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Is Türkiye a (Sub-)Imperialist Power?

Economic, Political and Military features of
the Turkish state & the Socialist Program

by Michael Pröbsting

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Picture on the cover: A Turkish Bayraktar TB2 unmanned combat aerial vehicle (Source: Wikipedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Bayraktar_TB2_Ground.jpg)

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Is Türkiye a (Sub-)Imperialist Power?

The economic, political and military features of the Turkish state, its class character and the program-matic consequences for socialists.
A contribution to an ongoing debate amongst Marxists

A Pamphlet (with 2 Figures and 10 Tables) by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, 25 September 2022

Introduction

The latest RCIT statement about the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has provoked some debates among socialists in Russia. One point which is particularly controversial, is the class character of Türkiye (“Turkey” ¹) and the subsequent tasks of socialists in case of a military conflict between Russia and Türkiye.

We consider Türkiye as an advanced semi-colonial capitalist state with certain features of a regional power. This has consequences for our military tactics, as we elaborated in our statement: *“The character of the conflict could change if Russia would send troops to intervene on the side of Armenia. In such a case, it would no longer be a war between two semi-colonial countries but rather one between an imperialist power, on one side, and a semi-colony (or two semi-colonies if Turkey would intervene in support of Baku) on the other side. In such a situation, the RCIT would advocate defeat for Russian imperialism and its Armenian ally and support for the camp of Azerbaijan (and Turkey), without lending political support for the regimes in Baku and Ankara. A defeat for Russian imperialism would weaken its grip of the Caucasus. Furthermore, it would be also a devastating blow for the bonapartist-totalitarian Putin regime. However, Russian troops have not intervened in the conflict yet and such a turn also does not seem likely, at least in the short term. In any case, the RCIT and Socialist Tendency advocate the slogan: Drive Russian imperialism out of the Caucasus!”* ²

In contrast, our critics view Türkiye rather as an imperialist or a sub-imperialist state and would not side with it in

case of a conflict with Russian imperialism.

In the following essay we want to explain our class analysis of Turkish capitalism – its economic, political and military features – in more detail. We shall also discuss again the issue of military tactics in a conflict between Russia and Türkiye.

On the practical meaning of Marxist analysis of imperialism

The RCIT has always emphasized the crucial importance of the Marxist theory of imperialism in order to understand the main developments in world politics in the first decades of the 21st century. We have pointed out that the main characteristics of capitalism today are the total decay of this system and the resulting acceleration of the contradictions between the classes and states. Among the most important manifestations of this development are the dramatic escalation of Great Power rivalry as well as the increasing number of conflicts between imperialist powers and semi-colonial countries.

Our scientific work in this regard has resulted, among others, in the recognition of the emergence of new imperialist powers – most importantly China ³ and Russia ⁴ – and the resulting rivalry between these Eastern Great Powers and the old Western Great Powers (U.S., Western Europe, and Japan). ⁵

Likewise, we have analysed in much detail the different forms of imperialist super-exploitation of the oppressed people of the Global South. ⁶



Publications of the RCIT

The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

Introduction * Another Denial of Russia's Imperialist Character * The Methodological Failure of our Critics * Russia's Economy: Dominated by Domestic, not Foreign, Monopolies * Capital Export and the Problem of "Round-Tripping" Foreign Direct Investments * "Phantom FDI": No Russian Peculiarity but a Global Phenomenon * Russia's Leading Multinational Corporations and their Foreign Investments * Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Capital Export * Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Migration * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

All these theoretical efforts did not have only an analytical purpose but were also essential for informing our political perspective and tactical conclusions. As we said numerous times, it is impossible to have a correct orientation in the current world situation without understanding the class character of the states and the resulting regional and global contradictions between these.

For these reasons, we have put many efforts in analysing the imperialist character of new emerging powers like Russia and China because only such an analysis allows to take a correct approach in the Great Power rivalry – the position of revolutionary defeatist opposition against all imperialist states. We summarised our position on such inter-imperialist conflicts in the slogans: *Workers and Oppressed: Fight all Great Powers in East and West! International Unity of Struggle against all Great Powers – U.S., China, EU, Russia and Japan! In Conflicts between Great Powers: The Main Enemy is at Home! Transformation of the Imperialist War into Revolutionary Civil War!*⁷

Our analysis of Russian imperialism has also helped us to recognize the *dual character* of the conflict which opened on 24 February – the imperialist, reactionary character of Putin's invasion against a semi-colonial country (Ukraine) and the inter-imperialist conflict between NATO and Russia. Recognizing these *two lines of contradictions* – two processes which are interdependent and influence each other but are not identical – the RCIT has advocated since the beginning of the war a *dual tactic* of, on one hand, *revolutionary defensism* of Ukraine against Putin's invasion and, on the other hand, *revolutionary defeatism* against NATO as well as Russian imperialism. We have summarised our position in the slogan: *Defend the Ukraine against Putin's invasion! Against Russian and against NATO imperialism!*⁸

The example of the Ukraine War demonstrates how crucial it is for Marxists to have a clear class characterization of the states involved in a given conflict as well as a concrete analysis of the totality of the different lines of contradictions.

It is therefore crucial not to characterize a state wrongly as "imperialist" as many socialists in Russia (and globally) do in the case of Türkiye. Such a mistaken analysis can easily result in refusing support for a semi-colonial country like Türkiye in a conflict with an imperialist power – a position which would only aid the imperialists.

It can not go unmentioned that until the last one or two years hardly any self-proclaimed Marxist organization recognized the imperialist character of Russia and China. The RCIT was nearly alone in analysing the tremendous changes in the world situation and the character of the Great Power rivalry since the beginning of the century.⁹ Likewise, most organisations failed to fully understand the nature and consequences of the relations between imperialist powers and semi-colonial countries and, hence, they failed to take a consistent line in defence of the oppressed people against the imperialist barbarians.¹⁰

For all these reasons, it has been no surprise that only very few socialist organisations stood the test of the Ukraine War and managed to defend the Ukraine and, at the same time, taking a dual defeatist line against both NATO as well as Russian imperialism!

And, we shall add, not a small part of those who refuse to recognize the semi-colonial character of Türkiye also fail to recognize the semi-colonial character of the Ukraine

and to defend it against Russian imperialism. This is hardly a coincidence! It reflects a lack of fundamental understanding of the Marxist theory of imperialism and its inherent differentiation between imperialist and semi-colonial countries!

In his Preface to the German edition of his book "*The Permanent Revolution*", Trotsky once noted: „*And here, on a much higher plane, we once again become convinced that in the field of Marxist theory there is nothing that fails to impinge on practical activity. The most remote, and it would seem, the most 'abstract' disagreements, if they are thought out to the end, will sooner or later be invariably expressed in practice, and practice does not allow a single theoretical mistake to be made with impunity.*“¹¹

As the world political events in the past years have demonstrated strikingly, this notion is particularly relevant when it comes to the analysis of imperialism, of old and new Great Powers as well as of conflicts between imperialist and semi-colonial countries!

A brief summary of the Marxist categories of imperialism and semi-colony

It would go beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the Marxist theory of imperialism in detail, and we refer interested readers to our relevant books on this issue.¹² At this place, we shall limit ourselves to a brief summary of the Marxist categories of imperialism respectively semi-colony only as much as it is relevant for the subject under discussion.

The orthodox tradition of Marxism – as it has been elaborated by Lenin and Trotsky – defends the conception that imperialism, and hence the definition of the class character of states, *combines both the economic and political features.*¹³

Furthermore, a given state must be viewed not only as a separate unit, but first and foremost *in its relation to other states and nations.* (Similarly, by the way, the nature of classes can also be understood only in relation to one other.) Here, again, it is crucial to view the relationship between states in the totality of its economic, political, and military features – in keeping with Lenin's dictum that the dialectical method must take into account "*the entire totality of the manifold relations of this thing to others.*"¹⁴

An imperialist state usually enters a relationship with other states and nations whom it oppresses, in one way or another, and super-exploits by appropriating a share of its produced capitalist value. Again, this has to be viewed in its totality, i.e., if a state gains certain profits from foreign investment but has to pay much more (debt service, profit repatriation, etc.) to other countries' foreign investment, loans etc., such a state can usually not be considered as imperialist.

Following Lenin's approach, we have always emphasized that the class character of a given state is based not solely on a single criterion (like the volume of capital export) but rather on the *totality of its economic, political and military features.* Hence, the RCIT considers the following definition as most appropriate: *An imperialist state is a capitalist state whose monopolies and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost dominate other states and nations. As a result, they gain surplus-profits and other economic, political and/or military advantages from such a relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.*

We think such a definition of an imperialist state is in accordance with the brief definition which Lenin gave in one of his writings on imperialism in 1916: „... imperialist Great Powers (i.e., powers that oppress a whole number of nations and enmesh them in dependence on finance capital, etc.)...”¹⁵

From this follows the definition of semi-colonial countries – the counterpart of imperialist states. We have summarized the RCIT’s definition of semi-colonies, in accordance with the understanding of the Marxist classics,¹⁶ as follows: *A semi-colonial country is a capitalist state whose economy and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost are dominated by other states and nations. As a result, they create extra-profits for and give other economic, political and/or military advantages to the imperialist monopolies and states through their relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.*

We have also pointed out in our works that there exists a wide spectrum of different types of imperialist resp. semi-colonial states. There are imperialist states which are strong in the economic but not the military fields and those where it is the other way round. Likewise, there are Great Powers and small imperialist states (of the type of Swiss, Austria or Belgium).

A similar distinction has to be made among semi-colonial countries where we differentiate “between advanced or industrialized semi-colonies such as Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Turkey, Iran or Thailand on one hand and poorer or semi-industrialized semi-colonies like Bolivia, Peru, the Sub-Saharan African countries (except South Africa), Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia etc.”¹⁷

“Sub-imperialism” vs “semi-colonial regional power”: notes on two opposite conceptions

Before we begin with our analysis of Türkiye’s class character, we shall add some notes on the category of “sub-imperialism”, even more so as various Marxists apply it to this Mediterranean country.

In the recent period, the concept of sub-imperialism – a theory which has been developed originally in the 1960s by Ruy Mauro Marini, a Brazilian socialist – has become increasingly fashionable among Marxists. Pseudo-Trotskyist organisations like those in the tradition of Tony Cliff – the largest of these is the *International Socialist Tendency* led by the *British Socialist Workers Party* – have also adopted this theory. They use the notion of “sub-imperialist” for the characterisation of such diverse states as China, Russia, Brazil, India, South Africa, Iran, Greece and Turkey.

The RCIT considers this theory of sub-imperialism as fundamentally flawed and incompatible with the orthodox Marxist theory. We have discussed this theory and elaborated our critique in various works.¹⁸

To summarise our critique, we think that this conception confuses the essential characteristic in the relationship between states in the age of modern capitalism – the relationship of exploitation and domination, i.e. the relationship between imperialist and semi-colonial countries. It artificially creates a third category which is supposedly both – exploiting and exploited, dominating and dominated – without making a clear analysis which of these two features is the prevalent one.

Such theoretical confusion has important implications in

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.

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

By Michael Pröbsting



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the field of politics and, consequently, for tactics. If states like China and Russia are not imperialist Great Powers but “sub-imperialist” states, it can mislead socialists into siding with the “sub-imperialist” camp in case of confrontations with the old Western imperialist powers. In short, such confusion can result in social-patriotic capitulation to an imperialist power. In fact, as we demonstrated in our works, a number of left-wing forces use such a differentiation between imperialist powers and “not-so-imperialist” states as an excuse for siding – openly or concealed – with China and Russia.

On the other hand, it can also result in grave mistakes in the opposite direction. Characterising advanced capitalist semi-colonies like Argentina, Iran, Iraq or Turkey as “sub-imperialist” can mislead socialists into abandoning the defence of such “sub-imperialist” (in fact, semi-colonial) countries against imperialist aggression. Actually, we have seen this in the case of the Malvinas War in 1982, where organisations like the Cliffite IST/SWP refused to defend Argentina on such grounds. Likewise, to give another example, did Peter Taaffe’s CWI characterise Iran in 2019 as a “regional imperialist power” – a definition which conveniently serves as a pretext not to defend this country against the U.S./Israeli aggression.

Having said all this, it does not mean that we deny that some semi-colonial countries do have certain peculiar features. They can play a regional or even global role because they control important raw materials (oil and gas in the case of Iran), because of a relative powerful military (Iran, Turkey, India), because of their geographic location (Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz, Turkey controls the Straits of Dardanelles and Bosphorus, India is centrally located in the Asian-Pacific region which in turn has become the most important sector of the world economy), or because of the sheer size of their size of their population (India).

Recognizing the peculiarity of such countries – without confusing their fundamental class character – the RCIT has elaborated the categories of *semi-colonial regional powers* resp. of *semi-colonial intermediate powers*.¹⁹

The dependent and semi-colonial character of Türkiye’s economy

We shall now move to our analysis of Türkiye and start with an overview of its economy. As we shall see, Türkiye is not a dominating capitalist country but rather one which plays a subordinated role in the world economy. In short, it is an advanced semi-colony.

Let us begin with taking, as a very broad measure, the GDP per capita which reflects the annual output in relation to the size of the population. In order to avoid a one-sided picture, we present the relevant figures both in current U.S. dollars as well as in PPP dollars. As Table 1 shows, Türkiye is in a similar league with other advanced semi-colonial countries like Iran, Poland, Romania, Malaysia, Argentina, Brazil, and Thailand. For the avoidance of distortion, we have only selected countries with a roughly similar population size (i.e. not islands or small countries where extraordinary factors can play a disproportional large role).

Of course, we are fully aware that such a measure in itself is only a rough approximation, a useful indicator. It is not sufficient for a precise class characterisation of a given

country.

A more relevant indicator is the global position of Turkish capital. If we take the globally leading monopolies (the *Fortune Global 500*), Türkiye is represented only with a single company on rank 357. (Koç Holding)²¹ Likewise, if we look at another index (the *Forbes Global 2000*), we can see that Turkish capitalists only have a small presence – again, similar to other advanced semi-colonies. (See Table 2)

We get the same picture if we look at the role of foreign capital in Türkiye’s economy. In the post-war period, Türkiye – like a number of other semi-colonial countries – did rely on a relatively strong role of the state-capitalist sector as well as on import-substitution. However, this has changed since the 1980s – in Türkiye as well as most of the Global South – and today imperialist capital plays a significant role.

Such intrusion by imperialist monopolies has been particularly relevant in Türkiye’s banking sector where foreign banks’ market share reached 39.7% in 2007.²³ Today, state-owned banks play only a limited role while the number of foreign banks has increased substantially. (See Table 3)

An author of a comparative study of finance capitalism in Mexico and Türkiye noted: “Turkey has become a site of foreign bank earnings, which can be repatriated without being invested in Turkish society, just as domestic capital can spirit money resources abroad in times of crisis or in search of higher returns. This, too, is shaped by Turkey’s still-subordinate position within a hierarchical interstate system and world market that is still dominated by the US.”²⁵

The increasing role of imperialist capital in Türkiye’s economy is not limited to the financial sector. Already in the early 2000s, foreign monopolies had a powerful position among the large industrial corporations in Türkiye, accounting for nearly half of the total value-added and profits of the large companies. “According to the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, in 2004, among the largest 500 industrial firms, there were 149 FDI firms, which accounted for 43 percent of the total sales, 51 percent of the total value-added, 44 percent of the total profits, 49 percent of the total exports, and 27 percent of the total employment”²⁶ The position of foreign monopolies has increased since then.

Let us take another important measure for the strength of Turkish capital – its investment abroad and its size in relation to foreign investment in the country. We shall look first at Türkiye’s inflow resp. the outflow of *Foreign Direct Investment* in the last few years. As we can see, the inflows of foreign capital into the country regularly outstrip Türkiye’s investment abroad. (See Table 4)

We get the same picture if we take the accumulated stock of inward resp. outward Foreign Direct Investment. Again, the stock of foreign investment in Türkiye has always exceeded the country’s investments abroad. (See Table 5)

If we compare Türkiye with other advanced capitalist semi-colonies, we get, again, a similar picture. In all these countries, inward FDI clearly outstrips outward FDI. (See Table 6)

All these figures reflect that Türkiye plays a subordinated role in the capitalist world market. It is much more object of foreign investment – mostly from imperialist countries – than country of origin of foreign investment to other countries. The fact that inward FDI clearly outweighs outward FDI is a strong indicator that imperialist monopolies squeeze surplus value from Türkiye to a much larger ex-

Table 1. Gross Domestic Product per capita in Türkiye and other countries, 2022 ²⁰

<i>Country</i>	<i>GDP per capita (current prices, expressed in current U.S. dollars per person)</i>	<i>GDP per capita (current prices, expressed in GDP in PPP dollars per person)</i>
Türkiye	8,081	37,488
Iran	20,261	18,332
Greece	20,940	35,596
Poland	18,506	41,685
Romania	14,825	36,622
Malaysia	13,268	32,901
Argentina	12,187	25,822
Brazil	8,570	17,208
Thailand	7,449	21,057

Table 2. The world's biggest companies (Forbes Global 2000), Türkiye and other countries, 2018 ²²

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Türkiye	10
Brazil	19
Thailand	16
Saudi Arabia	15
Malaysia	13
Mexico	12
Greece	6
Poland	6

Table 3. Number of Commercial and Other Banks, 2016 ²⁴

<i>State-owned</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Foreign</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
3	9	21	14	52

Table 4. Türkiye: Inflow and Outflow of Foreign Direct Investment, 2016-21 ²⁷

<i>FDI inflows</i>						<i>FDI outflows</i>					
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
13,651	11,113	12,573	9,594	7,821	12,530	2,954	2,626	3,658	2,966	3,229	4,979

Table 5. Türkiye: Inward and Outward Stock of Foreign Direct Investment, 2000-21 ²⁸

<i>FDI inward stock</i>			<i>FDI outward stock</i>		
2000	2010	2021	2000	2010	2021
18,812	188,324	120,700	3,668	22,509	57,356

tent than Turkish capitalists could exploit other countries.

This analysis is also strongly confirmed by an analysis of the regional distribution of Türkiye's capital export. As we can see below, the vast majority of Turkish Outward FDI is not directed to semi-colonial countries (where it could exploit weaker economies) but rather to imperialist metropolises – most of these to Europe (between 2/3 and 4/5). (See Tables 7 and 8)

Türkiye's weak, dependent role on the world market is also reflected by the structural deficit in the balance of payments which it runs since more than two decades. The balance of payments of a given country consists of its current account and capital account and includes the total sum of both trade of goods and services as well as financial transactions. As we can see below, Türkiye's current account balance was never positive in the last quarter of a century and the capital account could hardly ever make up for this deficit. Such a negative balance of payments existed also in the last years. (See Figure 1 and Table 9)

Hence, Türkiye is increasingly forced to rely on foreign loans in order to finance its balance of payments deficit. As a result, its foreign debt has substantially increased in the past decades. Its external debt in relation to its Gross National Income (GNI) increased by more than half between 2010 and 2020 – from 39% to 61%. As a result, Türkiye must use a growing share of its income to pay for its debts – the ratio of debt service to exports was already 41% in 2020. (See Figure 2 as well as Table 10)

This is very similar to countries which are well-known for their high indebtedness. Argentina, for example, had a ratio of external debt stocks to GNI of 68% and the ratio of debt service to exports was 41% in 2020 – the same as in Türkiye.³⁶

As a result, Türkiye's foreign exchange reserves have constantly shrunk in the past years. The OECD reports: *“Foreign exchange reserves shrank as a result of these interventions. Gross foreign currency reserves fell from USD 106 billion in March 2014 (11.3% of 2014 GDP), to USD 85 billion in March 2018, USD 54 billion in May 2020, and USD 40 billion in August 2020 (5.3% of 2019 GDP).”*³⁷

We can summarise our overview of Türkiye's economy by concluding that it does not play a dominating role on the world market – in fact, it does not even play a significant role in the Middle East market. It is not an imperialist economy but, rather, an advanced semi-colony.

The Erdoğan government: a bonapartist regime combined with limited bourgeois-parliamentary democracy

Another argument cited by supporters of the theory that Türkiye is a (sub-)imperialist country is the fact that it oppresses the Kurdish people and that it has an authoritarian regime.

Of course, it is true that the Turkish state oppresses – and has always oppressed – the Kurdish people. Such oppression takes place in the discrimination of its language rights, the denial of its fundamental right to national self-determination (including the right to have their own state or to unite with other parts of the Kurdish people in neighbouring countries), the repression against Kurdish parties like the HDP, the drastic militarisation of the Kurdish majority territories in the south-east of the country, etc.

All these features show beyond any doubt that the Kurdish people in Türkiye are an oppressed nation. Socialists must unconditionally support their liberation struggle.³⁸

It is equally true that Turkey is not a bourgeois democracy in the form as it exists in most European countries. For a long time, it has been a military dictatorship or a semi-dictatorship. It experienced several successful and unsuccessful military coups (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997 and 2016). The last one was an unsuccessful one by sectors of the army against the Erdoğan government.

However, it would be utterly wrong to imagine that Turkey is a dictatorship, not to speak about the ultra-left nonsense that it would have a “fascist regime” for more than half a century as various Maoist and Hoxhast group in Turkey claim since the 1970s.

It is true that the Erdoğan regime – in power since 2002 – possesses a clear bonapartist character which has been helped by the strong popular roots of the AKP, a bourgeois-Islamist party. However, one has to be clear that the AKP came to power in opposition to the long-time dominating ruling elite which had been very close to the army command.

Furthermore, it is also the case that a number of other parties exist and often articulate their sharp opposition against the AKP (surely, they face repeatedly bureaucratic hurdles or, in the case of the Kurdish HDP, outright oppression). It is also a fact that various trade unions as well as left-wing parties exist (again, with various forms of discrimination or oppression).

All these features reflect the fact that the Erdoğan government is a reactionary, bourgeois-bonapartist regime. However, they also demonstrate that it is not qualitative different from regimes in many other semi-colonial countries (or the regimes in Moscow or Beijing). And neither does it demonstrate that Turkey would be a (sub-)imperialist state.

The Erdoğan government is hardly more authoritarian than most regimes in Middle East. In fact, it is rather less authoritarian (just think about General Sisi in Egypt, the Gulf states, Iran, Sudan, etc.)

As we said above, the Turkish state oppresses the Kurdish people. But national oppression does not make a state automatically imperialist. As a matter of fact, the neighbouring states – Iran, Iraq and Syria – have the same shameful tradition of suppressing their Kurdish minority.

More generally, numerous semi-colonial states oppress national or ethnic minorities. To name only a few examples, we refer, in addition to the Kurds in the Middle East countries, to the non-Persian minorities in Iran, the Sahrawi people in the Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara, the numerous ethnic minorities in Burma/Myanmar, the Muslim people in Southern Thailand, various non-Arab groups in Sudan, several ethnic groups in Ethiopia, the Tuareg in Mali, the Southern ethnic groups in Nigeria, the indigenous people in several Latin American countries, etc. All these are examples of national oppression by reactionary states. But such oppression does not make these states automatically imperialist. If that would be the case, it would mean that a large part of the world would be “imperialist” – an absurdity in itself!

The imperialist (or non-imperialist) character of a given state *does not derive primarily from its relationship to the population within its own borders but from its role within the global*

Table 6. FDI Inward and Outward Stock in Türkiye and other countries, 2021 ²⁹

<i>Country</i>	<i>FDI inward stock</i>	<i>FDI outward stock</i>
Türkiye	120,700	57,356
Malaysia	187,375	134,613
Philippines	113,711	66,367
Thailand	279,140	177,044
Saudi Arabia	261,061	151,499
Argentina	98,928	42,452
Brazil	592,761	296,185
Chile	180,489	83,737
Mexico	578,792	185,268

Table 7. Türkiye: Regional Distribution of Residents' Direct Investments Abroad, Flows, 2016-21 (Million US Dollars) (*) ³⁰

<i>Region</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Europe	1.716	1.733	2.755	2.541	1.659	2.727
U.S. & Canada	851	830	911	613	858	1.367
Near & Middle East Countries	324	416	115	171	465	298
Asia (other than Near & Middle East)	140	107	67	70	126	168
Africa	67	83	75	34	23	18
Total	3.114	3.177	3.936	3.433	3.151	4.619

Table 8. Türkiye: Regional Distribution of Residents' Direct Investments Abroad, Stock, 2016-21 (Million US Dollars) (*) ³¹

<i>Region</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Europe	24.457	30.471	32.382	33.518	36.677	38.808
U.S. & Canada	1.631	1.836	1.787	3.198	1.558	2.274
Near & Middle East Countries	2.102	2.467	2.721	2.025	2.160	1.928
Asia (other than Near & Middle East)	1.501	1.383	1.343	1.836	1.495	2.113
Africa	631	778	784	1.169	1.295	1.642
Total	30.966	37.570	38.394	41.555	42.878	46.508

Table 9. Türkiye: Balance of Payments 2015-20 (as % of GDP) ³³

	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>
US\$ Billion	-11.8	0.8	-8.2	-10.4	6.3	-31.9
Percent of GDP	-1.4	0.1	-1.0	-1.3	0.8	-4.4

chain of the world economy and world politics. And all these countries – including Türkiye – have a sub-ordinated, dominated position in the hierarchy of the global imperialist system.

Türkiye's role as a regional military power

Do Türkiye's army and its military role qualify the country as imperialist? It is true that Turkey possesses a large army with an estimated strength of 775,000 military and paramilitary personnel, making it the second largest standing military force in NATO.

However, one also has to take into account that it has the second-largest population in NATO. More importantly, the large size of the Turkish army has originated in the crucial domestic political role which it had played since the foundation of the republic in 1920. As a matter of fact, it has always been the most important institution of the capitalist Turkish state.

Until the most recent past, the Turkish army has hardly been deployed abroad (if we leave participation in UN missions aside). Its main role was rather domestically – first in order to control the state and its government and, second, in order to suppress the Kurdish people who have waged an armed insurrection under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois nationalist PKK since 1984.

Türkiye's most significant military interventions abroad – those in Iraq and Syria – have been closely related to its reactionary war against the Kurdish people. This has been the case because the PKK has created retreat areas in Northern Iraq (respectively its leadership is located there) and it helped to build a strong branch in Syria (the PYD/YPG) which has brought – in close collaboration with U.S. imperialist forces – the eastern part of the country under its control. The intervention into these countries and the occupation of regions in the north of Syria are closely related to Ankara's war against the PKK:

However, it is also true that in the last years, Türkiye has sent armed forces – most importantly its famous armed drones *Bayraktar TB2* – to other countries where these played an important role in military conflicts. These Turkish forces were crucial in stopping and then pushing back the troops of ex-Gaddafi Colonel Haftar in early 2020.

The Turkish intervention in Idlib did also play a role in reaching a deal with Russia and Iran (the so-called Astana process) aimed at pacifying the Syrian Revolution which also included some limited military activities against the Assadist troops and its Russian master.³⁹

And, most recently, Turkish forces played an important role in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan where they aided the latter with its *Bayraktar TB2*.

So, do such military activities make Türkiye imperialist? We don't think so.

Again, Türkiye is not an exception in such foreign military activities. Iran is well known to have sent substantial forces to join the civil wars in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have invaded Yemen in 2015 and, since then, they effectively occupy large parts of the country.⁴⁰ African states have repeatedly assembled troops to intervene in civil wars in various countries on the continent. Ethiopia invaded in Somalia in 2006 and has occupied parts of the country since then with up to 15,000 troops.⁴¹

Such interventions of these states do not all have the same character. Sometimes they intervene on behalf of a reactionary oppressor camp (e.g. Türkiye against the Kurdish people, Iran supporting the Assad tyranny in Syria; Ethiopia in Somalia). Sometimes, these states intervene in a war which is reactionary on both sides (e.g. Türkiye in Azerbaijan). And sometimes, they lend military support to a progressive struggle of the oppressed – of course for their own bourgeois foreign policy interests (e.g. Türkiye in Libya and, to a certain degree, in Idlib; Iran in Yemen).

In any case, all these military adventures do not make these African and Middle East states imperialist. Why? Because such regional limited activities do not alter the fact that all these countries – including Türkiye – play a sub-ordinated, dominated position within the imperialist world order.

However, it is also necessary to recognise that Türkiye acts as a kind of regional power.⁴² The same is true for Iran.

Türkiye: An Advanced Capitalist Semi-Colony and a Semi-Colonial Regional Power

Our overview on the economic, political, and military features of Türkiye allow us to arrive at definite conclusions. Türkiye is an industrialised, advanced semi-colony which has a subordinated, dependent position in the world economy. It has a bonapartist regime combined with limited bourgeois-parliamentary democracy. It brutally suppresses the Kurdish minority. Opposition parties, trade unions and left-wing organisations are allowed, however they face various forms of discrimination and repression. In the last years, the Turkish state also engaged in several foreign military operations.

We have also demonstrated that Türkiye's political features – its reactionary regime, its foreign military interventions – are by no means unique features. In fact, most semi-colonial countries are ruled by bonapartist regimes. And many of these oppress national or ethnic minorities and a number of them – both advanced as well as poorer semi-colonies – have repeatedly sent troops to other countries.

In short, while such features clearly show the reactionary character of a regime, they qualify it by no means as "imperialist". Such an approach would represent an utter vulgarisation of the Marxist concept of imperialism which does not allow separation of politics and economy but rather *combines* these features (as we explained above).

Furthermore, we repeat that a Marxist analysis of the class character of a given state must not be based on a single criterion but rather on the *totality of its economic, political and military features*. In the case of Türkiye, the dominant aspect is clearly its subordinated position in the world market.

As mentioned above, it is true that Turkey has been able for some time to act as a regional power. This is possible because of its size in terms of population, army, and its economic development. However, there is also another crucial factor which has made this development possible and to which we did already draw attention a decade ago. *"The combination of the shift of the capitalist production to the South and the increasing rivalry between the Great Powers have the effect, that they might allow the bourgeoisie in the semi-colonial countries sometimes a certain room to maneuver. The*

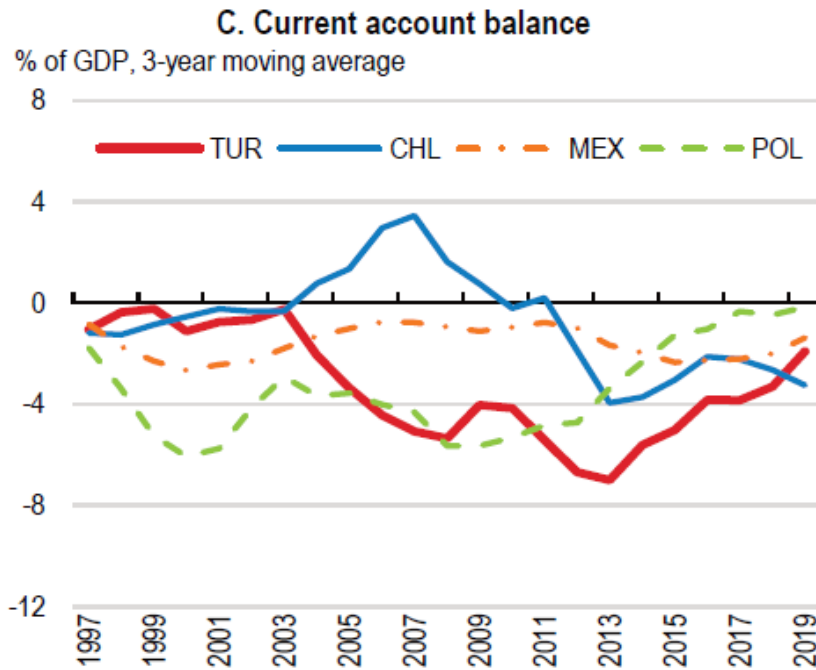
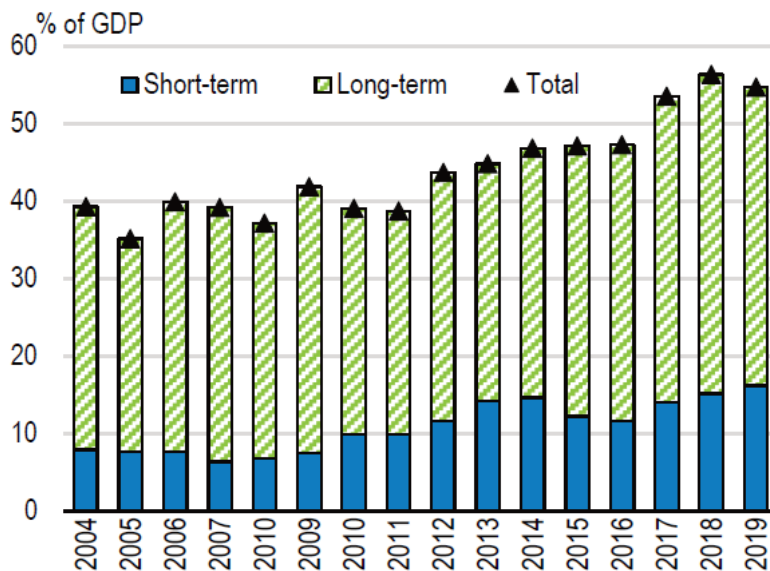
Figure 1. Current account balance of Türkiye 1997-2019 ³²Figure 2: Türkiye's External Debt 2004-19 (as % of GDP) ³⁴

Figure 1.5. External debt is expanding strongly

A. In Turkey over time

Table 10. Türkiye's Debt Ratios 2010-2020 ³⁵

	2010	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
External debt stocks to exports (%)	185	200	201	183	175	207
External debt stocks to GNI (%)	39	48	54	58	59	61
Debt service to exports (%)	37	37	38	35	34	41
Short-term to external debt stocks (%)	26	25	26	26	28	32
Reserves to external debt stocks (%)	27	22	18	16	18	11

*bourgeoisie of a given semi-colonial country can look for support from the Great Power B, if Great Power A puts more pressure on it. We have already seen in the past years that various Latin American and African countries have looked increasingly for trade agreements and foreign direct investments from China to counter the pressure from the USA. Our thesis might seem to some readers as a formal contradiction. On one hand we speak about an increasing subjugation of the semi-colonies to imperialism. And on the other side we speak about an increasing room to maneuver for the semi-colonies. But in reality, it is a dialectical contradiction, born out of the essence of the contradictions in imperialist capitalism itself. They are just two sides of the same coin. The imperialists are forced – because of the economic shift to the South and the increasing rivalry between themselves – to increase their attempts for more subjugation of the semi-colonies. But the same shift leads to a contrary dynamic – more room to maneuver for the semi-colonial bourgeoisie.”*⁴³

As we noted at the same place, such a contradictory situation bears certain similarities with the state of the relationship of the Latin American semi-colonies during the 1930s about which Leon Trotsky wrote: *“This is the period in which the national bourgeoisie searches for a bit more independence from the foreign imperialists.”*⁴⁴

Today, the Erdoğan regime is, to a certain degree, in a similar situation. Again, in this, Türkiye is no unique case. There are also a number of similar cases where semi-colonial countries utilize the rivalry between the Great Powers to gain a certain space for maneuvering and to advance their own interests. The Philippines under Duterte, Indonesia under Widodo, Malaysia, Argentina in the Kirchnerist period, even Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and India in the last period – all these are just a few examples for this phenomenon.

Hence, a certain degree of independence, of maneuvering between Great Powers, of playing a role as a regional power... these are features which do not contradict the semi-colonial character of a given country. One has to understand that such maneuvering is the policy of a weaker state who tries to utilize the contradictions between Great Powers. The latter dictate the terms, not the weaker side. Hence, Türkiye’s role as a regional power has to be seen in the context of its global subordination as an advanced semi-colony.

Hence, we can summarise that Türkiye – taking into account the totality of its global and regional role, of its economic, political and military features – is an *advanced capitalist semi-colony* and a *semi-colonial regional power*.

Marxist tactics in Türkiye’s military interventions

We don’t have a generalized military tactic concerning Türkiye’s foreign interventions. As a semi-colonial regional power is can – and does – intervene in wars where it sometimes joins the reactionary camp and sometimes the progressive camp. Depending on this, Marxists advocate a military tactic which is appropriate to the concrete situation.⁴⁵

In its war against the Kurdish people, we oppose the Turkish state and defend the oppressed. In the case of a war which is reactionary on both sides – like the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020 and 2022 – we do not support the Turkish side.⁴⁶ In the confrontation

with the Assadist/Russian forces in Idlib in spring 2020, we clearly sided with the Syrian rebels and the Turkish forces which supported them.⁴⁷ The same was the case in Libya when the GNA government desperately defended Tripoli – with the aid of Turkish drones – against the reactionary forces of General Haftar.⁴⁸

As we mentioned in the introduction to this essay, we said in the RCIT statement on the latest clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan that in the case of a military intervention of Russia on the side of Armenia and of Türkiye on the side of Azerbaijan, we would lend support to the military struggle of the Azeri/Turkish camp.

This was not an abstract speculation. In fact, there were already two brief occasions in the past years where Turkish and Russian armed forces did clash. In November 2015, the Turkish Air Force shot a Russian Su-24 which was attacking the Syrian rebels close to the border with Türkiye. And, as already mentioned, there was also a brief period of clashes in spring 2020 in Idlib. As we stated at that time, the RCIT sided in both cases with the Turkish forces against imperialist Russia.⁴⁹

Of course, such a tactical support for the Turkish side must never include any *political* support for the Erdoğan (or any other Turkish) regime.

Our military tactics are basically informed by the analysis of the class character of the states involved. It is an established principle of Marxism that, all other factors being equal, socialists support a semi-colonial country against an imperialist power.

In their well-known pamphlet *“Socialism and War”*, written in the midst of World War I, Lenin and Zinoviev stated that it is the highest duty of all Socialists to take the side of the oppressed in such wars: *„Only in this sense have Socialists regarded, and now regard, wars “for the defense 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 sympathize with the victory of the oppressed, dependent, unequal states against the oppressing, slave-owning, predatory “great” powers.”*⁵⁰

Likewise did Trotsky and the Fourth International sharply denounce all those pseudo-socialists who refused to take the side of the oppressed people against the imperialist enemy: *“The struggle against war, properly understood and executed, presupposes the uncompromising hostility of the proletariat and its organizations, always and everywhere, toward its own and every other imperialist bourgeoisie (...) The struggle against war and its social source, capitalism, presupposes direct, active, unequivocal support to the oppressed colonial peoples in their struggles and wars against imperialism. A “neutral” position is tantamount to support of imperialism.”*⁵¹

The situation is very different with an imperialist state. Marxists can never, under no circumstances, side with an imperialist power in any military conflict. This demonstrates why it is so important to have a correct analysis of the class character of the states involved in a conflict!

Of course, in itself, it is not sufficient to have an analysis of the class character of the states. Such an analysis must be *combined* with a concrete analysis of the conflict as such and the concrete role which the intervention of a foreign state plays in this conflict. Is it a conflict where the struggle of one camp has a progressive character or not? Does the

intervention of a foreign state have a dominating character and does this alter the nature of the conflict? Or is it rather an intervention which plays a secondary role?

Furthermore, one has also to analyze if the intervention of a foreign state is part of a more general conflict. For example, if Türkiye's intervention on the Azeri side against Russian-backed Armenia is part of a broader military intervention of NATO (in order to weaken and to defeat Moscow), such an intervention by Türkiye would be not an intervention of a semi-colonial country but would rather have the character of a general imperialist war of NATO against its Russian rival. In such a case, Marxists would of course neither side with Türkiye/NATO not with Russia.

All these elements must be analyzed concretely. Nevertheless, without a correct analysis of the class character of the states involved in a conflict it is impossible to develop a correct approach to such wars!

Finally, we want to emphasize, as we said in our above-mentioned statement, that a military defeat of Russian imperialism at the hand of Turkish forces would be a highly progressive event which socialists could not but welcome! At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922, Trotsky said: *"Every colonial movement that weakens capitalist rule in the ruling country (métropole) is progressive, because it assists the proletariat in its revolutionary task."*⁵² This is no less true today!

This is why the RCIT has supported various liberation struggles of oppressed peoples against imperialist powers (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Syria).⁵³ It is in the

interest of the Russian working class and the numerous oppressed peoples that its enemy – the Putin regime and the whole ruling class – suffers a decisive blow by non-imperialist opponents. It would weaken the regime and could, therefore, improve the opportunities for the workers in Russia to wage a determined struggle against the regime. For Russian socialists, the situation is very clear: their main enemy is not in Kyiv or in Ankara but in the Kremlin! Furthermore, a defeat for Russian imperialism would weaken its grip of the Caucasus and, hence, improve the conditions of the oppressed peoples in the region for their liberation struggle.

On the anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish tradition of Great Russian chauvinism as well as of European Occidentalism

We are fully aware, as we noted in our statement on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, that there exists a long tradition of anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish sentiments in Russia's public opinion. Such feelings are deeply rooted in the history of Great Russian chauvinism as the Tsarist Empire was in constant conflict with the Ottoman Empire for centuries and waged several wars against Istanbul. Furthermore, the history of the *Kyivan Rus'* and, later, the *Grand Duchy of Moscow* is deeply interlinked with their centuries-long devastating conflicts with the Mongol (the "Golden Horde") and Tatar Khanates among which Islam did play an important role.⁵⁴

Books of the RCIT

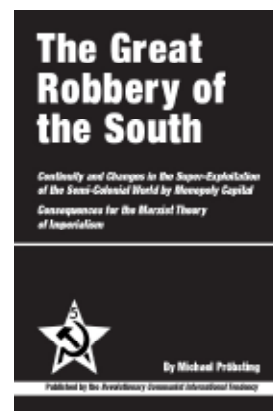
Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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)



Moscow's traditional animosity to Muslims is, we note in passing, also related to the fact that the Ottomans defeated the Byzantine Empire and conquered Constantinople in 1453 which was the centre of the Christian-Orthodox church. This historic event allowed the Moscow Patriarchate to claim the heir and to become the new centre of the Orthodox church (which was why Moscow was referred to as the *Third Rome*). Hence, the Imperial Russia waged wars against the Turks also in the name of defending Orthodox Christianity against the "pagans".

The hatred of Great Russian chauvinism for Muslim people was further incited by the heroic resistance of the Caucasian people in the 19th century – most famously under the leadership of Imam Shamil – against their subjugation by the Russian army.

We shall note in passing that Russian chauvinist hatred against Muslims is no isolated case. We see the same phenomenon in Western Europe. The imperialist governments and their public opinion have manipulated such Islamophobia by claiming that the "Western civilisation" and its "values" would be superior to Islam and, hence, to the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.

Such a reactionary ideology has been radically hyped by bourgeois public opinion since the beginning of the imperialist "War on Terror" in 2001 and, in particular, in the last few years. The notorious campaign of support for the racist magazine *Charlie Hebdo* or for the Islamophobic teacher Samuel Paty are prime examples for this reactionary policy.⁵⁵ This ideological offensive has also served as excuses to send French troops to Mali and Iraq.⁵⁶

Hence, it is not surprising at Great Russian chauvinists are hostile to the Azeri/Turkish camp. However, it is shameful that large sectors of Russia's "communists" are strongly influenced by such an ideology. This represents, as our comrades of *Socialist Tendency* (Russia) stated, "objectively a social-chauvinist adaption to Russian imperialism."

Such a social-chauvinist adaption has no basis in the tradition of orthodox Marxism. Karl Marx always supported the heroic Caucasian people in their resistance against Imperial Russia.⁵⁷ Likewise, Marx and Engels sided with the Turks in their struggle against the Tsarist Empire – both during the Crimean War 1853-56 as well as in the war in 1877-78. Marx left no doubt about the stance of Friedrich Engels and himself:

"We are most decidedly espousing the Turkish cause and for 2 reasons:

1. because we have studied the Turkish peasant—i.e. the mass of the Turkish people—and in this way have come to see him as indubitably one of the ablest and most moral representatives of the peasantry in Europe;

2. because the defeat of the Russians would have greatly expedited social revolution in Russia, of which all the elements are present in abundant measure, and hence radical change throughout Europe.

*Things took a different course. Why? In consequence of England's and Austria's treachery."*⁵⁸

It is a product of Stalinism which has downgraded or silenced the powerful Marxist tradition of opposition against Great Russian chauvinism. Authentic communists must decisively break with such reactionary falsification!

Conclusions

In conclusion, we shall summarise the results of our study in the form of a few theses.

1. The Marxist theory of imperialism, its conception of imperialist as well as semi-colonial states, is crucial for understanding the main contradictions of world capitalism in the 21st century. Without a correct analysis of the class character of the states and the resulting regional and global contradictions between these, it is impossible to have a correct orientation in the current world situation.

2. Hence, the theoretical discussion about the class character of Russia and China as imperialist Great Powers or a correct assessment of countries like Türkiye as advanced semi-colonial powers is by no means an abstract enterprise but has profound practical consequences. Such an analysis informs Marxists about their tactics in confrontation between such states – should they support on side against the other or should they take a revolutionary-defeatist position against both.

3. In our analysis of a given state we look at it not in isolation but rather its relationship with other states. Likewise, we base our assessment not solely on a single criterion but rather on the *totality of its economic, political and military features*. Hence, the RCIT considers the following definitions as most appropriate: *An imperialist state is a capitalist state whose monopolies and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost dominate other states and nations. As a result, they gain surplus-profits and other economic, political and/or military advantages from such a relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.* We characterise semi-colonial countries, the counterpart of imperialist states as follows: *A semi-colonial country is a capitalist state whose economy and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost are dominated by other states and nations. As a result, they create extra-profits for and give other economic, political and/or military advantages to the imperialist monopolies and states through their relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.* Such a definition is in accordance with the understanding of the Marxist classics.

4. At the same time, we take into account that there exists a wide spectrum of different types of imperialist resp. of semi-colonial states. There are imperialist states which are strong in the economic but not the military fields and those where it is the other way round. Likewise, there are Great Powers and small imperialist states (of the type of Swiss, Austria or Belgium). A similar distinction has to be made among semi-colonial countries where we differentiate "between advanced or industrialized semi-colonies such as Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Turkey, Iran or Thailand on one hand and poorer or semi-industrialized semi-colonies like Bolivia, Peru, the Sub-Saharan African countries (except South Africa), Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia etc."

5. The RCIT rejects the theory of "sub-imperialism" as it confuses the essential characteristic in the relationship between states in the age of modern capitalism—the relationship of exploitation and domination, i.e. the relationship between imperialist and semi-colonial countries. It artificially creates a third category which is supposedly both – exploiting and exploited, dominating and dominated – without making a clear analysis which of the two features is the prevalent one. Such a conception is prone to

be used, and in fact is often used, as an excuse for refusing to apply a consistent anti-imperialist policy. If states like China and Russia are not imperialist Great Powers but “sub-imperialist” states, it can mislead socialists into siding with the “sub-imperialist” camp in case of confrontations with the old Western imperialist powers. On the other hand, it can also result in grave mistakes in the opposite direction. Characterising advanced capitalist semi-colonies like Argentina, Iran, Iraq or Turkey as “sub-imperialist” can mislead supporters into abandoning the defence of such “sub-imperialist” (actually semi-colonial) countries against imperialist aggression.

6. At the same time, we do not deny that some semi-colonial countries do have certain peculiar features. They can play a regional or even global role because they control important raw materials, because of a relative powerful military, because of their geographic location or because of the sheer size of their size of their population. In recognizing the peculiarity of such countries – without confusing their fundamental class character – the RCIT has elaborated the categories of *semi-colonial regional powers* resp. of *semi-colonial intermediate powers*.

7. An analysis of Türkiye’s economy shows that it is not an imperialist state but an advanced semi-colonial country. It hardly has any monopolies which would play a role in the world market. Contrary, foreign monopolies play a strong role in Türkiye’s financial and industrial sector. Turkish capital export is much smaller than imperialist investments in the country. And most of Türkiye’s capital export is not directed to semi-colonial countries where it could exploit their labour force but rather to the rich imperialist markets (mostly Europe). Furthermore, Türkiye runs a structural and long-term negative balance of payments which has resulted in a dramatic increase of its foreign debts. In summary, we can conclude that Türkiye

does not play a dominating role on the world market – in fact, it does not even play a significant role in the Middle East market. It is not an imperialist economy but, rather, an advanced semi-colony.

8. Türkiye has a bonapartist regime combined with limited bourgeois-parliamentary democracy. It brutally suppresses the Kurdish minority. Opposition parties, trade unions and left-wing organisations are allowed, however they face various forms of discrimination and repression. In the last years, the Turkish state also engaged in several foreign military operations. While these characteristics show that the Turkish state is reactionary and capitalist, it does not mean that it is imperialist. In fact, most semi-colonial countries are ruled by bonapartist regimes. Many of them oppress national or ethnic minorities and a number of them – both advanced as well as poorer semi-colonies – have repeatedly sent troops to other countries.

9. Taking into account the totality of its global and regional role, of its economic, political and military features, we conclude that Türkiye is an *advanced capitalist semi-colony* and a *semi-colonial regional power*.

10. The RCIT does not advocate a generalized military tactic concerning Türkiye’s foreign interventions. As a semi-colonial regional power is can – and does – intervene in wars where it sometimes joins the reactionary camp and sometimes the progressive camp. Depending on this, Marxists advocate a military tactic which is appropriate to the concrete situation. In cases where it lends support to a liberation struggle (of course for its own bourgeois interests), we tactically side with the Turkish forces (e.g. in Idlib or in Libya). In cases where it lends support to a reactionary cause, we do not. In cases where it wages a reactionary war against an oppressed people, we support the latter (e.g. the Kurdish people). In the case of a military confrontation between Türkiye and Russia, we would, all



Publications of the RCIT

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By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

other factors being equal, support the semi-colonial country against the imperialist power.

11. We are aware that there exists a long tradition of anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish sentiments in the public opinion both of Russia as well as of Western countries. Such feelings are rooted in the history of these Great Powers. Shamefully, large sectors of the opportunist left have adapted to such prejudices. Such a social-chauvinist ideology objectively means to join the camp of the imperialist class enemy. Authentic Marxists must decisively break with such reactionary ideology and combat it!

Footnotes

1 The Turkish state requests to be called no longer “Turkey” but “Türkiye” in English language. This is because Turkey is also used as a name for a famous animal which is slaughtered every year in the U.S. on occasion of Thanksgiving. Naturally, we respect this wish and will call the state furthermore Türkiye.

2 RCIT: Armenia-Azerbaijan: Down with the Reactionary War! No to chauvinist excesses! Drive Russian imperialism out of the Caucasus! 16 September 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/armenia-azerbaijan-down-with-the-reactionary-war/>

3 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power. See on this e.g. the 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 by the same author: “*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; 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, 22 January 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-imperialist-power-or-not-yet/>; 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/>; 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/>; China's Emergence as an Imperialist Power (Article in the US journal 'New Politics'), in: “New Politics”, Summer 2014 (Vol:XV-1, Whole #: 57). See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

4 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: *The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory*, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; by the same author: *Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as*

a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia's Imperialist Character, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; *Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics*, 18 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; *Russia: An Imperialist Power or a “Non-Hegemonic Empire in Gestation”?* (Reply to Claudio Katz), *New Politics*, <https://newpol.org/russia-an-imperialist-power-or-a-non-hegemonic-empire-in-gestation-a-reply-to-the-argentinean-economist-claudio-katz-an-essay-with-8-tables/>; *Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies*, in: *New Politics* Vol. XVIII No. 4, Whole Number 72, Winter 2022, https://newpol.org/issue_post/russian-imperialism-and-its-monopolies/ (the same essay has been republished by International Viewpoint, 21. April 2022, <https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7618>); *Once Again on Russian Imperialism* (Reply to Critics). A rebuttal of a theory which claims that Russia is not an imperialist state but would be rather “comparable to Brazil and Iran”, 30 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-russian-imperialism-reply-to-critics/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

5 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 works 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/>.

6 Our main work on imperialist super-exploitation today is Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>.

7 For a summary of our approach 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/>

8 We refer readers to a special page on our website where more than 120 RCIT documents on the Ukraine War and the current NATO-Russia conflict are compiled: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/compilation-of-documents-on-nato-russia-conflict/>. In particular, we refer to the RCIT Manifesto: *Ukraine War: A Turning Point of World Historic Significance. Socialists must combine the revolutionary defense of the Ukraine against Putin's invasion with the internationalist struggle against Russian as well as NATO and EU imperialism*, 1 March 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/manifesto->

[ukraine-war-a-turning-point-of-world-historic-significance/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/russia-and-the-theory-of-lesser-evil-imperialism/)

9 We shall note that there exist revisionist organisations like the RKRП – a Stalinist party in Russia, led by Viktor Tyulkin – which characterise Russia as imperialist but, at the same time, view it as a “lesser evil” which has to be supported against the “worse” imperialists in the West! See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Russia and the Theory of “Lesser-Evil” Imperialism. On some Stalinists and “Trotskyists” who formally recognize Russia’s class character but reject the political consequences, 28 July 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/russia-and-the-theory-of-lesser-evil-imperialism/>.

Another version of such a theory is the conception of Claudio Katz, a progressive professor at the University of Buenos Aires who is a well-known economist in Latin America. He has developed the theory that Russia is not an imperialist power but rather “a semi-periphery country which is harassed by the United States” and “a non-hegemonic empire in gestation.” For our refutation of this theory see: Michael Pröbsting: Russia: An Imperialist Power or a “Non-Hegemonic Empire in Gestation”? A reply to the Argentinean economist Claudio Katz, in: New Politics, 11 August 2022, <https://newpol.org/russia-an-imperialist-power-or-a-non-hegemonic-empire-in-gestation-a-reply-to-the-argentinean-economist-claudio-katz-an-essay-with-8-tables/>.

10 See on this e.g. our essay by Michael Pröbsting: The Struggle of Revolutionaries in Imperialist Heartlands against Wars of their “Own” Ruling Class. Examples from the history of the RCIT and its predecessor organisation in the last four decades, 2 September 2022, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-struggle-of-revolutionaries-in-imperialist-heartlands-against-wars-of-their-own-ruling-class/>

11 Leon Trotsky: The Permanent Revolution, Merit Publishers, New York 1969, p. 144

12 The two main works in which we deal with the theory of imperialism and its relevance for the analysis of capitalism in the 21st century are two books by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Impe-

rialism 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/>; 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/>

13 Lenin once attacked Karl Kautsky, the German theoretician of revisionism, for separating the political and economic features of imperialism. “Kautsky divorces imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as “disarmament”, “ultra-imperialism” and similar nonsense. The whole purpose and significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the most profound contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of “unity” with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social-chauvinists and opportunists.” (V. I. Lenin: Imperialism and the Split in Socialism; in: LCW Vol. 23, p.107)

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

15 V. I. Lenin: A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism (1916); in: LCW Vol. 23, p. 34

16 See e.g. Trotsky’s note: “Colonial and semi-colonial – and therefore backward – countries, which embrace by far the greater part of mankind, differ extraordinarily from one another in their degree of backwardness, representing an historical ladder reaching from nomadry, and even cannibalism, up to the most modern industrial culture. The combination of extremes in one degree or another characterizes all of the backward countries. However, the hierarchy of backwardness, if one may employ such an expression, is determined by the specific weight of the elements of barbarism and culture in the life of each colonial country. Equatorial Africa lags far behind Algeria, Paraguay behind Mexico,

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.

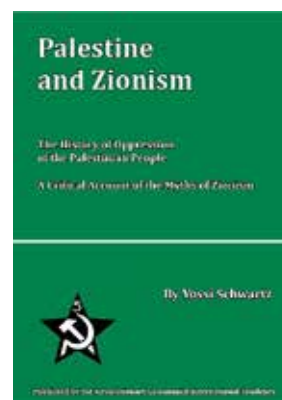
Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership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



- Abyssinia behind India or China. With their common economic dependence upon the imperialist metropolis, their political dependence bears in some instances the character of open colonial slavery (India, Equatorial Africa), while in others it is concealed by the fiction of State independence (China, Latin America)."* (Leon Trotsky: Introduction, in: Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* [1938], Haymarket Books, Chicago 2009, p. xiv, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/xx/china.htm>)
- 17 Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South*, p. 228
- 18 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *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/>; see also chapter IV in the above-mentioned book *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* as well as chapter 9 in the above-mentioned book *The Great Robbery of the South*.
- 19 For a more detailed discussion of this concept, see Michael Pröbsting: *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/>
- 20 All figures are from the database for the IMF: *World Economic Outlook*, April 2022; it can be downloaded here: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/April/download-entire-database>
- 21 Fortune Global 500, <https://fortune.com/global500/>; see also Alena Botros: *These 10 countries have only one Fortune Global 500 company*, 8 August 2022, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/10-countries-only-one-fortune-100000657.html>
- 22 Forbes: *Global 2000: The World's Largest Public Companies 2018*, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristinstoller/2018/06/06/the-worlds-largest-public-companies-2018/>; see also Andrea Murphy: *Forbes Global 2000: The world's biggest companies*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.forbesindia.com/article/cross-border/forbes-global-2000-the-worlds-biggest-companies/50555/1>
- 23 Hakan Yilmaz: *Neoliberalism and Financialization in Turkey*, CUNY Academic Works, 2020, p. 14
- 24 Galip L. Yalman, Thomas Marois and Ali Rıza Güngen (Eds.): *The Political Economy of Financial Transformation in Turkey*, Routledge, London 2019, p. 142
- 25 Thomas Marois: *States, Banks and Crisis, Emerging Finance Capitalism in Mexico and Turkey*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham 2012, p. 192
- 26 Talat Ulussever: *The Relationship between Foreign Direct Investment and Capital Formation in Emerging Economies: The Case Of The Turkish Economy*, in: *The Journal of Knowledge Economy & Knowledge Management / Volume: V (Spring 2010)*, p. 44; see also: Jiyān Kirān: *Expanding the framework of the varieties of capitalism: Turkey as a hierarchical market economy*, in: *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9 (2018), pp. 42-51
- 27 UNCTAD: *World Investment Report 2022*, p.212
- 28 UNCTAD: *World Investment Report 2022*, p.216
- 29 UNCTAD: *World Investment Report 2022*, pp.216-217
- 30 Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye: *Balance of Payments Statistics, Data Governance and Statistics Department*, July 2022, Table 13. Readers should take into account that we have not listed all regions since Latin America and Oceania are not relevant destinations of Turkish capital export.
- 31 Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye: *International Investment Position, Data Governance and Statistics Department*, July 2022, Table 10. Readers should take into account that we have not listed all regions since Latin America and Oceania are not relevant destinations of Turkish capital export.
- 32 OECD Economic Surveys, Turkey, January 2021, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/2cd09ab1-en>, p. 30
- 33 World Bank: *Turkey Economic Monitor*, February 2022: *Sailing Against The Tide*, Washington 2022, p. 103
- 34 OECD Economic Surveys, Turkey, January 2021, p. 31
- 35 World Bank. 2022. *International Debt Statistics 2022*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1800-4, p. 152
- 36 World Bank: *International Debt Statistics 2022*, p. 44
- 37 OECD Economic Surveys, Turkey, January 2021, p. 43
- 38 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Tek Yol Devrim! Action Program for Turkey*, October 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/program-turkey/>; see also: *The Elections in Turkey and the Kurdish National Question*, 19.6.2015, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/turkish-elections-kurds/>; *Turkey: Stop the Aggression against the Kurds! No to the US/France/UK Crusade against the People of Iraq and Syria!* 29 July 2015, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/turkish-war-on-kurds/>
- 39 The RCIT has published a number of booklets, statements, and articles on the Syrian Revolution that can be accessed on a special sub-section of this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>.
- 40 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Yemen: Another Humiliating Blow for the Saudi Aggressors! Yemeni popular resistance eliminates three pro-Saudi military brigades*, 02.10.2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/yemen-another-humiliating-blow-for-the-saudi-aggressors/>
- 41 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Somalia: Drive Out the AMISOM and Western Occupation Forces! Daring Guerilla Attack against U.S. Army Base and EU Military Convoy*, 30 September 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/somalia-drive-out-the-amisom-and-western-occupation-forces/>
- 42 See e.g. RCIT: *Turkey and the Growing Tensions in Eastern Mediterranean. Theses on the complex contradictions between imperialist and regional powers, the Arab Revolution and the consequential tactics of Marxists*, 28 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/turkey-and-the-growing-tensions-in-eastern-mediterranean/>
- 43 Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South*, p. 389
- 44 Leon Trotsky: *Latin American Problems: A Transcript (1938)*, in *Writings of Leon Trotsky Supplement (1934-40)*, p. 784
- 45 We have elaborated on this issue in more detail in chapter II and V in our book by Michael Pröbsting: *World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries*, RCIT Books, February 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>; see also the above-mentioned RCIT Theses: *Turkey and the Growing Tensions in Eastern Mediterranean*.
- 46 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Armenia-Azerbaijan: A New War in the South Caucasus. Reactionary regimes in crisis wage a chauvinist war against each other. Russia's intervention would transform it into an imperialist war*, 30 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/new-war-in-the-south-caucasus/>
- 47 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Syria: On the Turkish-Russian Confrontation in Idlib. Continue supporting the heroic Syrian resistance! Kick out the Russian-Iranian-Assadist occupiers! But don't trust Ankara's political games! Open Europe's borders for Syrian refugees!* 29 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/syria-on-the-turkish-russian-confrontation-in-idlib/>
- 48 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Libya: Defend Tripoli! Defeat Haftar! For Popular Militias to organize an independent struggle against the counterrevolution!* 9 April 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/libya->

[defend-tripoli-defeat-haftar/](#); Egypt's Dictator Sisi Threatens to Invade Libya. Defeat the counterrevolutionary bandit Haftar and the powers behind him!, 24 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-s-dictator-sisi-threatens-to-invade-libya/>

49 One could also mention in this context the well-known assassination of Russia's ambassador in Turkey by Mevlut Mert Altintas in December 2016 as revenge for Moscow's military intervention in Syria and the its involvement in the slaughter of the Syrian people in Aleppo. See on this: RCIT: The Syrian Revolution and the Assassination of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, 21.12.2016, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/assassination-of-russian-ambassador/>

50 V.I. Lenin: Socialism and War (1915); in: LCW 21, pp. 300-301

51 Leon Trotsky: Resolution on the Antiwar Congress of the London Bureau (1936), in: Documents of the Fourth International, New York 1973, p. 99

52 Leon Trotsky: Speech at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (1 December 1922), in: John Riddell (Ed.): Toward the United Front. Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922, Historical Materialism Book Series, Brill, Leiden 2012, p. 1000

53 See the above-mentioned essay by Michael Pröbsting: The Struggle of Revolutionaries in Imperialist Heartlands against Wars of their "Own" Ruling Class.

54 For a Marxist discussion of this issue see several works of M. N. Pokrovskii, an outstanding Russian Marxist historian and the leading figure of Soviet historiography in the 1920s, who enabled a fruitful discussion among various historians and made himself important contributions for the understanding of Russia's history (irrespective of his methodological weakness which Trotsky pointed out). Among his works which were translated into English language, the following is of interest for the issue under discussion: chapter II to VI in History of Russia. From the Earliest Times to the Rise of Commercial Capitalism (1928), Martin Lawrence Limited, London 1931; chapter VI in Russia in World History; Selected Essays, Edited by Roman Szporluk, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1970; While Pokrovskii was a consistent opponent of Great Russian chauvinism and its reactionary concept of history, Soviet historian, after the Stalinist purges which started in the early 1930s, adapted to such a concept. Concerning their views of the Mongol and Tatar period see e.g. chapter III and IV in I. I. Smirnov (Ed.): A Short History of the USSR, Vol. 1, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of

History, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965; see as well chapter 4 and 5 in S. Schmidt, K. Tarnovsky and I. Berkhin: A Short History of the USSR, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1984. An interesting work on this issue, from a bourgeois academic, is Charles J. Halperin: The Tatar Yoke. The Image of the Mongols in Medieval Russia, Slavica Publishers, Columbus 1986

55 See e.g. RCIT: Boycott Imperialist and Islamophobic France! Solidarity with the Muslim migrants! Drive out the French occupiers from Mali and other countries! 26.10.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/boycott-imperialist-and-islamophobic-france/>; Yossi Schwartz: Down with the Islamophobia in France: "We Are Not Samuel!", 20 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/down-with-the-islamophobia-in-france/>; Michael Pröbsting: France: "Our Republic"? Social-Chauvinism and Capitulation to Islamophobia by the Left, 2 November 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/social-chauvinism-and-capitulation-to-islamophobia-by-the-french-left/>

56 See ? See on this e.g. RCIT: France after the Attacks in Paris: Defend the Muslim People against Imperialist Wars, Chauvinist Hatemongering, and State Repression! 9.1.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/statement-paris-attacks/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Racist Character of Charlie Hebdo and the pro-imperialist campaign "Je Suis Charlie". Solidarity with Muslim People! NOT Solidarity with Charlie Hebdo! 17.1.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/racist-charlie-hebdo/>; by the same author: After the Paris Attack: Socialists must Join Hands with Muslim People Against Imperialism and Racism! Reformist and Centrist Forces try to derail the Workers Movement by Failing to Stand up for Solidarity with the Muslims and Against Imperialist War-Mongering! 17.1.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/france-defend-muslims/>

57 See e.g. the collections of quotes in Paul B. Henze: Marx on Russians and Muslims, in: Central Asian Survey. Vol. 6. No. 4, pp. 33-45

58 Karl Marx: Letter to Wilhelm Liebknecht (4 February 1878), in: MECW Vol. 45, p. 296; see also the collection of writings of Marx on Russia which was published by Marx's daughter Eleanor and her husband. Karl Marx: The Eastern Question. A Reprint of Letters written 1853-1856 dealing with the events of the Crimean War; edited by

Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London 1897

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