi-colonial* regional powers. ²⁰

We have always attempted to dialectically identify and

conceptualize the peculiar, contradictory nature of states. ²¹ It seems to us that the category of *advanced or industrialized semi-colonies* is appropriate and identifies the relative degree of capitalist development for a country like Greece or Iran. However, it is not sufficient as it does not deal with the *regional and international relevance* of such countries. The category of *non-imperialist* or *semi-colonial regional powers* is more useful for such a purpose and we will continue using it where it applies.

However, it might be useful to introduce, in addition, the category of *semi-colonial intermediate powers* for specific states like India or Iran. Such a notion points out that these states wield an influence in global politics that has not only regional but also international significance. The reasons for this can include control over important raw materials (oil and gas in the case of Iran), size in terms of population (India), geographic location (Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz, India is centrally located in the Asian-Pacific region which in turn has become the most important part of the world economy), etc.

It seems to us that the notion of *semi-colonial intermediate powers* could be a useful addition to the theoretical arsenal of Marxism. It dialectically grasps – as a "*moving category*" ²² – both the determining class character of such states (i.e. that they remain semi-colonies) and, at the same time, it identifies a relative strength that enables them to play an influential role in regional and world politics.

The case of Iran demonstrates how important it is to insist on the continued characterization of such countries as semi-colonies. This country is strongly dependent on the export of oil and gas and is easily subject to economic

Books of the RCIT

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

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

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

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

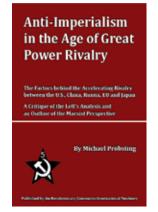
In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting critically discusses the analysis of modern imperialism by a number of left-wing parties (left social democrats, Stalinists, Trotskyists and others). He demon-

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

The author elaborates the approach of leading Marxist figures like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg to the prob-

lems of Great Power rivalry and imperialist aggression against oppressed peoples. He outlines a Marxist program for the current period which is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

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



pressure.

In the case of India its non-imperialist nature is underscored by the fact that Indian capital has not been able to play any significant role as a foreign investor in the neighbouring countries of South Asia. This is not only the case with Pakistan (which is not surprising given their historically hostile relationship) ²³ It is also illustrative that Indian capital in neighbouring Bangladesh and Sri Lanka amounts to only a paltry 1% and 4% of total foreign investment. ²⁴

Greece is a different case. While it is a relevant factor in regional politics in the Eastern Mediterranean, its significance in world politics is certainly smaller than that of Iran or India. On the other hand, Greek capital has successfully penetrated several smaller Balkan countries and plays a significant role in their economies.

What arguments could be put forward in opposition to the category *semi-colonial intermediate powers*? One could say that the words "intermediate power" are purely descriptive. However, we think that such a criticism would be misplaced as we add the notion "semi-colonial" which is a clear and precise class characterization. Furthermore descriptions are not implicitly wrong. Another, well known, Marxist category used by Lenin and Trotsky, namely "imperialist Great Powers", contains the very same combination of class characterization, "imperialist", as well as the descriptor, "Great Powers".

One could also say that it is self-contradictory to characterize a state on one hand as a semi-colony and on the other hand as a *power*. However, we think that such a criticism is also without merit. Marxists have been always aware that even the bourgeoisie of a semi-colonial state can act as an aggressor and oppress (or attempt to oppress) other peoples. A few of many examples of this would include Greece's historic policy of ethnic cleansing against Macedonians and Turks, Turkey's policies against the Kurds, the oppression of Eritrea by the Ethiopian state until 1991, the historic oppression of the Shia minority in Saudi Arabia, the oppression of national minorities in Iran, the oppression of the indigenous peoples in various Latin American countries, the oppression of the Amazigh (Berbers) in North Africa, the discrimination of the Somali Bantu community in Somalia, etc.

As Trotsky emphasized, "the bourgeoisie of colonial and semi-colonial countries is a semi-ruling, semi-oppressed class." ²⁵ Hence the semi-colonial bourgeoisie always tries to increase their profits and to consolidate their power. This includes, necessarily, their attempts to oppress other peoples. The difference from imperialist powers is not that the semi-colonial bourgeoisie does not desire to oppress other peoples but rather that it possesses much less means and power to implement such goals.

Marxists have always defended such national and religious minorities against the bourgeoisie in semi-colonial states. It is not necessary to invent such categories as "sub-imperialist" in order to provide a theoretical basis for such an anti-chauvinist approach. Support for national liberation and opposition against reactionary chauvinism are a sufficient basis in order to implement such a policy of proletarian internationalism.

Finally, let us also briefly deal with a possible analogy in defense of the theory of sub-imperialism. Could one not say that the category of sub-imperialist states is the equiv-

alent to the category of the petty-bourgeoisie in the field of international politics? As is well known the petty bourgeoisie is a third class, in addition to the two main classes in capitalist society – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Might the sub-imperialist states not also be a legitimate conception on the premise that there is also a third type of state in the field of world relations between countries that is, in addition to imperialist and semi-colonial states? We think that such an analogy is not useful as these two phenomena - petty bourgeoisie and "sub-imperialist" states cannot be compared with each other. First, the petty bourgeoisie is a class that historically stems from pre-capitalist social formations and the formative period of capitalism. The so-called sub-imperialist states are, according to their theoreticians, exactly the opposite – they are a new phenomenon stemming from the epoch of parasitic, decaying, and overripe capitalism.

Secondly, and related to this, the petty bourgeoisie is a historically outlived class that is declining in size and significance (albeit this is, naturally, not a linear process without contradictions). It continues to function in niche areas of capitalist production. The "sub-imperialist" states, according to their theoreticians, are the opposite. They are a new phenomenon that is spreading and increasing in significance, taking more and more an active and important place in the world capitalist system.

Thirdly, capitalism is an economic system based on a specific form of exploitation of the laboring class by the class that owns the means of production (i.e. the bourgeoisie). Marx emphasized this numerous times: "The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labour, and one based on wage labour, lies only in the mode in which this surplus labour is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the labourer."

The classic petty bourgeoisie is the class of small owners of private means of production with no or hardly any employed wage laborers. They primarily do not life from the exploitation of the labor power of another class (i.e. the proletariat) but rather of their "self-exploitation". This is exactly what differentiates the petty bourgeoisie from the bourgeoisie.

Hence we see again that the petty bourgeoisie cannot be used as an analogy to the "sub-imperialist" states. According to the defenders of this conception, it is exactly the ability to exploit other countries that differentiates "sub-imperialist" from semi-colonial states, i.e. to extract a surplus value from these countries. ²⁷

"In this context, what may emerge from the networking of the sub-imperialist elites, as witnessed in the BRICS bloc in its initial formation period, is an agenda that more systematically confirms super-exploitative practices within their hinterlands. Just as the political carving of Africa in Berlin at the 1884-85 conference hosted by Bismarck drew the continent's irrational boundaries mainly in order to benefit extractive enterprises — mining houses and plantations as well as construction firms associated with England, France, Portugal, Belgium and Germany — BRICS appears to follow colonial and neo-colonial tracks. Identifying port, bridge, road, rail, hydropower and other infrastructure projects in the same image, the BRICS 2013 Durban summit had as its aim the continent's economic carve-up, unburdened — now as then — by what would be derided as 'Western' concerns about democracy and human rights." ²⁸

In summary, we think that it would be utterly wrong to justify the theory of sub-imperialism by viewing such "sub-imperialist" states as a kind of petty bourgeoisie on the stage of world relations between states.

We rather think that the dialectical conception of *semi-colonial intermediate powers* avoids the shortfalls of the theory of sub-imperialism as the latter lacks a dialectic approach but rather adheres to the Anglo-Saxon defects of "*crawling empiricism*" (Deborin).

Consequences for tactic

Let us conclude this essay by briefly discussing the consequences in the field of revolutionary, class struggle tactics. As we have stated many times, Marxists subscribe to the principle that in a conflict between imperialist powers and a semi-colonial country, they have to side with the later. This can mean defending it in a war (e.g. Iran against the US), fighting against sanctions directed against such a country, supporting specific demands that counter the attempts of imperialists to strangle this country (e.g. the EU Memorandum against Greece, Greece membership in the EU), etc.

Of course, as we have also elaborated, such a conflict can take the character of a proxy conflict where the semi-colonial country involved acts objectively as the proxy of an imperialist power. This was the case during the standoff between India and China in the Himalayas in summer 2017. In that situation Delhi operated as a proxy of U.S. imperialism against China. In such cases, revolutionaries cannot lend support to the proxy nation but have to take a defeatist position on both sides. ²⁹

It is also clear that in cases where such a *semi-colonial inter-mediate powers* acts as an oppressor against weaker semi-colonial countries or oppressed people, revolutionaries must defend the later. The RCIT has always defended the Syrian people against Iran and its proxies or Macedonia against Greece. ³⁰

It is crucial to always make a concrete analysis in such conflicts in order to exercise correct tactics. Revolutionaries must analyze each conflict in its concrete totality, its various (and varying) factors, and their relationship to each other. This is required in elaborating the correct tactical conclusions. As we said somewhere else: "This is why a conflict or war has to be studied in all its aspects, with the general, fundamental, as well as its secondary, particular, characteristics. Such an approach must follow Lenin's dialectical method to study a thing or a process 'from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence." ³¹

In summary, we think that the category of *semi-colonial intermediate powers* can aid Marxists to better grasp the contradictory nature of states like Iran and India and to develop the necessary tactics appropriate to the class struggle.

Footnotes

- 1 V. I. Lenin: What Is To Be Done? (1902), in: LCW Vol. 5, p. 370
- 2 See e.g. chapter IV. *The Marxist Criteria for an Imperialist Great Power* in our recently published book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/.*
- On the RCIT's analysis of China and Russia as emerging imperialist powers see the extensive literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: https://www.thecommunists. <u>net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/</u>. In particular we refer readers to the above mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. See also 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; Michael Pröbsting: Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism, August 2014, http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/; Michael Pröbsting: Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire - A Reply to our Critics, March 2014, Special Issue of Revolutionary Communism No. 21 (March 2014), https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/.

The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power

- * Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire
- * Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and Russia's Rise as a Great Power

Two Pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

Order the pamphlet via our contact address: rcit@thecommunists.net

See e.g. on India our pamphlet by 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? August 2017, Revolutionary Communism No. 71, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-india-rivalry/ (chapter V); on Iran: RCIT: Iran: Down with Trump's Sanctions and Military Threats! But no political support for the reactionary Mullah Regime in Teheran! 11 May 2019, https://www.thecommunists. net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/down-with-trump-s-sanctionsand-military-threats-against-iran/; on Greece see our book by 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, RCIT Books, Vienna 2015, https://www.thecommunists.net/ theory/greece-semi-colony/; 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/worldperspectives-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, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/ (chapter 9); on Brazil see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry (pp. 151-152).

5 Ruy Mauro Marini: Brazilian "Interdependence" and Imperialist Integration, in: Monthly Review Vol. 17, No. 7 (December 1965), p. 12. See also Ruy Mauro Marini: Brazilian Sub-Imperialism, in: Monthly Review Vol. 23, No. 9 (February 1972)

6 Mathias Luce: Sub-imperialism, the highest stage of dependent capitalism, in: Patrick Bond and Ana Garcia (Ed.): BRICS. An Anti-Capitalist Critique, Pluto Press, London 2015, p. 39. Luce states elsewhere in the same essay: "The socio-economic formations that ascend to the sub-imperialist condition succeed in displacing the very conditions of dependent capitalism in a way that ensures expanded reproduction and mitigates the effects of dependency through forms that are specific to the pattern of capital reproduction and a policy of antagonistic cooperation with dominant imperialism in different situations; they claim relative autonomy for the sub-imperialist state without, however, questioning the framework of dependency." (p. 29).

Adrián Sotelo Valencia, another supporter of Marini's concept, argues in a recently published book in the same spirit: "To understand sub-imperialism Marini used a concept he called antagonistic cooperation. The term reflects the relationship between an imperialist country (the United States) and a sub-imperialist country (Brazil), in which there is a degree of conflict between powerful national bourgeoisies but without leading to a breakdown in relations or open confrontation. Instead inter-bourgeois cooperation and collaboration prove more the rule than the exception in relations between sub-imperialist bourgeoisies and their counterparts in the US and other dominant centres of power." (Adrián Sotelo Valencia: Sub-Imperialism Revisited. Dependency Theory in the Thought of Ruy Mauro Marini, Brill, Leiden, Boston 2017, pp. 76-77). See also: "Antagonistic cooperation does not mean that a country might at some point end or overcome its relationship of structural dependency on the dominant centre. As Marini noted, 'Reproducing on a global scale the antagonistic cooperation practised internally, these regimes become extremely dependent on their hegemonic centre - the United States - whilst continually clashing with it as they seek to reap greater rewards from the restructuring processes they are immersed in." (p. 80)

7 See Alex Callinicos: Marxism and Imperialism today, in: A. Callinicos, J. Rees, C Harman & M. Haynes: Marxism and

the New Imperialism, Bookmarks, London 1994, p. 45

8 For the position of our movement on this war see e.g. Workers Power (Britain): Arguments on the Malvinas (1982), https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/arguments-on-the-malvinas-1982/. See also our book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/ (chapter 12 and 13).

9 See Alex Callinicos: Marxism and Imperialism today, pp. 50-51

For the RCIT's position, and the respective literature, on these wars against Iraq at that time see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South (chapter 12 and 13). For our approach to the current tensions in the Persian Gulf see e.g. RCIT: Strait of Hormuz: Escalating Tensions between the US/UK and Iran. Drive the Great Powers out of the Middle East! But no political support for the reactionary Mullah Regime in Teheran! 22 July 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/escalating-tensions-between-the-us-uk-and-iran/

11 George Martin Fell Brown: No to War in the Middle East – U.S. and Iran Plunge into Conflict, June 29, 2019 https://www.socialistalternative.org/2019/06/29/no-to-war-in-the-middle-east-u-s-and-iran-plunge-into-conflict/. The article has also been republished by the Australian section of the CWI, https://thesocialist.org.au/us-iran-plunge-into-conflict/

Lenin once noted that "theoretical work only supplies answers to the problems raised by practical work." (V.I.Lenin: What the "Friends of the People" are and how they fight the Social-Democrats. (A Reply to Articles in Russkoye Bogatstvo Opposing the Marxists)), in: LCW Vol. 1, pp. 297-298) Indeed, while we think that the supporters of the theory of sub-imperialism are mistaken, we do not deny that they give an answer to a burning issue of world politics.

Abram Deborin: Lenin als revolutionärer Dialektiker (1925), in: Nikolai Bucharin/Abram Deborin: Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus, Frankfurt a.M. 1974, p. 53 (our translation). Abram Deborin was the brilliant and leading figure of the dialectical materialist school in the USSR in the 1920s. Unfortunately while there exist numerous works of this great Marxist philosopher in Russian language and also a considerable amount in German language, the weakness of Marxism in the Anglo-Saxon world in the 1920s has resulted in the situation that hardly anything of his works at that time has been translated into English language. Some useful quotes and summaries of Deborin's views in English language can be found in the following books: David Joravsky: Soviet Marxism and Natural Science 1917-1932, Routledge, New York 1961/2009; David Bakhurst: Consciousness and Revolution in Soviet philosophy: From the Bolsheviks to Evald Ilyenkov, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991; Helena Sheehan: Marxism and the Philosophy of Science, Humanities Press International, New Jersey 1985.

14 Friedrich Engels: Anti-Dühring. Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science, in: MECW Vol. 25, p. 23. In another classic work on Marxist philosophy Engels wrote: "The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of readymade things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which, in spite of all seeming accidentally and of all temporary retrogression, a progressive development asserts itself in the end — this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted." (Friedrich Engels: Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy (1886); in: MECW 26, p. 384) Engels based this important insight on Hegel's elaborations on dialectics. In his "Science of Logic", Hegel

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stated: "It is of the greatest importance to perceive and to bear in mind this nature of the reflective determinations we have just considered, namely, that their truth consists only in their relation to one another, that therefore each in its very Notion contains the other; without this knowledge, not a single step can really be taken in philosophy." (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Science of Logic, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, New York 1969, p. 438)

Abram Deborin: Materialistische Dialektik und Naturwissenschaft (1925), in: Unter dem Banner des Marxismus 1. Jahrgang 1925/26, Verlag für Literatur und Politik, Wien, p. 452 (our translation)

Lenin highlighted this phrase in his Philosophical Note-16 book. (V.I. Lenin: Conspectus of Hegel's Book the Science of Logic (1914); in: LCW 38, p. 227)

17 "The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute. (...) Development is the "struggle" of opposites." (V.I. Lenin: On the Question of Dialectics (1915); in: LCW 38, p.358)

See on this e.g. chapter II in Michael Pröbsting: Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 25, August 2014, http:// www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/

19 Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South, p. 228. Large parts of chapter 9 of this book discuss this issue.

See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences; RCIT: Iran: Down with Trump's Sanctions and Military Threats! But no political support for the reactionary Mullah Regime in Teheran! 11 May 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/ down-with-trump-s-sanctions-and-military-threats-against-iran/

The Marxist philosopher Ivan K. Luppol, another leading theoretician of the Soviet Deborin School in the 1920s, once noted that an important task of the materialistic dialectic is to "look for the unity in diversity but also for the diversity in the unity" (Iwan K. Luppol: Lenin und die Philosophie. Zur Frage des Verhältnisses der Philosophie zur Revolution, Verlag für Literatur und. Politik, Wien 1929, p. 72; our translation). This is exactly a crucial challenge for Marxists in elaborating categories which shall identify the contradictory nature of political and economic phenomena!

22 Iwan K. Luppol: Lenin und die Philosophie, p. 98 (our translation)

See on this e.g. RCIT: India-Pakistan: Defeat the War 23 Mongers! Free Kashmir! 27 February 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/india-pakistan-defeat-the-war-mongersfree-kashmir/; Michael Pröbsting: Kashmir: Social-Patriotism Among the Indian Left. On the opportunistic adaptation of various "Stalinists", "Trotskyists" and "Maoists" to the chauvinistic wave in the wake of the latest conflict between India and Pakistan, 02 March 2019, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/ asia/kashmir-social-patriotism-among-indian-left/

24 Sanjay Kathuria (Ed.): A Glass Half Full. The Promise of Regional Trade in South Asia, World Bank 2018, p. 57

Leon Trotsky: Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois 25 State? (1937); in: Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1937-38, Pathfinder Press, p. 70

26 Karl Marx: Capital, Volume One, in: MECW Vol. 35, pp. 226-227

With such an approach, the supporters of the theory of sub-imperialism claim to relate to Lenin's theory of imperialism. As is well known an essential element of Lenin's theory is his concept of super-exploitation, i.e. the extraction of a profit above the average. "Because monopoly yields superprofits, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world." (V. I. Lenin: Imperialism and the Split in Socialism (1916); in: LCW Vol. 23, pp.114-115)

Patrick Bond: BRICS and the sub-imperial location, in: Patrick Bond and Ana Garcia (Ed.): BRICS. An Anti-Capitalist Critique, p. 24

See on this our pamphlet mentioned above by Michael Pröbsting: The China-India Conflict.

As we elaborated in chapter II of our book World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings, there can be a number of cases in which revolutionaries have to side with one semi-colonial country against another because of the concrete character of the conflict. Hence, the RCIT defend the Yemeni people against the Saudi aggression, Qatar against the Saudi blockade and the Somali people against the Ethiopia-led AMISOM occupation forces.

Michael Pröbsting: Dialectics and Wars in the Present Period. Preface to Rudolf Klement's Principles and Tactics in War, June 2017, https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/dialectics-war/.

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