

Is Lenin's Theory of Imperialism Incompatible with the Concept of Permanent Revolution?

Some Notes and Answers to Arguments by Our Critics

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Some of our centrist opponents – the so-called *Liaison Committee of Communists* (LCC) as well as the *Liaison Committee for the Fourth International* (LCFI) – have recently published polemics against the RCIT's analysis of the emergence of China and Russia as new imperialist powers and the program of permanent revolution. ¹ Most of their criticism is just rehashed accusations against our tendency which we have already answered many times. ²

Basically, the LCFI denies China's and Russia's imperialist character and calls for an "*anti-imperialist united front with Putin and Xi*" against the Western imperialists. The same crude method led them to call in the past for a "united front" with the Libyan dictator Gaddafi and the Syrian tyrant Assad against the popular uprising in those countries. In short, as we have shown in earlier documents, that the LCFI are pro-Eastern social-imperialists who, perhaps unwittingly, have aligned themselves with the counter-revolution in important class struggles today. ³

In contrast to the LCFI, the LCC recognizes the imperialist nature of China and Russia and stands on the correct side of the barricades in Libya and Syria. Unfortunately, the LCC fails to break consistently with their ultra-left, indeed Bordegist, method of refusing to acknowledge the important difference between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois dictatorship from the perspective of the working class' liberation struggle. Hence they fail to defend democratic rights against open counter-revolution. ⁴ As a result, the LCC takes a neutral position in Egypt, Thailand, and Brazil, standing aside when it is crucial to mobilize the working class against right-wing counter-revolutions. ⁵ Equally, they rehash the worst economist nonsense and actually deny the progressive content of national liberation struggles, even denying – in a manner typical for arrogant social-imperialists – that small peoples like the Kosova Albanians or the Bosniaks constitute nations. ⁶

As Trotsky stated in the *Transitional Program*, those who are incapable of defending the most basic democratic and social gains will inevitably fail to achieve any new gains: „*The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective.*“

I. The Decay of the Old Imperialist Powers and the Shift of Capitalist Value Production to the South

However, here we want to focus on the discussion of Lenin's theory of imperialism, the LCC's denunciation of how we apply it, and the further development of imperialism under the circumstances of the present historic period. The LCC comrades claim that it is impossible for any semi-colonial country to become imperialist, and in the cases of China and Russia this was only possible because they had a past of being degenerated workers' states. Furthermore, they accuse us of violating Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

In their mechanistic, dogmatic approach, the LCC resembles the wooden method of those "Trotskyist" dogmatists who criticize us based on the supposed tenet that, in principle, since the days of Lenin and Trotsky it is not possible that new imperialist states could have emerged.

We have already dealt with this argument in various documents referred to the footnote at the beginning of this essay. In particular, we refer readers to our reply to Latin American comrades which

we published recently. ⁷ Below, we will elaborate and extend our arguments on the application of the Marxist theory of imperialism and its relationship with the theory of permanent revolution.

In our book *The Great Robbery of the South* we have established, among others things, that in the past decades we have seen a decline of the old imperialist powers, the US, EU, and Japan. At the same time a massive shift to the South in the production of capitalist value has taken place. This shift has provided the material background for, on the one hand, an intensification of the super-exploitation of the semi-colonial world and, on the other, the emergence of new imperialist powers, in particular China and Russia. ⁸

According to official figures, the share of the old imperialist countries in total world manufacturing declined from 82% (1992) to 65% (2012). ⁹ The share of the US alone declined from 32.4% (1985) to 20.5% (2011). ¹⁰ (See also figure 1 and 2)

Figure 1: Developing Economies' Share in World Manufacturing Value Added and GDP, 1990–2010

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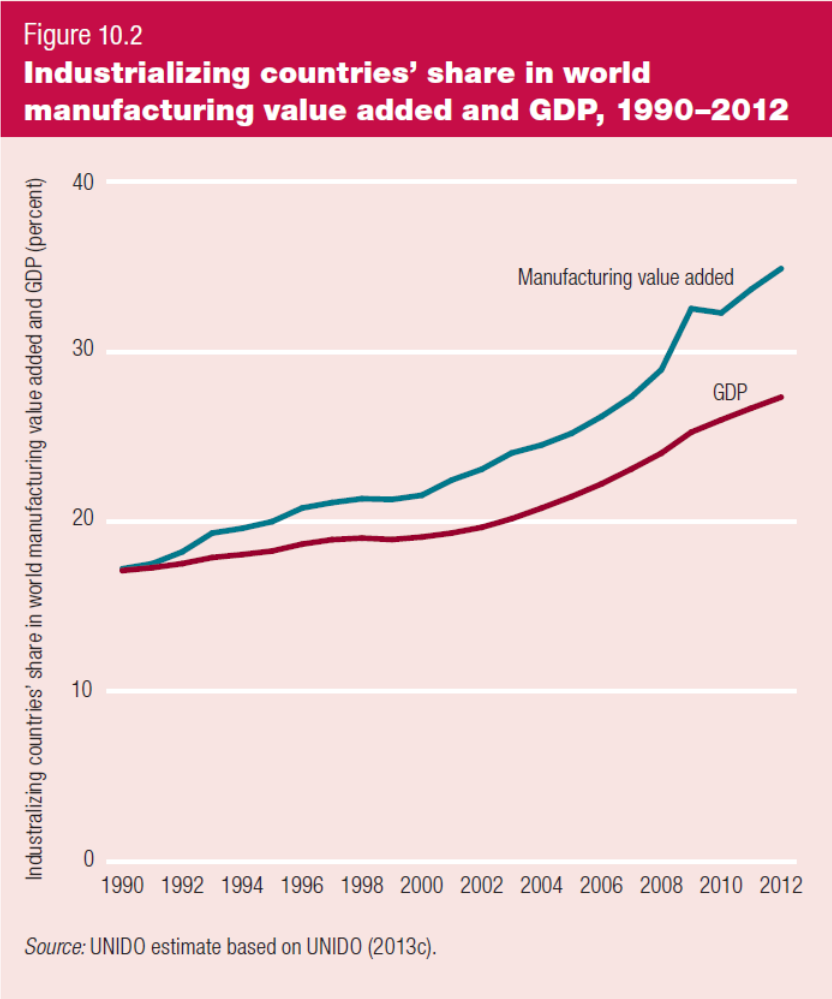
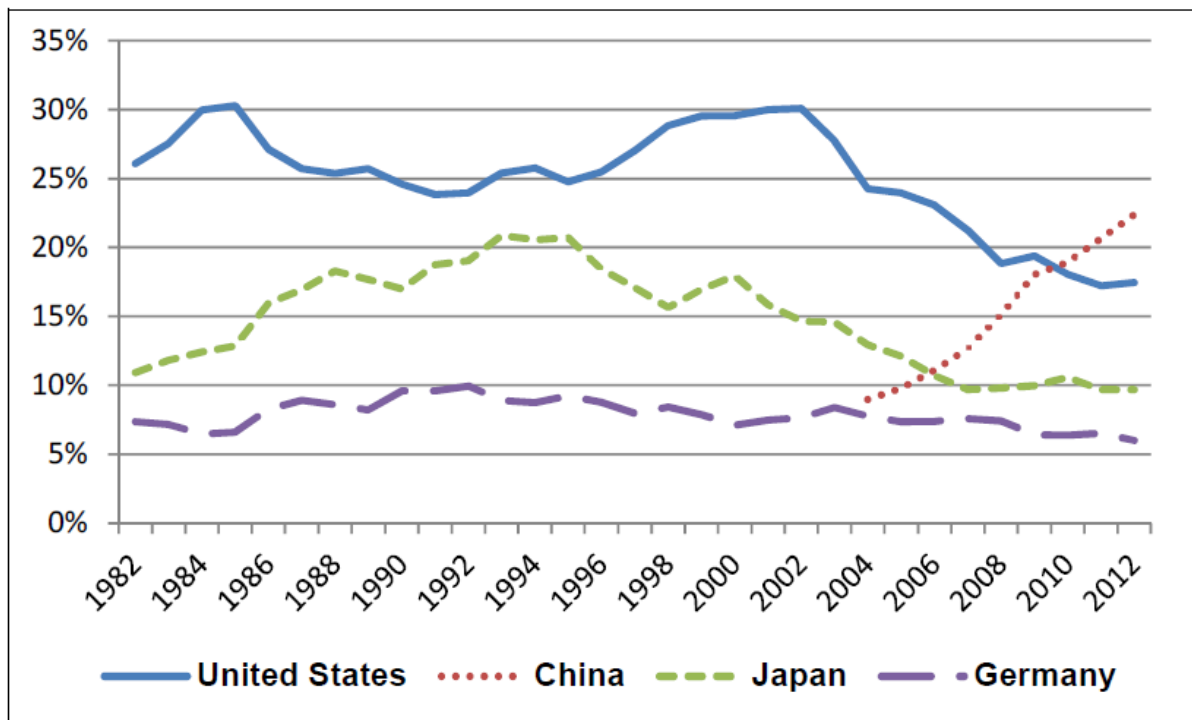


Figure 2 Selected Countries' Shares of World Manufacturing Output, 1982-2012 (Calculated in current US Dollars) ¹²



Source: United Nations National Accounts Main Aggregates Database, value added by economic activity, at current prices—U.S. dollars.

As we explained in *The Great Robbery* these figures significantly *underestimate* the degree of the shift of capitalist value production to the South:

“The degree of this shift of capitalist value production to the South is massively distorted and underestimated in the official figures produced by bourgeois economists. There are a few reasons for this. First, the category “Gross Domestic Product” (GDP) confuses real and fictional values. Given that the financial sector, which creates no value, is mainly based in the rich imperialist countries, the GDP figures of the North are artificially inflated and hence lower than the share of the South in the World GDP in the official statistics. Second, there is a massive swindle contained in the GDP figures since a substantial portion of the value created in the South is appropriated in the North via the market price on which the commodity is sold in the North. Therefore, a substantial portion of the value created in the South appears in the official GDP figures as created in the North. Third, we have the massive super-exploitation of the workers in the South and the appropriation of extra profits by the monopoly capitalists in the North. Again, these profits are often counted as part of the Northern GDP but in reality are produced by the workers in the South.” ¹³

One gets a more accurate picture of the shift if we examine the development of the world proletariat – the only material source which can create new capitalist value. As we have shown, the massive growth of the global working class was mostly due to the growth of the proletariat outside of the old imperialist metropolises. The process of industrialization has necessarily led to a massive shift of the weight of the proletariat from the imperialist metropolises towards the poorer countries. (See Table 1) A hundred years ago – at the time of Lenin and Trotsky – the proletariat in the colonial and semi-

colonial world was still quite small. This has changed dramatically in recent decades. As a result the huge majority of the world working class today lives outside of the old imperialist metropolises. Three-quarters of wage laborers and 85.3% of all industrial workers live and work in the semi-colonial countries and in emerging imperialist China. (In the year 1950, only 34% of the global industrial workers were living in the South; in 1980 this share was about 50%.)

Table 1: Distribution of Labor Force in Industry in different Regions, 2013 ¹⁴

	Labor force in Industry (in Millions)	Distribution of industrial Labor force
Global	724.4	100%
Developed economies	106.8	14.7%
Eastern Europe & ex-USSR	44.8	6.2%
East Asia	250.1	34.5%
South-East Asia	59.0	8.1%
South Asia	144.3	19.9%
Latin America	58.3	8.0%
North Africa	18.7	2.6%
Middle East	13.0	1.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	29.3	4.0%

Contrary to the evidence which we have presented, the LCC unabashedly maintains that *“the shift in value production from North to South in the post WW2 period is a totally non-Marxist and non-Leninist conception of the world economy”* (!):

“The RCIT is therefore wrong to deduce that new imperialist powers could emerge since WW1 on the basis of: ‘...an important shift in the production of capitalist value from the old imperialist countries of the North to the South. We have seen the economic as well as political and military decline of the leading imperialist power, the US, as well as that of Japan and the EU. Under such conditions, is it so surprising that new imperialist powers emerge and fill the void?’ This is fundamentally wrong on two counts. First, the shift in value production from North to South in the post WW2 period is a totally non-Marxist and non-Leninist conception of the world economy. This ignores that from the onset of the imperialist epoch value production in the ‘South’ was and still is largely owned by the finance capital of the ‘old’ imperialist powers of the ‘North’. Second, with the concentration and centralisation of capital in this epoch, it does not follow that the decline of some existing imperialist powers must call forth new ones.”

Why the shift in value production from the North to the South in the past decades should be *“a totally non-Marxist and non-Leninist conception”* is a mystery known only to the LCC. By no means was it seen as a non-Leninist concept by Lenin himself. As we have shown in previous documents, Lenin explicitly argued that, since the productive forces are growing faster in the colonies than in the old imperialist countries, new imperialist powers can emerge among the former.

“Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, new imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan).” ¹⁵

II. The “Impossibility” of the Emergence of New Imperialist Powers: Myths and Facts

Naturally, and as we have demonstrated in *The Great Robbery*, the shift of the value production usually goes hand in hand with growing dominance of the production facilities owners – the imperialist monopolies – over the semi-colonial countries of the South. But there can be exceptions, as we saw in South Korea and Israel in the 1990s and in Russia and China in the respectively early and late part of the first decade of the 2000s.¹⁶ In the end, these new emerging imperialist powers increase their share of plunder at the expense of the old great powers, while together they increase the imperialist dominance over the oppressed peoples of the South.

So, the LCC’ claim, that Lenin never said that the leap from a semi-colonial to an imperialist country is possible, is simply nonsense.

The LCC transforms – or more accurately, distorts – Lenin’s dialectical conception into a wooden, mechanistic dogma. They explicitly rule out the possibility that *any* semi-colonial country could ever transform its character with regard to other countries except through a successful socialist revolution:

“In other words the Leninist theoretical objection of the comrades of the CSR and PCO (and also of the FLTI who made the same argument against us in 2009) is correct, that once the world economy is divided between imperialist powers, there is no prospect that any colony or semicoloniality can break out of its dependent status except through permanent revolution.”

Contrary to such theoretical myths, Lenin and Trotsky recognized not only the possibility of the emergence of new imperialist powers – as shown in the quote we cited above. They also assessed such an actual transformation in the case of Czechoslovakia which was transformed from a colony into an imperialist state after 1918. On the other hand, Portugal most likely lost its imperialist status during the last four decades since the lapse of its colonies in 1974.

In order to adapt the “reality” to their new dogmas, the LCC is now busy rewriting its historical position and claims that its long-standing analysis of Australia as a small imperialist country was always flawed and incorrect.¹⁷ Surely, this is not the last position which the LCC will have to abandon. We are neither able nor willing to stop them in this exercise.

III. How Trotsky Allegedly Failed to Understand the Theory of Permanent Revolution ... according to the LCC

Desperately searching for a theoretical hook on which to base their notions, the LCC looks to Trotsky who wrote the following in his book on the permanent revolution:

*“With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.”*¹⁸

From this fundamental insight of Trotsky the LCC derives ... that nothing can change in any semi-colonial country at any time without the dictatorship of the proletariat. Poor pedants! From Trotsky’s statement that “*the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation*” (our emphasizes) in the “*countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the*

colonial and semi-colonial countries” the LCC distortedly concludes that not even one single aspect of belated capitalist development can change in any country, at any time, anywhere in the world!

The LCC comrades remind us of those “orthodox” Trotskyists who claimed that, if a petty-bourgeois guerilla movement without an organized working class base comes to power, it is beyond all possibility that this could result in the formation of a degenerated workers state ... and who were therefore so completely confused by the events in Cuba after 1959. Or similarly, they are reminiscent of those “orthodox Marxists” who claimed that Lenin had become a “Bakunist” and a “mad anarchist” when he published his famous *April Thesis* in Russia in 1917; or those “Trotskyists” who believed that history had refuted Trotsky’s theory of Stalinism when its bureaucratic dictatorships did not collapse after World War II but only in 1989–91, and who subsequently adapted the revisionist theory of state-capitalism.

Let us first draw the LCC’s attention to the fact that Trotsky himself developed and applied the theory of permanent revolution with respect to the solution of national and democratic tasks not only to semi-colonial countries but also to backward imperialist countries. As is well known – although disputed today by numerous centrist muddle-heads – Trotsky considered Russia to be a backward imperialist country:

„Its meaning is that Russia was the most backward and economically weakest of all the imperialist states. That is precisely why her ruling classes were the first to collapse as they had loaded an unbearable burden on the insufficient productive forces of the country. Uneven, sporadic development thus compelled the proletariat of the most backward imperialist country to be the first to seize power.“ ¹⁹

According to the LCC, though they can’t possibly acknowledge it, Trotsky’s statement quoted above was pure nonsense! How could he speak – in the same sentence! – about the need of “*the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation*” in relation to a backward imperialist country? According to the LCC muddle-heads, this is an impossibility, since Trotsky should have said that, in such a country, the question of national emancipation has already been completely solved?! But maybe the LCC understands Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution better than Trotsky himself?

IV. A Few Examples which “Disprove” Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution

Let us give yet another example which unmasks the LCC’s wooden, mechanistic way of thinking. In his book, Trotsky illustrated his concept of permanent revolution with the case of Germany. There he explained that the failed bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848 resulted in the absence of democracy. He elaborated that the failure of the working class to take power not only in 1848 but also in 1918 resulted in a “*bourgeois counter-revolution, which was compelled to preserve pseudo-democratic forms.*”

“The concept of the permanent revolution was advanced by the great Communists of the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx and his co-thinkers, in opposition to the democratic ideology which, as we know, claims that with the establishment of a ‘rational’ or democratic state all questions can be solved peacefully by reformist or evolutionary measures. Marx regarded the bourgeois revolution of 1848 as the direct prelude to the proletarian revolution. Marx ‘erred’. Yet his error has a factual and not a methodological character. The Revolution of 1848 did not turn into the socialist revolution. But that is just why it also did not achieve democracy. As to the

*German Revolution of 1918, it was no democratic completion of the bourgeois revolution, it was a proletarian revolution decapitated by the Social Democrats; more correctly, it was a bourgeois counter-revolution, which was compelled to preserve pseudo-democratic forms after its victory over the proletariat.”*²⁰

However, it would be pure nonsense to claim that after World War II Germany was still without a bourgeois democracy (irrespective of all the democratic deficiencies which, in general, are characteristic of bourgeois democracy as a form of capitalist dictatorship). Again, in the LCC’s mindset, this post-1945 bourgeois democracy in Germany is an irresolvable mystery. Based on their misunderstanding of Trotsky, they would have to deny that bourgeois democracy exists in imperialist Germany, since otherwise Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution is false!

In reality, of course, Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, understood dialectically, is in harmony with the contradictory historical process of class struggle; it is only the LCC’s distorted caricature of this theory which rams its head against the wall. Exceptional historical circumstances – first and foremost the counter-revolutionary defeat of the working class by fascism, the abortion of the revolutionary crisis in Europe and a number of Asian countries by the Stalinist parties, the agreement between imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy to establish a reactionary new world order, and finally the post-war boom in 1950s and 1960s – facilitated the creation of conditions in which imperialism could solve, in a distorted manner, one or another of the unresolved democratic tasks.

Let us give another example to illustrate this dialectical understanding of the theory of permanent revolution. As we have demonstrated in previous documents, Lenin and Trotsky considered Japan, not only Russia, to be a backward imperialist state recognizing, as they did, the “*semi-feudal*” and “*barbaric*” nature of its agrarian social relations.

*“Japan is today the weakest link in the imperialist chain. Her financial and military superstructure rests on a foundation of semi-feudal agrarian barbarism. Periodical explosions within the Japanese army are only a reflection of the intolerable tension of social contradictions in the country. The regime as a whole maintains itself only through the dynamics of military seizures. (...) But Japanese aggression is interlaced with traditionalism. While creating a gigantic fleet of the most modern type, the Japanese imperialists prefer to base their activities on ancient national traditions. Just as priests put their pronouncements and desires into the mouths of deities, so the Japanese imperialists palm off their very modern plans and combinations as the will of the august progenitors of the reigning Emperor. Similarly Tanaka covered up the imperialist aspirations of the ruling cliques by reference to a non-existing testament of an Emperor.”*²¹

Again, according to the LCC’s dogmatic interpretation of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, it should have been impossible to liquidate these “*semi-feudal*” and “*barbaric*” agrarian property relations without the dictatorship of the proletariat. Unfortunately for the LCC, the living process of class struggle didn’t take into account abstract mechanistic schemas. As a matter of fact – due to the specific political and economic conditions of the post-war period mentioned above – Japanese imperialism managed to largely overcome these semi-feudal features of Japanese agriculture.

V. The Dialectical Essence of the Theory of Permanent Revolution and the LCC’s Distorted Mechanistic Caricature of It

Those who adhere to an undialectical mode of thinking fail to understand that the living historical process develops in leaps. But the LCC's distorted version of permanent revolution transforms it into a stagnant, gradualist caricature with no leaps and with no uneven development.

All the examples we have provided above demonstrate that the LCC has simply not understood Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. They transform this theory into a distorted caricature by maintaining that nothing can change in any country at any time without a proletarian revolution. In real life, the social process based on the global struggle between the classes is much more complicated. The distorted form of a social revolution – Stalinist rule in Russia and China – helped to construct a material basis which enabled these countries to become backward imperialist states some time after the capitalist restoration in the early 1990s.

Likewise, in the case of South Korea, an extraordinary position as an important ally of the imperialist powers, combined with decades of massive exploitation of the local proletariat, could under specific circumstances lead to the transformation of one aspect of the social and economic development of a semi-colonial capitalist country. Or to give another example: Decades of the extraordinary material aid received from the entire imperialist world, combined with the robbery of a land and the expulsion of its indigenous population, enabled Israel to become a small imperialist power. Due to its inability to think dialectically, the LCC is blinded to such phenomena and prevents its recognizing and understanding the complex reality of the modern imperialist world.

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution did *not* mean that not a single aspect of the democratic program can ever be solved in any country at any time. It rather meant that *in its totality, the full democratic program is not possible without a successful proletarian revolution*. This and nothing else is the meaning of Trotsky's formulation that the *"complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat"*.

History, therefore, does not at all rebut the theory of permanent revolution if it demonstrates that imperialism, under exceptional circumstances, was able to solve the democratic question in Germany or the semi-feudal agrarian question in Japan. Furthermore, the course of contemporary history by no means disproves Trotsky's theory because, in its totality, imperialism is exacerbating – and not alleviating – the democratic question in both the semi-colonial world and, increasingly, in the imperialist countries as well. In addition, contemporary historical processes pose new democratic questions, like mass migration and the impending climatic catastrophe.

Neither does history violate Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution if it confronts the emergence of new imperialist powers with the decline of the old imperialist powers. This process takes place in a global situation, in which the emergence of these new imperialist powers augment the super-exploitation of important sectors of their native proletariat (the "migrants" in China), and only adds to the overall global increase of the super-exploitation of all the oppressed people of the South, as well as the migrants in the North, by the composite of imperialist monopolies and great powers.

VI. Summary

In this essay we have shown that the emergence of new imperialist powers does not at all refute Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. We have explained that the decline of the old great Western powers and the shift of capitalist value production to the South created the material base for the

emergence of new imperialist states like Russia and China. In addition, this process has been advanced by the decades-long rule of Stalinist bureaucracies in both countries which helped annihilate the semi-feudal remnants of the past and, in retrospect, created an industrial base for their future emergence as great imperialist powers.

All in all, the emergence of these new imperialist powers has led to an increase of super-exploitation of the world proletariat and oppressed peoples.

Furthermore, we have demonstrated that Trotsky's theory is by no means refuted if this or that aspect of the democratic revolution in one or another country has been resolved without the creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This was and will remain possible under exceptional historic circumstances. However, in its totality imperialism accelerates – and does not alleviate – the social and political contradictions which also result in a sharpening of the democratic question in the semi-colonial world and, increasingly, in the imperialist countries as well. In addition, these developments pose new democratic questions like mass migration or the impending climatic catastrophe.

In short, the contradictory process of the class struggle and world politics are easy to explain and to understand if Marxists are armed with the dialectical method of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. For those who replace it with mechanist dogmas, both Trotsky's theory, as well as the living process of the world class struggle, remains a book secured by seven seals.

¹ Liaison Committee of Communists: Russia, China, and the Unfinished Permanent Revolution; in: *Class Warrior*, Vol. 1 No. 8 (Spring 2015); Socialist Fight reply to the Liaison Committee of Communists, 8 April 2014, <http://socialistfight.com/2015/04/10/socialist-fight-reply-to-the-liaison-committee-of-communists/>. All quotes, if not stated otherwise, are taken from these documents.

² For our analysis of China as an emerging imperialist country we refer readers to:

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, 2013, Chapter 10, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/great-robbery-of-south-online/download-chapters-1/chapter10/>

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* (English-language Journal of the RCIT) No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>

Michael Pröbsting: No to chauvinist war-mongering by Japanese and Chinese imperialism! Chinese and Japanese workers: Your main enemy is at home! Stop the conflict on the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands in the East China Sea! 23.9.2012, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 6, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-between-china-and-japan/>

Michael Pröbsting: Russia and China as Great Imperialist Powers. A Summary of the RCIT's Analysis, 28 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 22, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-china-and-russia/>

Michael Pröbsting: More on Russia and China as Great Imperialist Powers. A Reply to Chris Slee (Socialist Alliance, Australia) and Walter Daum (LRP, USA), 11 April 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 22, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-slee-on-russia-china/>

For our analysis of Russia as an emerging imperialist country we refer readers to:

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. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia's Imperialist Character, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 25, 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, 18 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>

Michael Pröbsting: The Uprising in East Ukraine and Russian Imperialism. An Analysis of Recent Developments in the Ukrainian Civil War and their Consequences for Revolutionary Tactics, 22.October 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 28, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/ukraine-and-russian-imperialism/>

For a discussion comparing China, Russia, and semi-colonial countries like Brazil, we refer readers to our document: Michael Pröbsting: The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. Again on China as an imperialist Power. Reply to a Polemic from CSR (Venezuela) and PCO (Argentina), December 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 32, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-csr-pco-on-china/>

³ *For RCIT statements on the civil war in Syria and replies to the pro-Assad propaganda, see among others:*

* Yossi Schwartz: Syria, Israel and Palestinians: Free Abdel Qader Altlitha! Free Abdel Qader Altlitha! Free all Palestinian Political Prisoners! Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT-Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine), 16.2.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/syria-israel-and-palestinians/>

* Yossi Schwartz: The Myth of Assad's Syria as an Anti-Imperialist Regime, Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT-Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine), November 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/myth-of-assad-s-anti-imperialism/>

* Michael Pröbsting: Syria: The Butcher in his own Words. Assad: A Friend of Israel and an Enemy of the Arab Popular Masses, 21.10.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/assad-s-own-words/>

* RCIT: Syria: Down with the Imperialist Geneva Accord! Stop US and Russian imperialist interference in Syria! No imperialist-controlled "peace" negotiations which can only result in a defeat for the Revolution! International Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution against the murderous Assad Dictatorship! 15.9.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/against-geneva-accord/>

* RCIT: Syria: Against Assad and Against Imperialism – Victory to the Revolution! For International Solidarity with the Popular Revolution against the murderous Assad Dictatorship! But Without and Against any Western Imperialist Military Intervention! 27.8.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/syria-against-assad-imperialism/>

For RCIT statements on the civil war in Libya, see among others:

RCIT: General Sisi, Hollande, Obama: Hands Off Libya! Defeat General Haftar's Imperialist Lackeys! Down with the Daash-Gang of Killers! For a Workers' and Popular Government! 26.2.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/hands-off-libya/>

Michael Pröbsting: Liberation struggles and imperialist interference. The failure of sectarian "anti-imperialism" in the West: Some general considerations from the Marxist point of view and the example of the democratic revolution in Libya in 2011, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 5, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/liberation-struggle-and-imperialism/>

RKOB: After the collapse of the Gaddafi regime: Where now for the Libyan Revolution? in *Revolutionary Communism* No. 1 (2011), <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/libya-collapse-of-gaddafi-regime/>

Michael Pröbsting: The intervention of the imperialist powers in Libya, the struggle of the masses against Gaddafi's dictatorship and the tactics of revolutionary communists, in *Revolutionary Communism* No. 1 (2011), www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa/libya-revolutionary-tactics

⁴ *For the RCIT's analyses of Egypt's military dictatorship and replies to the centrists who failed to oppose the coup, we refer readers to the following small selection of our articles on this issue:*

RCIT: General Sisi – The Butcher of the Egyptian People – Sentences another 683 People to Death, 1.5.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-mass-death-sentences/>

RCIT: Egypt: Down with General Sisi's pro-Army Constitution! Boycott the Referendum!, 12.1.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/boycott-egypt-referendum/>

Yossi Schwartz: Israel and the Coup in Egypt. Israel's primary concerns regarding Egypt are the possible fall of the military regime or a descent into civil war, Aug 21, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/israel-and-egypt-coup/>

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Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the reactionary military regime! Down with the army's puppet-government! No political support for Morsi and the Muslim brotherhood! For independent working class mobilization with a revolutionary perspective! 27.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime/>

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CCR (RCIT Brazil): Brazil: Right-Wing Opposition threatens with a Coup d’État, 18.11.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-coup-danger/>

⁵ See e.g. their statement: “However, the RCIT’s slavish application of the bourgeois democratic schema as progressive can be seen in Egypt when the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (SCAF) dismissed the Muslim Brotherhood, elected to power on a reactionary constitution that defended the military regime. The Muslim Brotherhood was a weak Islamic bourgeoisie of the bazaar seeking to replace the dominant military fraction. The RCIT called this dispute between two fractions of the bourgeoisie a coup against ‘bourgeois democracy’ and an ‘historic defeat’ for the working class when the election of the Muslim Brotherhood did nothing to advance the interests of the working class. This was proven by the millions of workers who marched against it. Such ‘bourgeois democracy’ was in reality a reactionary bourgeois regime seeking to appease imperialism and imposing a theocratic barrier to revolution. Its removal meant that the SCAF was now seen openly as the power base behind the Mubarak regime and that it had always been the dominant fraction of the national bourgeoisie. What the national revolution in MENA proves beyond question is that democratic rights are only in the interest of the working class if they actually advance the struggle for proletarian revolution.” Obviously, more than 6.000 people slaughtered by the army and tens of thousands thrown into prison do not count as a significant fact for the working class and popular struggle in the eyes of the Bordigist LCC!

(Dis)armed with the same logic the LCC sees no reason to defend the Brazilian popular front government of Dilma Rousseff against a looming coup d’état: “In Latin America what we see is the

method of the LRCI/ LFI inherited by the RCIT. We argued above that this semi- Cliffite method fetishises 'bourgeois democracy' so that the concept of permanent revolution becomes stageist in practice. It defends popular front parties against military dictatorship in Egypt and Thailand." It is obvious that during the Spanish civil war in 1936-39, when the popular front government fought against the fascist forces of General Franco, the LCC would have taken a shameful neutral position!

⁶ See e.g. their statement: "In other words the democratic revolution in the epoch of imperialism can no longer be spoken of as the 'bourgeois national democratic' revolution. The formation of new capitalist nation states can only serve the interests of bourgeois imperialism and the unfinished tasks of that revolution cannot be realised other than by the proletarian revolution." So, according to the LCC, supporting the struggle of oppressed nations for an independent state only serves imperialism as long as it does not go hand in hand with the proletarian revolution. So they would not support such a struggle if it leads "only" to the expulsion of the foreign occupants and the creation of a new bourgeois national state.

It is only logical that these Neo-Bordegists still justify their shameful betrayal of the national liberation struggles of the Balkan people in the 1990s: "As we have been at pains to point out to the RCIT for some years now, this flaw in its method is reproduced in its program today. While revolutionary workers defend bourgeois democratic rights they do so only when that defence advances the interests of the socialist revolution. Yet the RCIT has a tendency to turn the permanent revolution into a slavish defence of bourgeois democratic rights, when that defence is clearly not in the interests of workers but serves the bourgeois counter-revolution. Defending bourgeois democracy against the Stalinist military was not an unconditional defence of workers property in Soviet Russia, nor in Yugoslavia. Today the RCIT regards Bosnia and Kosovo as expressing the national rights of national minorities when in reality these 'nations' were the creations of imperialism (NATO and the UN) in the enforced breakup of Yugoslavia. Here the Leninist support for national self-determination is turned on its head as the support for the creation of new NATO capitalist protectorates!"

⁷ See Michael Pröbsting: The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. Again on China as an imperialist Power

⁸ 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, 2013. The book can be ordered via our contact address or downloaded for free at <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>. A summary of the book can be read here: <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-summary/>.

⁹ UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2013, p. 171

¹⁰ For the figures on manufacturing see UNIOD Industrial Development Report 2002/2003, p. 152 (for year 1985) and UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2013, p. 202 (for the year 2011).

¹¹ UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2013, p. 172

¹² Marc Levinson: U.S. Manufacturing in International Perspective, Congressional Research Service, February 20, 2014, p. 4

¹³ Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South, p. 397

¹⁴ Sources: International Labour Office: Global Employment Trends 2014. Risk of a jobless recovery?, p. 97 and our own calculations

¹⁵ V. I. Lenin: Imperialism. The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916) ; in: LCW Vol. 22, p. 274

¹⁶ We have analyzed South Korea's transformation into a small imperialist power in Michael Pröbsting: *Der kapitalistische Aufholprozeß in Südkorea und Taiwan*; in: *Revolutionärer Marxismus* Nr. 20 (1996). A shortened version of this article appeared as "*Capitalist Development on South Korea and Taiwan*" in: *Trotskyist International* No. 21 (1997), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/capitalism-in-south-korea-taiwan/>. On Israel as a small imperialist power see Michael Pröbsting: *On some Questions of the Zionist Oppression and the Permanent Revolution in Palestine*", in: *Revolutionary Communism* Nr. 10 (June 2013), p. 29, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/permanent-revolution-in-palestine>

¹⁷ See CWG(NZ): U.S.A. became Imperialist, what about NZ, South Africa and Australia? March 04, 2015, <http://redrave.blogspot.co.at/2015/03/usa-became-imperialist-what-about-nz.html>

¹⁸ Leon Trotsky: *The Permanent Revolution* (1929), Merit Publications, New York 1969, p. 276

¹⁹ Leon Trotsky: *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), New York 1970, p. 56

²⁰ Leon Trotsky: *The Permanent Revolution* (1929), Merit Publications, New York 1969, p. 131

²¹ Leon Trotsky: *The "Tanaka Memorial"* (1940), in: *Trotsky Writings 1939/40*, p. 170