



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



[www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net)

New Series Issue Nr.68

February 2022

## China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet?

A Theoretical Question  
with Very Practical Consequences!

by Michael Pröbsting

# English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.59, February 2022

<b>Introduction</b>	p.3
<b>I. The importance of the dialectical method</b>	p.4
<i>Transition and totality, quantitative and qualitative changes</i>	
<b>II. A summary of our characterization of China as an imperialist Great Power</b>	p.5
<i>A theoretical definition of imperialist states</i>	
<i>China's role in the capitalist world economy</i>	
<i>A backward economy?</i>	
<i>China's military and political role in world</i>	
<b>III. On China's unevenness and vulnerability</b>	p.8
<i>Vulnerability of the U.S. and the EU</i>	
<b>IV. The Taiwan question in its historical and geostrategic context</b>	p.10
<i>The genuine historical roots of Taiwanese nationalism</i>	
<i>An issue subordinated to the inter-imperialist rivalry</i>	
<b>V. Is China a Great Power without imperialist features?</b>	p.12
<i>The key role of East and South-East Asia</i>	
<b>VI. Can China's development as an imperialist power be aborted?</b>	p.14
<b>VII. China, imperialist wars, and revolutionary tactics</b>	p.15
<i>A military confrontation over Taiwan: the most likely war scenario</i>	
<i>What would a potential war scenario mean for socialists?</i>	
<i>The class interests are the decisive issue!</i>	
<b>Footnotes</b>	p.19

Picture on the cover: PLAAF airmen on parade during a full honors arrival ceremony in 2000 (Source: Wikipedia, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Chinese\\_military\\_honor\\_guard.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Chinese_military_honor_guard.jpg))

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

**www.thecommunists.net - rcit@thecommunists.net**  
**Tel/SMS/WhatsApp/Telegram: +43-650-4068314**

# China: An Imperialist Power ... Or Not Yet?

## A Theoretical Question with Very Practical Consequences!

Continuing the Debate with Esteban Mercatante and the PTS/FT  
on China's class character and consequences for the revolutionary strategy

*A Pamphlet (with 11 Tables) by Michael Pröbsting,  
International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 22 January 2022*

### INTRODUCTION

The current debate between Esteban Mercatante and the author of these lines about China's class character is by no means accidental. It rather reflects the fact that the "China question" is a crucial issue of our time and that Marxists must have a clear analysis and program on this issue. Without such they would be confused and disorientated in world politics and the global class struggle.

Our tendency has repeatedly pointed out that the acceleration of the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – among which the U.S.-China conflict is the most important element – is a key factor in the current historic period which is characterized by a fragile global order and the decay of capitalism as a social formation. This political and economic crisis will deepen as long as the world is dominated by a small layer of monopolies and a few Great Powers. In fact, against the background of such decay, this rivalry between the Great Powers will inevitably continue to escalate – first in form of sanctions and trade wars, proxy wars and, finally, direct military confrontations.<sup>1</sup>

For all these reasons, the China question – i.e. the question of the class character of one of the largest countries in the world in terms of economy, military, politics, and population – is not merely a theoretical issue but one with strong practical consequences. Should socialists side with China in such conflicts or not?

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT), to which the author of these lines belongs, has elaborated an extensive analysis of China and its development in the past decade. We have arrived at the conclusion that China

has become an imperialist Great Power at the beginning of the current historic period which opened with the deep recession of the global economy in 2008-09. We explained in our works that despite all peculiarities and unequal features in its development, China had crossed the Rubicon and became an imperialist power, i.e. a state which plays a key role in the world economy and world politics and which exploits semi-colonial countries.<sup>2</sup>

Such an analysis has important consequences for the strategy and tactics of revolutionaries. Among these are that socialists must not defend China in any conflict with other states. They rather have to take a position which is called in the Marxist tradition as *revolutionary defeatism* and which is associated with the famous slogan of Karl Liebknecht "The main enemy is at home!"<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to our analysis, comrade Esteban Mercatante – a leading theoretician of the *Socialist Workers Party* (PTS) and its international current (*Fracción Trotskista*) – considers China as an "imperialism under construction" by which he resp. his comrades in the PTS/FT mean that China is in the process of becoming an imperialist state, but it is not such yet. Consequently, they do not apply a policy of defeatism in principle but rather make supporting resp. not supporting China dependent on the concrete situation.<sup>4</sup>

The comrades of the PTS have published the latest exchange in our debate on their website.<sup>5</sup> This essay shall deal with the arguments of comrade Esteban Mercatante in his latest contribution in order to deepen the debate and to clarify the issue.



### *Publications of the RCIT*

## The Inter-Imperialist Cold War between the US and China

*By Michael Pröbsting, March 2021*

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

Introduction \* A symbolic public row \* Two thieves as upholders of moral standards \* Escalating the conflict between China and Japan \* The Quad Summit \* Inter-Imperialist tensions in the Taiwan Strait \* Unavoidable continuation and acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry \* Continuing doing business \* Towards escalation on the Korean Peninsula? \* "Fuck the EU" and Russia, again? \* Confirmation of the Marxist analysis \* Footnotes



## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIALECTICAL METHOD

At the beginning of his contribution, comrade Mercatante emphasizes the “importance of theorizing transitional forms”. Replying to me, he wrote: “To begin with, I would like to re-emphasize the importance of theorizing transitional forms. You pointed out the question of the leap from quantity to quality, but part of that process is the development of a whole series of transitions until that qualitative change takes place. The notion of imperialism under construction applied to China seeks to account for a transition, pointing to a direction (towards consolidating itself as imperialism) but without considering it inevitable that it will advance towards it.”

At a later point in the discussion, on the issue of which side socialists should take in a conflict between the U.S. and China, the comrade states that such an issue can only be decided case by case: “I believe that this ultimately cannot be determined a priori, but by a ‘concrete analysis of the concrete situation’.”

We will deal later with the issue of China’s class character and revolutionary tactics. At this point we want to pick up comrade Mercatante’s suggestions that an approach to this issue needs to be based on the dialectical method and the importance of viewing things concretely as well as in their movement.

While we can not but wholeheartedly agree with the emphasis on applying the dialectical-materialist method, we think that the comrade does so in a one-sided and, ultimately, undialectical way. Let us explain this first on the level of method and then in discussing concretely the issue of China’s class character.

### Transition and totality, quantitative and qualitative changes

Comrade Mercatante points to the importance of focusing on a “series of transitions until that qualitative change takes place.” This is indeed a highly relevant issue since there is hardly a country in the world which has experienced such a rapid capitalist development in the past three decades like China. (The only other example is Vietnam.) But one can only understand the nature of a transition process if one knows where this process started, where it is heading and at which stage of this development we are currently in. Without such an approach, one can recognize only the process of the transition as such but not the totality in which it is situated. In other words, quantitative changes can only be understood if such are located within the qualitative stage of development.

This relates to a central requirement of materialist dialectic: viewing transition – as well as the concrete – not in isolation but in relation to other processes, other concretes. Hence, transition or concrete exist – and can only exist – as part of a given totality. Such a conception was masterly elaborated by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel whose works on dialectics were crucial for Marx and Engels in their elaboration of the materialist Weltanschauung. In his “Philosophy of Nature”, Hegel characterized the “substance” as the “totality of moments of

actuality”.<sup>6</sup> Building on such an approach, Marx – in his famous *Grundrisse*, the groundwork for the *Capital* – characterized the reality as the “rich totality of many determinations and relations.” He spoke about the concrete as follows: “The concrete is concrete because it is a synthesis of many determinations, thus a unity of the diverse.”<sup>7</sup>

Likewise did Lenin, in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, define the “essence of dialectical cognition” as “the unfolding of the sum-total of the moments of actuality.”<sup>8</sup> Such an approach was defended by later Marxist theoreticians like Abram Deborin, the leading philosopher of the USSR in the 1920s before the Stalinist clampdown. He formulated this issue very well. “Nothing in the world exists in and of itself but everything exists in relation to the rest of the totality.”<sup>9</sup>

And Georg Lukács, a remarkable Marxist philosopher albeit not without weaknesses, summarized the issue in the following pointed formula: „The primacy of the category of totality is the bearer of the principle of revolution in science.”<sup>10</sup>

Such emphasis on the category of totality is decisive for understanding the nature of a process of transition. Without it, it is impossible to correctly locate the character of such transition and the stage of its development. We see this in the discussion on China’s class character. Emphasizing the process of transition is only useful if it is combined with a clear characterization of the stage of development, with clarifying if quantity has transformed into quality, if the Rubicon has been crossed and China has become essentially an imperialist state.

Without integrating and subordinating the process of transition into recognition of the totality, by fixating ones mind on only the process of transition itself, one runs into danger of replacing the dialectical materialist analysis with an empiricist description based on an eclecticist method.

Taking account of the category of totality is also crucial in order to avoid the following danger. In our discussion of the process of China’s transformation into an imperialist power we have always emphasized that one has to view its relationship with other countries, with other Great Powers, with the world economy, etc. We warned that by looking exclusively at China’s economy in isolation, taking a checklist if it is fulfilling this or that criteria, one can easily fail to recognize the overall class character of a state. Hence, we have always insisted on the necessity to view China in its relationship to other states and, by doing this, to take into account the totality of its economic, political, and military features – “the entire totality of the manifold relations of this thing to others” (Lenin).<sup>11</sup>

## II. A SUMMARY OF OUR CHARACTERIZATION OF CHINA AS AN IMPERIALIST GREAT POWER

Taking the “*totality of relations*” as the starting point, we focus our understanding of China’s class character not solely on its internal development – albeit this is of course also an important issue – but also on its role in the global system of imperialism. In his contribution, comrade Esteban Mercatante states: “*China’s superiority is accompanied by a situation in which the balance between the set of dimensions configures a less “coherent” socioeconomic formation. What do I mean by this? I mean that today we still have many “Chinas” within China; a southeast where the most advanced of the world’s industry and technology is located, where the companies that compete head to head with US, German or Japanese firms to dominate some of the cutting-edge technologies are formed; while in the rest of the country the situation is much more unequal.*” He also points out that China has an “*aggregate productivity which is one third that of the USA.*”

Of course, the comrade is correct in pointing to these features. It is, in summary, the result of Chinas belated development as a capitalist – and even more so as an imperialist – state. As a result, it has regions which are basically as modern as Western states and other regions which are more backward.

All this is true. But the decisive question is to identify the main character, the totality of these concrete features and relations. What is the *result* of these characteristics which the comrade identifies?

### A theoretical definition of imperialist states

Let us begin with a brief recapitulation of our definition of imperialist states which we have elaborated in our works. This is important since, in our opinion, many Marxists lack a clear theoretical understanding of what makes a state imperialist (respectively semi-colonial). Another, commonly occurring, mistake is the one-sided focus in the analysis on only one or two specific features of a state (e.g. its military power, its capital export, etc.). In contrast, we consider it as decisive to apply a dialectical approach which views the totality of political, economic, and military features as well as the relation of a given state to others within the capitalist world order.

Hence, we have arrived in our works at the following theoretical definition of the imperialist class character of a state. “*An imperialist state is a capitalist state whose monopolies and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost dominate other states and nations. As a result they gain extra-profits and other economic, political and/or military advantages from such a relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.*”<sup>12</sup>

Hence, the decisive point is not to look at China’s internal development and the relationship of the different provinces to each other nor to focus only on this or that feature but rather to analyze China’s political, economic, and military development as a whole, to view its *relationship to the world*, to other countries, to other Great Powers.

From a global point of view, it is clear that China plays a

leading role in the world. It is not a state which is dominated – politically, economically or military – by other powers. It rather plays a dominating power itself. We have demonstrated this in our works on China. At this point we limit ourselves to demonstrate China’s dominating role with the help of a few facts and figures.

### China’s role in the capitalist world economy

Irrespective of the fact that China’s domestic economy is unevenly developed and that its labor productivity lags behind that of the old imperialist powers in the West, it plays nevertheless a dominating role in the world economy.

According to latest figures, China had become the leading nation in world manufacturing – the heart of global capitalist value production. By 2019 it accounts for 28.7% of global manufacturing output and in 2020 this share did already grow to 31.3%. The U.S. ranks as second with 16.8%. (See Table 1) Likewise, it has become the leading economy in world exports and is in a nearly equal position with the U.S. in terms of imports. (See Table 2 and 3)

### A backward economy?

Some of our critics argue that such a leading position does not reflect the whole picture since Western monopolies would super-exploit Chinese workers, i.e. while the production takes place in China, the extra-profits end up in the pockets of American, European or Japanese shareholders.<sup>16</sup> However, as we have demonstrated in our works, while such a mechanism exists to a certain degree, it is *not the dominating feature* in the relationship between China and the world economy.

This can be clearly seen in the light of the rapid development of *Chinese* monopolies and *Chinese* billionaires. If a major part of the surplus value, created by Chinese workers, would end up in the pockets of the Western monopoly bourgeoisie, the latter would have kept and extended their lead in global ranking. However, the opposite is the case. It has been mainly the Chinese monopoly bourgeoisie which has appropriated the bulk of the surplus value created by Chinese workers. This becomes very evident from the actual figures of the leading global corporations as well as the world’s billionaires.

As one can see in Table 4, China has become the leading nation among the largest monopolies in the world (as calculated by the *Fortune Global 500* list). We see the same picture when it comes to the global ranking of billionaires. (See Table 5)

Comrade Esteban Mercatante, as we quoted above, points to the uneven development of China’s economy. True, but in the end, the decisive question is, if one takes all factors into account, what is the totality of these elements and their relationship to each other? What is the totality of China’s economic relation with other imperialist powers?

We did already demonstrate above the leading role of

China in various fields of the capitalist world economy. However, as the latest UNIDO report shows, China has become not only a strong but also a very modern economy in the field of modern technology. As Table 6 demonstrates China has rapidly expanded its stock of industrial robots – one of the key areas of economic-technological power. While its share of industrial robots was merely 3.2% in 2010, it increased to 31% within ten years. In contrast, the share of the so-called “Industrialized Economies” – this is a bourgeois economic category for Western imperialist countries – declined in the same period from 95% to 63%. As readers can see in this table, the countries which bourgeois economists call “Developing and Emerging Industrial Economies” – i.e. semi-colonial capitalist countries which are super-exploited by the imperialist monopolies – only hold a negligible quantity of industrial robots (about 6% by now).

This means that by now, China *alone* has half as many industrial robots as all Western imperialist countries – the U.S., Western Europe, Japan, South Korea, Australia, etc. – combined! From this follows, logically, that China has become the world’s leading economy with the largest number of industrial robots operating!

And industrial robots are not an isolated example. In fact, China has become the No. 1 or 2 in various crucial trend-setting industries like Artificial Intelligence, renewable energy, or medical research – to name only a few examples.<sup>20</sup> To make a historical analogy: China is a late bloomer in the current phase of imperialism, as Japan and South Korea were before and as Germany was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In summary, comrade Mercatante is right to say that “today we still have many “Chinas” within China”. But, for Marxists it is not sufficient to point to different features of a phenomenon, that “on one hand there is this and on the other hand there is the opposite”. In order to avoid an eclectic approach, we must identify the *essence*, the main element which is dominating – the backward or the advanced elements of China’s capitalist development? Are the backward features dominating the advanced elements or are the advanced elements dominating the backward? Or, to put it more allegorical, does the city dominate the village or the other way round?

Hegel once stated that „the truth of being is essence.“<sup>21</sup> And, indeed, the decisive issue is to identify the essence of China’s economy? In our opinion, there is no doubt that, despite all its uneven features, China is not only a large economy but also among the world’s leading countries in all relevant fields, including modern technologies. It is a country dominated by a monopoly bourgeoisie which is closely interwoven with the Stalinist-capitalist regime and which plays a leading role in the capitalist world economy.

### China’s military and political role in world

In the field of military power, China has also experienced a rapid process of catching-up. As one can see from the Tables 7, 8 and 9, the U.S. was and remains the largest military power. However, Russia is not far behind and China is catching up. Beijing’s military spending is the second highest in the world after the United States. It far exceeds that of its neighbors and was greater than the combined expenditure of India, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and Tai-

wan in 2019.<sup>22</sup> The renowned *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI) observes: “Chinese spending has risen for 26 consecutive years – the longest streak of uninterrupted increases by any country in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.”<sup>23</sup>

Add to this that, according to the latest Pentagon report, China has now the largest navy in the world. “The PRC has numerically the largest navy in the world with an overall battle force of approximately 355 ships and submarines, including approximately more than 145 major surface combatants. As of 2020, the PLAN is largely composed of modern multi-role platforms.”<sup>27</sup>

Of course, such development must be viewed in context. While the US Navy’s battle force numbers approximately 293 ships as of early 2020, it remains far ahead in the key metric of tonnage, meaning the US Navy operates much larger warships than China. The Chinese navy approaches 2 million tons, while the US Navy tops 4.6 million tons, according to a 2019 estimate by the *Center for International Maritime Security*. However, this difference is also related to different combat missions. “Analysts say part of the reason why China’s navy is lighter is because it is heavily concentrated on building a force to secure regional spheres of influence in what Beijing considers Chinese sovereign waters, like the South China Sea and the East China Sea. The US Navy operates larger vessels, like its 11 aircraft carriers, to project force around the world, and China doesn’t necessarily need a blue-water navy right now to deter access to the South China Sea.”<sup>28</sup>

As a result of its economic as well as military rise, China plays a central role in world politics. This is reflected not only in the fact that it is one of the five veto powers in the United Nations. It is also reflected in the central role of China’s *Belt & Road Initiative* – Beijing’s version of the Marshall Plan, so to say. As it is known, numerous countries of the South on all continents have joined the BRI initiative. However, in the last years a number of members states of the European Union has also started participating in the BRI. Among these are not only all Eastern European states but also others like Italy, Austria, Portugal, Greece and Cyprus.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, China’s transformation is also reflected in the fact that all capitalist governments consider China as a Great Power. Washington has identified Beijing as its main rival – what is this if not a recognition by its chief enemy that China has become a Great Power?! When the imperialist governments of the European Union discuss their foreign policy, the main issues are a) their relations with the U.S. and b) their relations with China. Obviously, imperialism has been sufficiently constructed in China for being recognized as a serious rival by the Western powers!

In summary, it is evident that China has become a leading power in every aspect – in the world economy, in international politics as well as in the global arms race. Such a power is definitely an imperialist state.

**Table 1. Top 10 Countries by Share of Global Manufacturing Output in 2019** <sup>13</sup>

	<i>Share in Global Manufacturing Output</i>
China	28.7% (2020: 31.3%)
U.S.	16.8%
Japan	7.5%
Germany	5.3%
India	3.1%
South Korea	3.0%
Italy	2.1%
France	1.9%
UK	1.8%
Indonesia	1.6%

**Table 2. Share of U.S. and China in World Merchandise Exports, 2003 and 2020** <sup>14</sup>

	2003	2020
U.S.	9.8%	8.4%
China	5.9%	15.2%

**Table 3. Share of U.S. and China in World Merchandise Imports, 2003 and 2020** <sup>15</sup>

	2003	2020
U.S.	17.1%	13.9%
China	5.4%	11.8%

**Table 4. Top 10 Countries with the Ranking of Fortune Global 500 Companies (2020)** <sup>17</sup>

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Companies</i>	<i>Share(in%)</i>
1	China (without Taiwan)	124	24.8%
2	United States	121	24.2%
3	Japan	53	10.6%
4	France	31	6.2%
5	Germany	27	5.4%

**Table 5. China and U.S. Lead the Hurun Global Rich List 2021** <sup>18</sup>

	<i>2021</i>	<i>Share of "Known" Global Billionaires 2021</i>
China	1058	32.8%
U.S.	696	21.6%

## III. ON CHINA'S UNEVENNESS AND VULNERABILITY

Comrade Esteban Mercatante, as quoted above, points to the uneven character of China, i.e. the substantial differences in the economic development of the country's provinces. This is of course true. One can say that, broadly speaking, the development between the China's rich and the poor provinces differs – if we take the economic output per capita as a measure – by about 3:1. In comparison, such a gap between the states within the U.S. do not exceed about 2:1.<sup>30</sup>

The comrade concludes from this: “*Although today neither Germany, nor Japan, nor any other country has China's capabilities to challenge the US, neither do they exhibit such a vulnerability.*” It seems to us that such a conclusion is an exaggeration. Let us explain.

Sure, the differences in China's internal development are an important factor. And, no doubt, these contain the potential for instability and vulnerability. However, in order to judge the vulnerability of a country, it is not sufficient to view the state of its economic development. It is also important to take into account the direction of development, the state of the political regime, the ideological cohesion of the society, etc.

We fully agree with the comrade that China's society is ridden with contradictions and the regime has to work hard to control and contain these. We think that – depending on various domestic as well as international factors – China could experience a social explosion and revolutionary crisis within the next few years.

### Vulnerability of the U.S. and the EU

But – and this is an important “but” – the same is true for various other imperialist countries. In fact, the whole world is pregnant with (pre-)revolutionary and counter-revolutionary developments!<sup>31</sup> Look at the U.S.: in summer 2020, the largest imperialist power experienced a popular uprising after the murder of George Floyd which opened a pre-revolutionary situation.<sup>32</sup> Today, one of the most important issues discussed in all publications of America's bourgeois establishment – from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* to the *Wall Street Journal* – is the threat of a looming civil war. Many fear that such a po-

litical and social explosion could take place by 2024 in the context of the next Presidential elections. The ruling class is deeply divided, the working class and the middle layers are in convulsion. Say yourself, is the U.S. a less vulnerable country than China?!

Or take the European Union. Let us leave aside at this point the current mass protests against the draconic measures of capitalist governments under the pretext of the pandemic.<sup>33</sup> We limit ourselves to state that these developments express a new stage of rupture in the relationship between the capitalist state and large sectors of the popular masses in Europe.

But let us take the European Union as such. We have always emphasized that the European monopoly bourgeoisie has only a chance to play a leading role in world politics and economy if it advances in the formation of an imperialist pan-European state apparatus, i.e. if it creates a kind of European “super-state”. If it fails to do so, it will not be able to challenge other Great Powers. France or Germany alone are no match for the U.S., China or Russia.<sup>34</sup>

It is also worth pointing out that the gap in the capitalist development between the rich and the poor member states of the EU – measured in economic output per capita – is about 3:1, no less than in China.<sup>35</sup>

As “*Brexit*” – Britain's exit from the EU – demonstrated, the European Union is, as a unified imperialist bloc, also highly vulnerable. Yes, it can advance and strengthen its pan-European state structures. But this is by no means guaranteed as the massive tensions between the different EU member states demonstrate. Furthermore, we see that some countries – e.g. in Eastern Europe – have strong leaning to the U.S. In contrast, there are also other countries which have joined China's *Belt & Road Initiative* (e.g. Italy) or which develop closer economic relations with Russia (e.g. Germany's North Stream 2 gas pipeline with Russia). Again, we ask, is the European Union really less vulnerable than China?!

In summary, we agree with comrade Mercatante's argument that China is vulnerable as a capitalist state and economy. But we believe that such a fragility exists also in other imperialist regions.



## Publications of the RCIT

### The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism



**Table 6. Share in Total Stocks of Industrial Robots, 2010 vs. 2020**<sup>19</sup>

	2010	2020
“Industrialized Economies”	95%	63%
China	3.2%	31%
“Developing and Emerging Industrial Economies”, Europe	0.5%	1.2%
“Developing and Emerging Industrial Economies”, Latin America	0.7%	2.2%
“Developing and Emerging Industrial Economies”, Asia-Pacific	0.7%	2.8%

**Table 7. World Nuclear Forces, 2020**<sup>24</sup>

<i>Country</i>	<i>Deployed Warheads</i>	<i>Other Warheads</i>	<i>Total Inventory</i>
USA	1,800	3,750	5,550
Russia	1,625	4,630	6,255
UK	120	105	225
France	280	10	290
China	–	350	350

**Table 8. The U.S. and China as the World’s largest Military Spenders**<sup>25</sup>

	<i>Military Spending in 2020 (in \$Billion)</i>	<i>Growth of Military Spending 2011-2020 (in %)</i>
U.S.	\$778 Billion	-10%
China	\$252 Billion	+76%

**Table 9. The World’s 10 Top Exporters of Weapons, 2016-20**<sup>26</sup>

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Exporter</i>	<i>Global Share (%)</i>
1	U.S.	37%
2	Russia	20%
3	France	8.2%
4	Germany	5.5%
5	China	5.2%

## IV. THE TAIWAN QUESTION IN ITS HISTORICAL AND GEOSTRATEGIC CONTEXT

An important issue in the argumentation of comrade Mercatante is the reference to China's incomplete development as an imperialist power. He points to the lack of military bases abroad (see on this the next chapter) as well as to the Taiwan question. He writes: "Let us add the fact, which in one point is "symbolic" but also of no lesser importance, that we are talking about a state that intends to dispute world domination while at the same time maintaining claims of sovereignty over Taiwan against the support of U.S. imperialism received by the pro-independence government of Taipei. You raise, with some reason, that any Chinese advance on Taiwan could be part of a conflict between powers. But the fact that for China this is a *sine qua non* condition for achieving national integrity is yet another sign of the contradictory nature of its status." This is a crucial question since, as we will see later, comrade Mercatante considers it as possible to take the side of China in a military confrontation with the U.S. on the issue of Taiwan.

At this point we will not deal with the tactical consequences for revolutionaries in such a scenario (see on this the last chapter of the essay at hand). We shall rather discuss some concrete issues related with the Taiwan question. First, it is crucial to view the Taiwan question from a *historical* point of view. Taiwan was annexed by the Qing dynasty in 1683. However, it faced several uprisings by the population who viewed the Empire forces as occupiers. The most important of these was the so-called *Lin Shuangwen* rebellion (1786–1788). Another significant uprising took place in 1862–64 under the leadership of Dai Wansheng.<sup>36</sup>

In 1895 the island was occupied by emerging Japanese imperialism which, after some time, imposed an assimilation program, pushing people to adopt Japanese surnames. The colonial masters faced a seven-year resistance and the rebels proclaimed a short-lived "*Republic of Taiwan*".<sup>37</sup> Finally, with the crushing defeat of the *Empire of the Rising Sun* in 1945, Taiwan was liberated.

However, the Chinese civil war between the peasant army led by Mao's Communist Party and the forces under the command of Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary Kuomintang (KMT) had important consequences for the island. After the Maoist forces defeated Kuomintang on the mainland, Chiang Kai-shek retreated with his supporters to Taiwan. He announced himself as the leader of all of China and proclaimed Taipei as its "*wartime capital*". With the help of U.S. imperialism, Chiang Kai-shek brutally crushed the resistance of the communists and the local population. The most important event – which has become a historic date for the Taiwanese nationalist movement – is the so-called "*2:28 Incident*" referred so because of its start on 28 February 1947. This was a spontaneous popular uprising against the KMT regime demanding some form of autonomy or independence of Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek's troops crushed the rebellion, killing between 18,000 to 28,000 people within a few weeks (according to the findings of an official commission in 1992). This massacre allowed the KMT forces to create a pro-Western military dictatorship which existed until the late 1980s.

### The genuine historical roots of Taiwanese nationalism

One important consequence of Chiang Kai-shek retreat to Taiwan was the fact that he did not only bring much of China's gold reserves and foreign currency reserves to the island but also some 2 million people – mostly soldiers, KMT members and intellectual and business elites. This population group constituted ¼ of the total population and completely dominated the state apparatus. The KMT dictatorship enforced Mandarin as the official language of state and Taiwanese was not allowed to be spoken in schools or the military. It was only decades later that Taiwanese culture became tolerated and the native Taiwanese people were allowed to enter leading positions in the state.

We have undertaken this brief historical excursion because we want to counter the myth – spread by Chinese Stalinism and its supporters – that Taiwan is simply part of the Chinese nation and that all arguments for autonomy or independence of Taiwan would only represent an excuse for an anti-China and pro-U.S. policy. As we have shown, this is simply not true. Han chauvinism has always been a central feature of the Stalinist regime in China and the national minorities in East Turkestan, Tibet and in other regions have suffered a lot from this.<sup>38</sup> When the KMT created its dictatorship with the support of U.S. imperialism, they did not recognize any specific Taiwanese national identity. Quiet the opposite, they promoted Han chauvinism – like their Stalinist rivals – and suppressed the native population. Hence, Taiwanese nationalism and "separatism" is historically not at all a product of pro-U.S. forces.

What is true is that more recently, Washington has indeed begun to support Taiwanese separatist sentiments. They are doing this because of two reasons. First, Taiwanese nationalism has become the dominant force. According to a recently published survey by the *Election Study Center at National Chengchi University* in Taipei, the majority of the population identify themselves as Taiwanese nationals and are opposed to a unification with mainland China. More than 60% of the island's 23 million people identify as solely Taiwanese and only 2% identified as Chinese, down from 25% three decades ago.<sup>39</sup> This process is also reflected in the fact that the *Democratic Progressive Party* – a bourgeois Taiwanese-nationalist force – has won the parliamentary elections in the recent past several times.<sup>40</sup>

Secondly, U.S. imperialism changed its approach to China about a decade ago. As Beijing became a Great Power which Washington could no longer dictate its policy, the U.S. Administration – beginning with Obama (the famous "*Pivot to Asia*") – changed their approach to Taiwan. Giving up the hope to influence China's policy, it adopted an aggressive approach of supporting Taiwan's drive to independence in order to weaken Beijing. However, this does not change the fact that Taiwanese nationalism has its genuine historical roots which has nothing to do with American imperialism and which, in fact, was brutally suppressed by the pro-U.S. dictatorship of the KMT for a long time.

### An issue subordinated to the inter-imperialist rivalry

For all these reasons, we think that Marxists have no reason to parrot Beijing's propaganda that the "reunification of China", i.e. the annexation of Taiwan against the will of the local population, would be a progressive demand.

However, this does not mean that socialists should "defend Taiwan against China". Why? Because the Taiwan question has become an issue which is *subordinated to the rivalry between the U.S. and China*. It is clear that Taiwan only exists as a de-facto independent state because of its political and military support by Washington. For the U.S. Taiwan is nothing but an instrument to weaken its Chinese rival. Hence, Marxists reject the reactionary Western propaganda that the U.S. would support Taiwan in order to "defend democracy".

In fact, both U.S. as well as Chinese imperialism want to control the island for political, economic and geostrategic reasons. Han chauvinism has become the most important ideological pillar of the Stalinist-capitalist regime and, consequently, the "reunification of Taiwan" is a paramount goal. In addition, control of Taiwan is essential for domination of the South China Sea as well as the East China Sea. The domination of these seas in turn is precondition to control the world as this region is the most important maritime route for world trade. 60% of global maritime trade and more than 22% of total global trade passes through the South China Sea. Hence, it is only logical that both Beijing as well as Washington are determined to control this region. And in order to achieve this, control of Taiwan is necessary.

Furthermore, there are also direct economic factors which make both sides determined to control the island. Taiwan is a global leader in several sectors of the high-technology industries. Taiwan's leading chip producer (TSMC) alone accounts for 54% of the global semiconductor market share. Up to 90% of the semiconductors applied by US technological companies – including Apple, Nvidia, and Qualcomm – rely on Taiwanese manufacturing. Hence, any Chinese attack on the island would have devastating consequences not only for Taiwan itself but also, indirectly, for U.S. corporations. So, both camps have also very good economic reasons to control the island.<sup>41</sup>

Let us note in passing that in the period of China's civil war until 1949 and later when the U.S. supported the KMT dictatorship, Marxists took a different approach. As our movement has elaborated, China became a deformed workers state, i.e. a country with a planned, post-capitalist economy and politically dominated by a Stalinist bureaucracy.<sup>42</sup> Naturally, socialists had to defend such a state in any confrontation with a capitalist country. Hence, Marxists had to take the side of the People's Republic of China in all confrontations with the Taiwanese KMT regime or U.S. imperialism – like e.g. during the civil war, the First and the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (in 1954-55 resp. 1958).

However, this situation did dramatically change with the historical defeat of the Chinese working class in June 1989 (the *Tiananmen Square massacre*) and the consequential capitalist restoration in the early 1990s.<sup>43</sup> It did change even more when China became an imperialist Great Power in the wake of the Great Recession in 2008-09.

## 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.

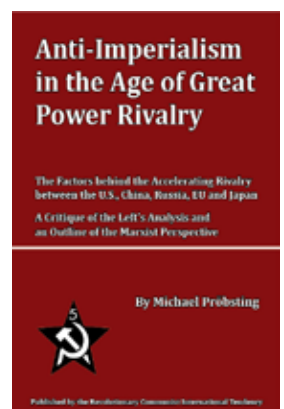
*Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is 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 demonstrates that most of these orga-

nizations fail to understand the nature of the Great Power rivalry and, consequently, are not able to take an internationalist and revolutionary stance.

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

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



## V. IS CHINA A GREAT POWER WITHOUT IMPERIALIST FEATURES?

Let us now deal with another important argument of comrade Mercatante. This argument can be summarized as follows. China is an “imperialist state under construction” but not an imperialist power yet because it lacks several important features. Such features are a lack of military bases abroad, the absence of occupation of other countries, the fact that its conflict with the U.S. takes place in its bordering seas, etc. To quote the comrade in his own words:

*“On the other hand, and this is not a minor issue, after World War II many of the imperialist powers on both warring sides reconstructed their status as powers as part of a system of alliances that led them to recognize a subordinate position with respect to the United States. Today China, which since the Nixon voyage maintained for decades a privileged relationship with the US, finds itself outside of that alliance system, and at odds with it, beyond China’s place in global governance institutions such as the IMF or the World Bank, where it cooperates with the interests of global capital. I emphasize the category of imperialism in the making to point out that, as other scholars of China observe, China is at an early stage of its imperialist deployment. Let us agree that China so far did not show itself as an occupying force outside its territory (although within its territory it responds harshly to any claims of oppressed nationalities), and that the consolidation of its ascendancy over other nations, especially beyond its borders, is supported by economic means such as investments through the BRI, bilateral credits, etc. It has no network of military bases abroad, and most of its military force is devoted to border conflicts. Back, it is true that for many imperialist powers some of these things don’t happen either; but through NATO even the weaker EU military powers actively intervene in dependent and semi-colonial countries much more than China does.”*

It seems to us that the comrade, while pointing out correctly several important features, does not take into account other, no less important, development. Let us explain.

It is true that China has currently only one military bases in Djibouti and deploys troops in South Sudan. No doubt, it wants to increase its foreign presence, but these are still plans for the future. Likewise, it is correct that China is not occupying other countries and that most of its military force is devoted to border conflicts.

All these features point to a very important characteristic of China as a Great Power: it is a *late coming imperialist state*. When China transformed into an imperialist power about a decade ago, the whole world was already divided in various spheres of influence, other powers did possess a strong army and had foreign military operations etc. Likewise, traditional imperialist global economic institutions like the IMF and the World Bank were dominated by the American and European imperialists.

In the political, financial and economic sphere, China has already succeeded in pushing back the Western dominance. Its *Belt & Road Initiative* allows Beijing crucial economic and political influence in numerous countries. Its control over the *Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank* – an

institution with 105 member states – as well as its own bilateral financial operations have effectively ended the long-time hegemony of the IMF and the World Bank. In addition, China dominates the newly formed *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership* (RCEP) which includes 15 East Asian and Pacific nations. RCEP is now the world’s largest trading bloc, representing around 30% of world GDP. It is – to quote UNCTAD – “set to become (...) a new centre of gravity for global trade.”<sup>44</sup>

As comrade Mercatante point out, China does not have foreign military operations. But other imperialist powers also had no foreign military operations (Germany from 1945 until the late 1990) and Japan until today. The comrade might object that these countries have been part of the Western military alliance system dominated by the U.S. But we saw similar developments also before World War II. Germany and the U.S. – as late coming imperialist powers – had only a few military operations abroad and occupied only a few other countries before 1914.<sup>45</sup> Both states had only a few colonies (Germany in Africa, and the U.S. in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, etc.). But their global influence as imperialist powers did not result primarily from their foreign military operations or the occupation of other countries. Germany after 1919 until 1938 didn’t have any foreign colonies or operations.

The later example is interesting also in regard to the suggestion by comrade Mercatante that China’s is no imperialist power yet as it has not even achieved its national reunification. However, if we look to other examples, we see that this is not a unique feature of China. Germany – in the period after the Versailles Treaty in 1919 and the later 1930s – had to give up control over several territories which had been part of its empire for a long time (e.g. Rhineland, Upper Silesia, Saarland, etc.). A similar process did take place after 1945 when large parts of German territories were annexed by other countries and the German population expelled. This situation exists until today. Likewise, Russia occupied the four southernmost Kuril Islands after World War II and keeps them under control until today – against the vehement protest of Japan.

### The key role of East and South-East Asia

Comrade Mercatante points to the defensive or “weak” character of China since it has not only no colonies but is even forced to focus its military operations to its bordering seas. Formally, this argument is correct. But it misses a crucial point without which, in our opinion, it is impossible to understand China’s role in world politics and, more generally, the whole world situation as such.

This point is the fact that in the course of the last two decades, Asia – more precisely East Asia, South-East Asia and South Asia – have become the most important region for global capitalist value production. Hence, albeit it is true that China operates its military largely in the Asian-Pacific region, it means that China strives for domination of the most important region of the world economy.



We already see an indication for this if we look at the regional shares of the global GDP – albeit this is a less precise measure to judge the economic weight of countries as it includes also unproductive and speculative sectors of the economy. Still, as we can see in Table 10, East Asia (without China!), South-East Asia and South Asia have a combined GDP which is larger than that of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia taken together.

However, the real weight of Asia becomes more visible if we look at the regional share of global manufacturing, i.e. the sector which creates most of the capitalist value. By now, Asia creates more than half of global manufacturing output. As we can see in Table 11, China, Japan, South Korea and the South-East Asian ASEAN countries alone have a combined share in global industrial output of 38.5%.

*“Latest statistics from the United Nations show that Asia’s industrial value added rose markedly from US\$2.7 trillion in 2000 to US\$9.4 trillion in 2019, at an average annual nominal growth of 6.7%. During this period, Asia’s share of world industrial value-added climbed from 35.9% to 50.9%, in contrast to a decline in the US and Western Europe. In particular, China’s share rocketed from 6.4% to 24.9%, while the share of ASEAN also rose from 2.8% to 4.8%. Japan’s share declined as*

*the country’s industrial activities were relocated to lower-cost production sites in Asia and beyond. From the RCEP perspective, the 15 members had a combined share of 40.2% by 2019, up from 29.4% in 2000. Further liberalization under the RCEP is set to further such development in the next decade.”*<sup>47</sup>

These figures demonstrate beyond doubt that the region under dispute – East Asia, South Asia and South-East Asia – have become the center of world capitalist production and trade. To put it more bluntly: the influence of the U.S. and its numerous military bases on all continents are not as decisive as many people believe. If East and South-East Asia (excluding China) have a larger output than all other non-imperialist regions in the world combined, the issue of world domination is primarily decided not in Europe, Africa, Latin America or the Middle East. It is decided on the Asian continent.

Therefore, China’s struggle for domination of its bordering regions is objectively not only a defensive struggle. It is, automatically for the reasons mentioned above, *also* a struggle for world domination. The same is true for the U.S. Of course, it *“Pivot to Asia”* reflects its imperialist aggressiveness. But, at the same time, there is no doubt: if Washington loses Asia to China, its leading role in the world is over. Lose Asia and the game is over!

**Table 10. Regional Shares of Global GDP in 2019, in Market Exchange Rates**<sup>46</sup>

<i>Region</i>	<i>Share of Global GDP</i>
North America	26.6%
Europe (excl. UK)	19.9%
China	17%
Asia-Pacific	14.1%
South Asia	3.8%
Latin America	5.9%
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	3.5%
Middle East	3.2%
Africa	2.7%
UK	3.3%

**Table 11. Regional Shares of Global Industrial Value Added in 2019**<sup>48</sup>

<i>Region</i>	<i>Share</i>
China	24.9%
United States	16.6%
Northeast Asia	8.8%
Japan	6.4%
South Korea	2.4%
Western Europe	8.7%
Southeast Asia (ASEAN)	4.8%
Oceania	1.6%

## VI. CAN CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT AS AN IMPERIALIST POWER BE ABORTED?

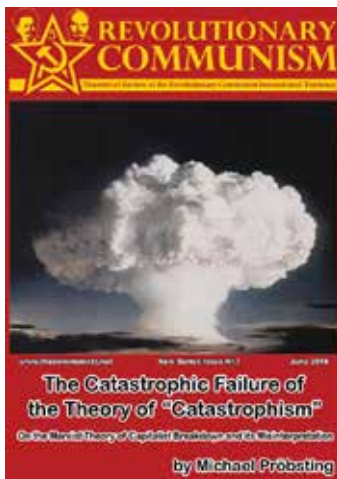
Another interesting thought by comrade Mercatante is his statement that China imperialist development could be aborted. *"I believe that we are still observing the transformation of the Chinese state into an imperialist one -crossed by numerous internal contradictions that could abort this transformation, as I point out in the articles- and that it would not be correct to take it as a consummated process. In the debates of the early twentieth century, the characterization of the powers as imperialist left no room for doubt about the warlike and rapacious character that these states were openly deploying and whose capacities to deploy were not "under construction" but fully deployed."*

We think that this is not true. Of course, China, as a capitalist country, is ridden with all kind of contradictions typical for an authoritarian-ruled class society. But as long as the Chinese working class does not succeed to overthrow the Stalinist-capitalist ruling class, China will remain a strong capitalist, i.e. imperialist power. There is only one possibility which could, indeed, liquidate the imperialist character of China: *a decisive defeat in a major war*, resulting in the destruction of the country's capital stock and its economic infrastructure.

Such a development is not a theoretical but a very concrete possibility. As we have pointed out repeatedly, the

U.S. and China are inevitable moving towards a military confrontation. Leading figures in the Pentagon estimate that a war between the two Great Powers could happen until 2024 or 2026.<sup>49</sup> This does not mean that such a confrontation must automatically result in World War III. Such a war could have a limited character and a world war might happen at a later point.

We have seen a similar scenario, albeit on a technologically much less developed level, when the Western imperialist powers defeated Germany in World War I and imposed draconic peace condition on it via the Versailles Treaty. At that time Lenin and Communist International tended to view Germany no longer as an imperialist but rather a semi-colonial country.<sup>50</sup> One can discuss if the communists were correct on this issue, and I am aware that this question is disputed among Marxists. (I personally tend to believe that indeed Germany could not be considered as imperialist in the years 1919 to 1923.) The point here is not to discuss such a historical issue but to give an example from the past in order to demonstrate that such a transformation from an imperialist power to a non-imperialist country is indeed by no means excluded. But it does not happen easily but requires the defeat of such a state in a major war.



### NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

## The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of "Catastrophism"

By Michael Pröbsting, May 2018

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

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format

## VII. CHINA, IMPERIALIST WARS AND REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

We shall conclude this essay by discussing the issue of revolutionary tactics. As we already indicated in the discussion with comrade Mercatante, we consider the issue of China's class character not only as an important theoretical issue but also as a highly practical and political question. For all the reasons mentioned above, the rivalry between the Great Powers – and in particular the conflict between the U.S. and China – has become a key axis of the world political situation. At the moment this conflict takes the form of sanctions, trade wars, military threats and provocations, diplomatic maneuvers, "patriotic" ideological campaigns, etc. Given the political and economic decay of the capitalist world order, these conflicts will no doubt escalate and sooner or later result in wars between the Great Powers.

The RCIT has always insisted that it is the duty of Marxists today to educate and organize the workers vanguard on the basis of a *consistent anti-imperialist position*. This means that socialists must oppose *all* Great Powers, that they must reject all forms of chauvinist aggression and campaigns, all forms of militarism, all forms of ideological campaign in favor of one or the other imperialist camp, etc. In case of a war, as we noted above, socialists need to take a revolutionary defeatist position against all imperialist powers and try to exploit the circumstances of war conditions for working towards the overthrow of the imperialist governments and their allies.

The major weakness of the position of comrade Mercatante and his comrades in the PTS/FT is, in our opinion, that they do not take such a position. Quiet the opposite, the comrade, in his latest contribution, explicitly leaves the door open to the possibility that he resp. his organization might take a position in defense of China in a conflict with the U.S.

*"Regarding the war scenarios, although the possible conflicts could be the ones you point out, I believe that the type of war in*

*question requires considering more elements such as the type of alliances that are formed. I agree in warning against the chauvinist tendencies and the preparations of the ruling classes, both in China and the U.S., to present any clash as a "defense", to present any clash as a "defense of the nation against external aggression", in the first case, or a "defense of democracy" in the second, as they showed weeks ago with the clownish conference for democracy in which Taipei was one of the great guests of the US. But, along with this warning, and aware that a conflagration is likely to occur in which the correct position is to pronounce the defeat of both sides, I believe that this ultimately cannot be determined a priori, but by a "concrete analysis of the concrete situation"."*

In our opinion, such an approach lacks clarity and is not able to prepare the workers vanguard for the major confrontation between the imperialist powers. In fact, the comrade thinks that a conflict between the U.S. and China about Taiwan is, from the side of Beijing, "*a sine qua non condition for achieving national integrity.*" While he does not say so explicitly, it seems to us that he resp. his comrades in the PTS/FT would take the side of China in such a conflict over Taiwan.

### **A military confrontation over Taiwan: the most likely war scenario**

For socialists, it is crucial in itself to state a clear position on the issue of a war over Taiwan. It is evident that Taiwan is already now one of the key issues of world politics and it will become even more so in the next years. This is "*as safe as the Bank of England*" – to use a British proverb. The reasons are, as indicated above, politically, economically, as well as geostrategically.

From the point of view of the regime in Beijing, Taiwan plays a central role in the "*great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation*" (Xi). Patriotic campaigns for the recapture of the

## **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](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net)

island are the best way to rally large sectors of the Chinese population behind the regime. Control over small, unpopulated island (and often even artificially created) in the South China Sea has much less patriotic appeal. This, of course, also implies that achieving the goal of “reuniting the motherland” becomes a *conditio sine qua non* for the Xi regime. Failing in conquering Taiwan in the next few years would result in the loss of Xi’s ideological legitimacy and, most likely, the beginning of his downfall.

U.S. imperialism has also strong ideological interests in the Taiwan issue. Washington can sell its ideological campaign of “defending democracy” when it relates to an island with 23 million people. This is a cause which – at least in the eyes of the pro-imperialist sectors of the domestic audience – could justify sending U.S. warships close to China’s borders and engaging in a war. It is much less attractive – even for the patriotic bourgeois and middle class layers – to “defend democracy” in a war about some uninhabitable rockets in the sea.

Furthermore, as we mentioned already above, Taiwan is of huge economical and geostrategic importance for both camps. For China, conquering Taiwan opens the way to the Pacific. For the U.S. it is an “*unsinkable aircraft carrier*” to contain its main rival. Add to this Taiwan’s leading role in various sectors of computer manufacturing.

All these factors put the Taiwan question in the center of the inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S. and China. It is impermissible for socialists not to take already now a clear and unambiguous position on this issue. The task is to educate the workers vanguard about the nature of this conflict, about the real class interests of all sides, about the necessary approach on the issues of sanctions, trade wars, military conflicts, ideological campaigns, etc.

We in the RCIT consider it as indispensable to state clearly that socialists must support neither the Western nor the Chinese imperialist camp. They have to oppose both the Western imperialist propaganda lie of “*defending Taiwan and its democracy*” as well as the Chinese imperialist propaganda lie of “*reuniting the motherland*”. Fundamental opposition against all forms of economic, diplomatic and military aggression of both camps – this can be the only legitimate program for consistent anti-imperialists!

#### What would a potential war scenario mean for socialists?

Unfortunately, the comrades of the PTS/FT lack such a clarity. Their approach is basically: “*Let’s wait and see. We will develop our tactics if we see the concrete nature of the war (i.e. when it has already started).*” In our opinion such an approach is a very serious mistake.

Imagine how a war over Taiwan could start. On 20 January, for example, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) – according to a state news agency – “*expelled a US warship that trespassed Chinese territorial waters in the South China Sea. (...) On Thursday, the USS Benfold guided missile destroyer illegally entered the Chinese territorial waters of Xisha Islands without authorization from the Chinese government, Senior Colonel Tian Junli, spokesperson at the PLA Southern Theater Command, said in a statement on the day.*”<sup>51</sup>

This was the first time that the PLA made such a move. It didn’t end in a military confrontation. It might also not do so the next time. But sooner or later, such conflicts will

result in a gun battle and losses of lives and material. Since neither side can retreat, for the reasons mentioned above, such confrontations will sooner or later result in a near-war and, ultimately, a war. We might have in the not-too-distant future a similar scenario like the *Cuban Missile Crisis* of October 1962 when the U.S. and the Soviet Union – at the height of Cold War – came close to nuclear conflict. If a similar situation will occur in the South China Sea, “*the world will stand still*”.

Do the comrades of the PTS/FT intend to start making a “*concrete analysis of the concrete situation*” only in the midst of such a dramatic situation? This would be too late. Such a situation will be confusing, full of contradictory information and the public will be paralyzed by the danger of a major war. We are aware that Marxists are not masters of crystal ball gazing, that there are conflicts and class struggles which can develop in an unforeseen way. However, the warmongering between China and the U.S. about Taiwan is building up since years now – such a war will not be a sudden or surprising event.

Just remember the tragic days in July 1914 when the leadership of the II. International was confused and helpless when the Great Powers mobilized their armies, and a major war was looming. Sure, the right-wing revisionist forces were social-chauvinist defenders of their imperialist fatherlands by heart and they didn’t care about the concrete circumstances how this crisis evolved. But the center – with Hugo Haase, Karl Kautsky, Jean Jaurès, Édouard Vaillant and others – consisted of socialists who were sincerely opposed to the imperialist war. But they had no clear understanding neither of the class character of the war nor of the criteria for elaborating a correct program and tactics, etc. As a result, they succumbed to the chauvinist pressure of the ruling class and the public opinion and, in the end, reluctantly joined the camp of social-chauvinism against their initial honest intentions.<sup>52</sup>

In one of the last articles before his death, Lenin emphasized – drawing the lesson of 1914 – the difficulties for revolutionaries at the outbreak of a major war. “*We must explain the real situation to the people, show them that war is hatched in the greatest secrecy, and that the ordinary workers’ organisations, even if they call themselves revolutionary organisations, are utterly helpless in face of a really impending war. We must explain to the people again and again in the most concrete manner possible how matters stood in the last war, and why they could not have been otherwise. We must take special pains to explain that the question of “defence of the fatherland” will inevitably arise, and that the overwhelming majority of the working people will inevitably decide it in favour of their bourgeoisie. Therefore, first, it is necessary to explain what “defence of the fatherland” means. Second, in connection with this, it is necessary to explain what “defeatism” means. Lastly, we must explain that the only possible method of combating war is to preserve existing, and to form new, illegal organisations in which all revolutionaries taking part in a war carry on prolonged anti-war activities—all this must be brought into the forefront.*”<sup>53</sup>

Such an advice has not lost its relevance for revolutionaries today as we can hear, again, the war-drums of imperialism and chauvinist propaganda! An escalation about Taiwan - up to a full-scale war - can and will unleash major developments and forces in history that will put extreme pressure on Marxists. Entering such a situation without preparation means to risk zigzags resulting in major defeat.



In our opinion, there is no reason why the comrades of the PTS/FT should not be clear and explicit in stating which position they would take in a military confrontation between the U.S. and China over Taiwan. The class interests of both camps, the issues at stake, all this is pretty clear. If the comrades consider China not as an imperialist power “yet” and if they consider Taiwan as a legitimate part of the Chinese nation, it is only logical that they will side with China in such a conflict. Of course, we do not intend to push the comrades towards such a position! In our opinion, this would be effectively mean supporting one of the Great Powers, i.e. such a policy would represent a form of pro-Chinese social-imperialism.<sup>54</sup> But we think that there is no justification for the comrades to limit themselves to algebraic formulation and confine themselves to make a “concrete analysis of the concrete situation” in the future when such a war scenario emerges.

Such an approach can leave the workers vanguard only confused and unprepared. It is much too late to start elaborating a “concrete analysis of the concrete situation” only when a war is about to start. Marxists have to think and to plan in advance. They have to help the workers vanguard to politically, ideologically and practically prepare for such a war which, in fact, is inevitable if they proletariat does not overthrow global imperialism in time.

#### **The class interests are the decisive issue!**

For Marxists, the decisive issue is not where exactly a war takes place. It is neither what exactly is the formal issue of dispute. And it is also not relevant which side fires the first shot. Lenin and the *Communist International* – and later Trotsky’s *Fourth International* – always defended the position that the decisive issue in determining the character of a war is the class character of the forces involved. In a conflict between a (semi-)colonial people and an imperialist power, Marxists take the side of the former. (We leave aside the scenario where such a country acts as a proxy for another imperialist power.) In conflicts between imperial-

ist Great Powers, socialists can not support either side under any circumstances – irrespective where the war starts or what is the issue under dispute!

The Bolsheviks were very clear on this question. In a resolution, adopted at the famous *Berne Conference* in late February and early March 1915, which helped the party to formulate its tactics on the imperialist war, the Russian revolutionaries stated: “*The question of which group dealt the first military blow or first declared war is immaterial in any determination of the tactics of socialists. Both sides’ phrases on the defence of the fatherland, resistance to enemy invasion, a war of defence, etc., are nothing but deception of the people.*”<sup>55</sup>

V.I. Lenin and G. Zinoviev – the exiled leaders of the Bolsheviks during World War I – elaborated the Marxist approach very clearly in their major work “*Socialism and War*”. “*The epoch of 1789-1871 left deep tracts and revolutionary memories. Before feudalism, absolutism and alien oppression were overthrown, the development of the proletarian struggle for Socialism was out of the question. When speaking of the legitimacy of “defensive” war in relation to the wars of such an epoch, Socialists always had in mind precisely these objects, which amounted to revolution against medievalism and serfdom. By “defensive” war Socialists always meant a “just” war in this sense (W. Liebknecht once expressed himself precisely in this way). Only in this sense have Socialists regarded, and now regard, wars “for the defence of the fatherland”, or “defensive” wars, as legitimate, progressive and just. For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, India on England, Persia or China on Russia, and so forth, those would be “just”, “defensive” wars, irrespective of who attacked first; and every Socialist would sympathise with the victory of the oppressed, dependent, unequal states against the oppressing, slaveowning, predatory “great” powers. But picture to yourselves a slaveowner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slaveowner who owned 200 slaves for a more “just” distribution of slaves. Clearly, the application of the term “defensive” war, or war “for the defence of the fatherland” in such a case would be historically false, and in practice would be sheer deception of the common people, of philistines, of ignorant people, by the astute slaveown-*

# **China: Restoration of Capitalism and Transformation into an Imperialist Power**

**A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power**

**By Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)**

**Order the pamphlet via our contact address: [rcit@thecommunists.net](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net)**

ers. Precisely in this way are the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie deceiving the peoples by means of "national ideology and the term "defence of the fatherland in the present war between slave-owners for fortifying and strengthening slavery." <sup>56</sup>

The decisive issue in determining the character of a war is the class character of the participants and their respective class interests. Hence, a clear analysis of the class character of China – is it an imperialist power or not ("yet") – is a precondition for taking a correct stance in any confrontation. Trotsky also emphasized the necessity for Marxists to make such a clear analysis in a programmatic Manifesto published in 1940, after the beginning of World War II: „To teach the workers correctly to understand the class character of the state imperialist, colonial, workers' – and the reciprocal relations between them, as well as the inner contradictions in each of them, enables the workers to draw correct practical conclusions in situation.“ <sup>57</sup>

In our opinion it is decisive for socialists to remove any doubts and any lack of clarity. It is wrong to consider China as an imperialist state "not yet". No, it is already such a Great Power. Such an analysis is the precondition for educating and preparing the workers vanguard in a consistent anti-imperialist spirit. No support for either imperialist camp – under no circumstances! The RCIT has summarized this program in the slogan: *Workers and Oppressed: Fight all Great Powers in East and West!*

Irrespective of our differences with comrade Mercatante and the PTS/FT, we consider this debate as highly important and fruitful. In fact, the central place of the rivalry between the U.S. and China in the current world political situation makes the continuation of such a discussion an urgent necessity for Marxists!

## Books of the RCIT

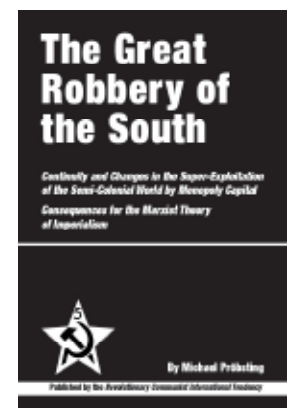
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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



## FOOTNOTES

1 The RCIT has dealt on numerous occasions with the inter-imperialist rivalry of the Great Powers. See e.g. RCIT: World Perspectives 2021-22: Entering a Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation, 22 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2021-22/>; see also our book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also the following two pamphlets by the same author: "A Really Good Quarrel". US-China Alaska Meeting: The Inter-Imperialist Cold War Continues, 23 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/us-china-alaska-meeting-shows-continuation-of-inter-imperialist-cold-war/>; *Servants of Two Masters. Stalinism and the New Cold War between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West*, 10 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/servants-of-two-masters-stalinism-and-new-cold-war/>; for more works on this issue see these sub-pages: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/>.

2 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power. See on this e.g. the following works of Michael Pröbsting: *Chinese Imperialism and the World Economy*, an essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6\\_179-1](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1); China's

transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>; China's Emergence as an Imperialist Power (Article in the US journal 'New Politics'), in: "New Politics", Summer 2014 (Vol:XV-1, Whole #: 57); How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China's State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>.

3 For our programmatic approach on inter-imperialist conflicts 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 chapters XVI to XX in the above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*. See also the German-language essay by the same author: *Lenin, die Bolschewiki und ihr Kampf gegen den imperialistischen Krieg. „Umwandlung des imperialistischen Krieges in den Bürgerkrieg“*, <https://www.thecommunists.net/home/deutsch/lenin-und-der-imperialistische-krieg/>

4 You can read several contributions of Esteban Mercatante on China in Spanish (<https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Esteban-Mercatante>) as well as in English (see e.g. <https://www.leftvoice.org/china-and-imperialism-elements-of-the-debate/> and <https://www.leftvoice.org/a-tour-of-views-on-chinas-rela->

# 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

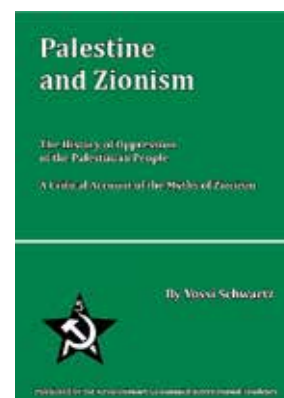
In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz provides a critical analysis of numerous Zionist myths about the Jews as well as about the Palestinians. He demonstrates that the Zionist claim that Palestine is the historic homeland of the Jews lacks any serious basis.

*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/>





tionship-to-imperialism/). His latest book is “*El imperialismo en tiempos de desorden mundial*.” (<https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/El-imperialismo-en-tiempos-de-desorden-mundial>)

5 The exchange between the two partly took initially place on the Marxmail list (it can be read [here](#)), and later in the form of a direct dialogue. The PTS translated and republished this direct exchange on its website in the section “*Ideas de Izquierda*”. It can be read here: <https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/El-caracter-de-China-y-sus-consecuencias-para-la-politica-revolucionaria>. Meanwhile the text has also been translated and published in Portuguese language on the website of the Brazilian comrades of the PTS (<http://www.esquerdadiario.com.br/O-caracter-da-China-e-suas-consequencias-para-a-politica-revolucionaria>). The RCIT has republished this exchange on its website in English as well as in Spanish and Portuguese language. (See <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/debate-on-capitalism-in-china/>) All quotes of Esteban Mercatante are taken from this exchange if not indicated otherwise.

6 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Die Naturphilosophie*. Einleitung; in: *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, Teil I, Werke 8, Frankfurt a. M. 1986, p. 284. (our translation). Likewise, Hegel stated in his “*Science of Logic*”: “*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)

7 Karl Marx: *Grundrisse [Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft of 1857-58)]*; in: MECW 28, pp. 37-38

8 V.I.Lenin: *Conspectus of Hegel’s Science of Logic* (1914); in: *Collected Works Vol. 38*, pp. 157-158

9 Abram Deborin: *Lenin als revolutionärer Dialektiker* (1925); in: Nikolai Bucharin/Abram Deborin: *Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus*, Frankfurt a.M. 1974, p. 136 [our translation]

10 Georg Lukács: *The Marxism of Rosa Luxemburg*, in: *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1923), The MIT Press, Cambridge 1971, p. 27

11 V. I. Lenin: *Conspectus of Hegel’s Science of Logic* (1914); in: *Collected Works Vol. 38*, p. 220

12 See on this e.g. the above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*, p. 51; see also, by the same author, another book: *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, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>; *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, 1 August 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/semi-colonial-intermediate-powers-and-the-theory-of-sub-imperialism/>

13 Felix Richter: *These are the top 10 manufacturing countries in the world*, World Economic Forum, 25.2.2020, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/countries-manufacturing-trade-exports-economics/>; output measured on a value-added basis in current U.S. dollars. The figure for China in 2020 is taken from United Nations Industrial Development Organization: *Industrial Development Report 2022. The Future of Industrialization in a Post-Pandemic World*, Vienna 2021, p. 111

14 WTO: *World Trade Statistical Review 2021*, p. 56

15 WTO: *World Trade Statistical Review 2021*, p. 56

16 See on this e.g. Sam King: *Imperialism and the development myth. How rich countries dominate in the twenty-first century*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2021. The author of this book, a self-proclaimed Marxist academic, strongly

denies China’s imperialist character and takes issue, among others, with my works on imperialism in general and China in particular (pp. 76-82, 104, 226); See also a thoughtful but ultimately wrong analysis by Minqi Li: *China: Imperialism or Semi-Periphery?* In: *Monthly Review*, Volume 73, Issue 3 (July-August 2021), <https://monthlyreview.org/2021/07/01/china-imperialism-or-semi-periphery/>.

17 Fortune Global 500, August 2020, <https://fortune.com/global500/> (the figures for the share is our calculation)

18 Hurun Global Rich List 2021, 2.3.2021, <https://www.hurun.net/en-US/Info/Detail?num=LWAS8B997XUP>

19 United Nations Industrial Development Organization: *Industrial Development Report 2022. The Future of Industrialization in a Post-Pandemic World*, Vienna 2021, p. 109

20 See on these e.g. Daitian Li, Tony W. Tong, and Yangao Xiao: *Is China Emerging as the Global Leader in AI?* 18 February 2021, <https://hbr.org/2021/02/is-china-emerging-as-the-global-leader-in-ai>; Dominic Chiu: *The East Is Green: China’s Global Leadership in Renewable Energy*, <https://www.csis.org/east-green-chinas-global-leadership-renewable-energy>; Sintia Radu: *U.S., China Compete for Medical Research Leadership*, 27 September 2019, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2019-09-27/china-threatens-the-us-leadership-position-in-medical-research>

21 Hegel’s *Science of Logic* (Translated by A.V. Miller; Foreword by J.N. Findlay), Allen & Unwin, London 1969, p. 389

22 Matthew P. Funaiolo, Brian Hart: *Understanding China’s 2021 Defense Budget*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 5, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-chinas-2021-defense-budget>

23 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: *SI-PRI Yearbook 2021. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Summary, pp. 12-13

24 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: *SI-PRI Yearbook 2021. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Summary, p. 17

25 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: *SI-PRI Yearbook 2021. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Summary, p. 12

26 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: *SI-PRI Yearbook 2021. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Summary, p. 15

27 Pentagon: *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2021. Annual Report to Congress*, p. 48

28 Wesley Rahn: *China has the world’s largest navy – what now for the US?* Deutsche Welle, 21.10.2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/china-navy-vs-us-navy/a-55347120>

29 Chris Devonshire-Ellis: *European Union Member States Who Joined China’s Belt And Road Initiative Are Seeing Their Exports Rise Faster By Nearly 5% More Than Those Who Have Not*, Nov 20, 2020, <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2020/11/20/european-union-member-states-who-joined-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-are-seeing-their-exports-rise-faster-by-nearly-5-more-than-those-who-have-not/>

30 See on this Wikipedia: *List of Chinese administrative divisions by GDP per capita*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Chinese\\_administrative\\_divisions\\_by\\_GDP\\_per\\_capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_administrative_divisions_by_GDP_per_capita); Wikipedia: *List of states and territories of the United States by GDP*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_states\\_and\\_territories\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_by\\_GDP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_states_and_territories_of_the_United_States_by_GDP) (both accessed on 21.1.2022)

31 See on this e.g. the RCIT document: *World Perspectives 2021-22: Entering a Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation*, 22 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2021-22/>. This document also contains a number of links to revolutionary developments in individual countries.

32 See on this the compilation of RCIT documents on the popular uprising after the murder of George Floyd: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/articles-on->



[uprising-after-murder-of-george-floyd/](#)

33 The RCIT has analysed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February 2020 we have published about 125 pamphlets, essays, articles and statements plus a book which are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>.

34 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Reformist Pipe Dream of a "Socialist" European Union, 01.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/is-a-socialist-transformation-of-the-imperialist-eu-possible/>; by the same author: Marxism, the European Union and Brexit; August 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-and-brexit/>; Michael Pröbsting: Does the EU Represent "Bourgeois Democratic Progress"? Once again, on the EU and the Tactics of the Working Class, 16.09.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-brexit-article/>; The British Left and the EU-Referendum: The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism. An analysis of the left's failure to fight for an independent, internationalist and socialist stance both against British as well as European imperialism, August 2015 <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/british-left-and-eu-referendum/>; Americanise or bust'. Contradictions and challenges of the imperialist project of European unification (2004), in: Fifth International Vol.1, No.2, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-imperialism-americanise-or-bust/>; Die Frage der Vereinigung Europas im Lichte der marxistischen Theorie. Zur Frage eines supranationalen Staatsapparates des EU-Imperialismus und der marxistischen Staatslehre. Die Diskussion zur Lösung der Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa bei Lenin und Trotzki und ihre Anwendung unter den heutigen Bedingungen des Klassenkampfes, in: Unter der Fahne der Revolution Nr. 2/3 (2008), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/marxismus-und-eu/>

35 GDP per capita, consumption per capita and price level indices, 15 December 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

[statistics-explained/index.php?title=GDP\\_per\\_capita\\_consumption\\_per\\_capita\\_and\\_price\\_level\\_indices](#)

36 See on this e.g. Ian A. Skoggard: The indigenous dynamic in Taiwan's postwar development: the religious and historical roots of entrepreneurship, M.E. Sharpe 1996, pp. 14-18; see also: Willard J. Peterson: The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9, Part One: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 269

37 Melissa J. Brown: Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 2004, p. 8

38 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: China: Defend the Muslim Uyghurs against Oppression! 18.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-defend-the-muslim-uyghurs-against-oppression/>; by the same author: 37 Signatures Are Worth a Thousand Words. On a letter of 37 states, including Muslim countries, sent to the United Nations defending China's treatment of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, 16 July 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/37-states-defend-china-s-treatment-of-uyghurs/>

39 Amy Qin and Amy Chang Chien: 'We Are Taiwanese': China's Growing Menace Hardens Island's Identity, New York Times, 19 January 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/world/asia/taiwan-china-identity.html>

40 We refer at this point to the often highly informative and thoughtful analysis of Vincent Kolo, a Chinese socialist and leading member of the ISA (which has a section in Taiwan). See e.g. New Cold War Perspectives: Will There Be a Taiwan War? Taiwan finds itself at the center of escalation in the US-China Cold War. The new Cold War is not a temporary phase in global relations — Biden's anti-China policies aim to "win the 21st Century", chinaworker.info, 13 July 2021 <https://internationalsocialist.net/en/2021/07/new-cold-war-perspectives>.

41 See on this e.g. RCIT: The Coming Inter-Imperialist War on Taiwan. Revolutionary Defeatism against both Great Powers – the U.S. as well as China! 10 October 2021, <https://>

# Books of the RCIT

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

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

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

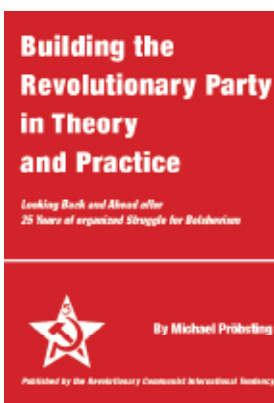
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

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

25 years.

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

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



[www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-coming-imperialist-war-on-taiwan/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-coming-imperialist-war-on-taiwan/)

42 See on this e.g. League for a Revolutionary Communist International / Workers Power (Britain): *The Degenerated Revolution. The Origin and Nature of the Stalinist States* (1982), chapter "Tito and Mao: disobedient Stalinists"

43 See LRCI: *The Chinese Stalinist's Tiananmen Square Massacre* (1989), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/tiananmen-massacre/>

44 UNCTAD: *A New Centre of Gravity - The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and its Trade Effects*, 2021, p. 15

45 See on this e.g. Richard Sorge (R. Sonter): *Der neue deutsche Imperialismus* (1928), Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1988.

46 Department for International Trade (UK): *Global Trade Outlook*, September 2021, p. 55

47 Wing Chu, Yuki Qian: *RCEP: Asia as the Global Manufacturing Centre*, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2 December 2021, p. 1

48 Wing Chu, Yuki Qian: *RCEP: Asia as the Global Manufacturing Centre*, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2 December 2021, p. 1

49 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: "Maritime Freedom" – A Keyword of the U.S./NATO Warmongers, 5 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/maritime-freedom-a-keyword-of-the-u-s-nato-warmongers/>

50 See on this e.g. Evgenij Varga (using the pseudonym: Dr. Eugen Pawlowski): *Der Bankrott Deutschlands*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Carl Hoym Nachfolge, Hamburg 1921; by the same author: *Deutschland eine Kolonie? Viva Vereinig Internat. Verlagsanstalten*, Berlin 1923; in English language see e.g. André Mommen: *Stalin's Economist. The economic contributions of Jenő Varga*, Routledge, New York 2011, pp. 96-101

51 Liu Xuanzun: PLA expels US warship trespassing Chinese territorial waters in S.China Sea, *Global Times*, 20 January 2022 <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202201/1246499.shtml>

52 There exists a vast literature about the crisis in the leadership of social democracy at the beginning of World War I. The following books are particularly worth reading: George Haupt: *Socialism and the Great War: The Collapse of the Second International*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford 1972; Angelica Balabanoff: *Erinnerungen und Erlebnisse*, E. Laubsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin 1927, pp. 55-74; Jürgen Kuczynski: *Der Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie: Chronik und Analyse*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1957; Karl-Heinz Klär: *Der Zusammenbruch der Zweiten Internationale*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt a.M. 1981

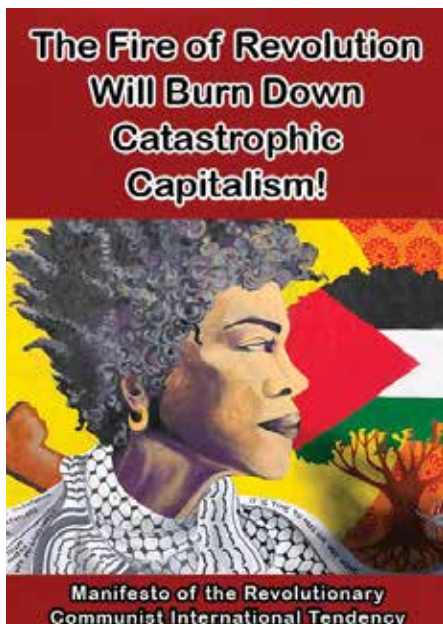
53 V.I. Lenin: *Notes on the Tasks of our Delegation at the Hague* (1922); in: *LCW Vol. 33*, pp. 447-448

54 We have dealt with the issue of social-imperialism today in various works. see e.g. our above-mentioned book by our book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* as well as the pamphlet *Servants of Two Masters. Stalinism and the New Cold War between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West*.

55 The Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. Groups Abroad (1915), *Resolution on the "Defence of the Fatherland" Slogan*, in: *LCW Vol. 21*, p. 159

56 V.I. Lenin / G. Zinoviev: *Socialism and War* (1915); in: *LCW Vol. 21*, pp. 300-301

57 *Manifesto of the Fourth International on Imperialist War. Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution*. Adopted by the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, May 19-26, 1940, <http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/fi/1938-1949/emergconf/fi-emerg02.htm>



## *New Program of the RCIT*

# Manifesto for the Liberation Struggle

*Adopted at the III. World Congress of the RCIT in April 2021*

\* **Introductory Note**

\* **A New Era of Counterrevolutionary Offensive and Revolutionary Upheavals**

\* **The Capitalist State Monster Attacks Democracy! Defeat Chauvinism and Bonapartism!**

\* **Great Power Rivalry and Imperialist Aggression in the South: Turn the Guns against the Lords of Power and Money!**

\* **Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership: How to Organize and How to Fight?**

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format*

# What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*

