

**Imperialism and Marxist Theory**

**David M. Kotz**

**PhD in Economics, is Professor in Department of Economics Thompson Hall, University of Massachusetts Amherst and Professor at School of Economics, Co-Director of the Political Economy Department, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics Shanghai, PRC**

**Abstract**

Imperialism is among the many topics on which Cheng Enfu has written. His recent coauthored article “Five Characteristics of Neoimperialism” (Enfu and Lu 2021) offers a Marxist analysis of contemporary imperialism.

It considers the role of globalization, financialization, monopolization, and other features of global capitalism.

It provides valuable insights about the character of the contemporary imperialist system.

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capitalism. It provides valuable insights about the character of the contemporary imperialist system.

This article provides an analysis of the Marxist concept of imperialism. Section 2 asks what is meant by “imperialism” in the Marxist tradition. Section 3 examines the roots of imperialism in the basic relations of capitalism. Section 4 reviews the evolution of the imperialist system in the capitalist era through about 1990. Section 5 assesses the contemporary world system. Section 6 offers concluding comments.

A future world without imperialism would be a great advance for human welfare. However, it cannot emerge until the capitalist epoch, and with it class society, draws to a close. One cannot rule out occasional frictions between nation-states in a future socialist world if nation-states remain in that future world. However, a future socialist world, even if made up of nation-states of some kind, would not have an imperialist economic drive.

**Marxism- Leninism: A Scientific Method And Guide For Understanding And Transforming The World**

*Cheng Enfu and Li Wei*

Cheng Enfu is Chief Professor at University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Former Dean of Marxism Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Li We is Researcher at of Marxist Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

**Abstract :** This article offers a retrospective assessment of the new Chinese translations and publication *Marx and Engels Works* and *Lenin Thematic Collections*. The article sets forth five key issues of theoretical concern: the emphasis on becoming revolutionaries and builders like Marx and Lenin; the illustration of scientific tools for understanding that the two collections provide; the exposition of the union of proletarians and oppressed nations all over the world; the discussion of socialism as the elimination of classes and exploitation, and the Communist Party as the leader and organizer of the proletariat.

In 2009, two new compilations were published: *Marx and Engels Works* (10 volumes) and *Lenin Thematic Collections* (5 volumes) in China. This was a commendable achievement in the intellectual and cultural sphere. During the 1980s and 1990s, the International Communist Movement experienced severe setbacks, and the promotion of Marxism-Leninism encountered unprecedented resistance globally. Within such an international context, the Communist Party of China initiated and completed this significant project of editing and publishing Marxist-Leninist works, making a tangible effort to spread and develop Marxism-Leninism and to revive the International Communist Movement that had for a time fallen into a trough.

On the important issue of how to study Marxism-Leninism and its role in the international communist movement, Deng Xiaoping's summarizing assertion, drawn from the long-term practice of the Chinese Communists, should become a guide for all comrades who adhere to Marxism. He stated, "The ideological and theoretical work of Marxism cannot be divorced from practical politics. By politics here, I refer to the overall situation of class struggle both domestically and internationally, the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and the people of the world in their actual struggle. It is inconceivable to become a Marxist thinker or theorist without studying the overall political situation, without examining the overall political situation, without assessing the actual development of revolutionary struggles." Guided by Marxism-Leninism and its sinicization, we must continue to promote continuous progress and harmony in China and the world.

***Imbalanced Global Expansion Of 21st Century Capitalism And The Outward Friendly Cooperation Of China: Book Review Of Werner Rügemer's "the New Capitalists Of The 21st Century"***

*Cheng Enfu and Yin Xing*

Cheng Enfu is Chief Professor at University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Former Dean of Marxist Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Yin Xing is Associate Professor at Shanghai Maritime University and Ph.D. in Economics.

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, there has been on the one hand the apparent trend of the United States in turning away from globalization, while on the other hand there has been a

hidden agenda of continued global expansion by US financial capital. These two trends intertwine with each other, seemingly contradictory yet inherently interconnected. The United States, unable to implement effective institutional reforms after the financial crisis to check the disorderly expansion of financial capital and mitigate its domestic economic and political contradictions, views China, which is actively promoting globalization, as a challenger to the US hegemonic order and consistently pursues "de-Sinicization", further exacerbating their own systemic crisis and global governance crisis. The world is experiencing a once-in-a-century major transformation, which is evolving at an accelerated pace. The world is entering a period of turbulence and transformation, facing more uncertainties and unpredictable factors. It is necessary to be prepared for significant challenges, even to face fierce storms and tumultuous waves. The major challenge appears to be on the surface, but its internal contradictions lie in the hidden agenda. The pressing concerns for China and the world are as follows: how to fully comprehend the inherent contradictions of the 21st-century's new global expansion of US financial capital; the external impact of these developments on China's socialism with Chinese characteristics in its promotion of friendly cooperation around the globe; coping better with the significant changes and potential turbulence; and improve the global economic order.

Dr. Werner Rügemer, a well-known German scholar, has published a book entitled *The New Capitalists of the 21st Century* (Chinese edition published by Oriental Press in June 2023, translated by Xiao Lei). In this book, Rügemer conducts a detailed and professional study of the global expansion and inherent crisis of 21st-century American financial capital, while acknowledging and anticipating the contributions of Socialism with Chinese characteristics in promoting global friendly cooperation. The book clearly points out that since the 1980s, global capital, driven by globalization and informatization, has concentrated itself significantly and formed a few large capital groups that virtually control the most critical industries and companies in the West. These are called the "new capitalist" of the 21st century. The deep and wide expansion of this new capitalism globally has not only intensified the concentration of wealth and power imbalances between labor and capital but also strengthened the economic and political control of the United States over Europe. It has triggered global financial crises and continues to dominate even after the crises, using distorted neoliberal policies in an effort to mitigate the neoliberal crisis.

### **A New Socioeconomic Formation? Philosophical Reflections On China's "new Projectment Economy"**

*Roland Boer*

Roland Boer is a professor in the School of Philosophy at Renmin University of China, Beijing. In recent years, his research has focused on the philosophical aspects of socialist

construction, with a particular interest in Marxist political philosophy and the philosophical dimensions of political economy. The most recent publications include *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: A Guide for Foreigners* (2021), *Friedrich Engels and the Foundations of Socialist Governance* (2021), and *Socialism in Power: On the History and Theory of Socialist Governance* (2023). His current research project concerns the history of Marxist philosophy in China from 1978 to the present.

**Abstract:** This article seeks to provide a more comprehensive philosophical framework for the proposed model of a “new projectment economy” in China. Developed by a research team of political economists and social scientists, the “new projectment economy” offers an innovative theoretical framework in an attempt to interpret facts on the ground in China. However, what is needed is more extensive philosophical analysis of what is at stake. Thus, the article has two main sections. The first provides a critical overview of the move from the “old projectment” as initially proposed by the Brazilian economist Ignacio Rangel, as well the key points of the “new projectment” in relation to China. The second main section turns to connect the proposal of the research team with Chinese Marxist philosophical analysis, in terms of the development of contradiction analysis, a reconstruction of China’s economic history since 1949, and a proposed dialectical transformation (*Aufhebung*) of both plan and market in the new era. Further engagement by the “projectment” research team with Chinese scholars and policy-makers should be the next step, for this would lead to mutual enrichment through complementarity and difference.

This study offers philosophical reflections on the proposal that China is in the process of establishing a new socioeconomic formation that in its most recent developments is known as the “new projectment economy.” A couple of terms in this opening sentence need some further explication. To begin with, the “new projectment economy” is a model being developed by a research team to understand what they see as the latest phase of a qualitatively new socioeconomic formation<sup>1</sup> that began to emerge in China since 1978. Initially, the formation in question was described as a “socialist market economy” and it continues to be so described by many scholars and students of Chinese development. The proposed “new projectment economy” is distinct in the sense that it provides a model for understanding the most recent manifestation of this socioeconomic formation. The theoretical foundation of the “new projectment economy” is the initial work of the Brazilian philosophical economist Ignacio Rangel, who provides the source of a new vocabulary and indeed a new theoretical framework to understand the evidence arising from concrete practice. For the research team existing categories are inadequate, whether from neoclassical, heterodox, or even Marxist political economy.

## **Exploration Of The Communist Party Of The Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) On The Construction Of Socialist Culture In The Soviet Union And Its Value**

*Sun Shaoyong*

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed analysis of the category of “socioeconomic formation” and its relation to “mode of production,” see Gabriele and Jabbour (2022, 45–60).

Sun Shaoyong, male, Doctor of Law, Professor and PhD Supervisor at the School of Marxism, Northwestern Polytechnical University. He is also a special researcher at the Economic and Social Development Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His research mainly focuses on the Sinicization of Marxism, and cultural and economic social development.

**Abstract:** The construction of socialist culture is related to the development of the economy and society as it is with the foundation of party governance. Following the triumph of the October Revolution in Russia, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) thoroughly recognized the importance of developing advanced culture. It concerned itself with the development of socialist cultural construction, addressing the challenge of how relatively backward socialist nations could cultivate their cultures. This endeavor yielded substantial achievements, not only significantly impacting the Soviet economy and society's evolution but also enriching and advancing Marx and Engels's understanding of culture. This paper seeks to analyze the theoretical approach of the CPSU (B) leadership in the construction of socialist culture in the Soviet Union, understands and grasps the development of the CPSU (B) in the construction of socialist culture in the Soviet Union and its value. The later errors of the Soviet Communist Party in guiding the progression of socialist cultural construction were a direct contradiction to the ideological principles of Marxist-Leninist cultural construction. The resulting insights hold profound significance and offer valuable reference points for fostering the proletariat's advanced culture and enhancing the cultural soft power of socialist countries.

Culture is the essence that nourishes a nation and its people, keeping alive their roots and guiding their future. Following the success of the Russian Revolution, Lenin emphasized, "Communism cannot be built without a wealth of knowledge, technology, and culture."<sup>2</sup> Since socialism is founded on absorbing the achievements of capitalist civilization, developing a culture more advanced and robust than capitalism is a crucial task for socialist countries. XI Jinping has also stressed, "Culture is the soul of a country and a nation." History and reality have shown that nations that abandon or betray their own historical culture not only fail to develop but also risk experiencing historical tragedies."<sup>3</sup> After the formation of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of the CPSU (B) explored socialist cultural construction, achieving significant milestones. These efforts played a pivotal role in consolidating the nascent regime and driving the economic and social development of the Soviet Union.

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2 *Complete Works of Lenin* (Volume 30) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1957: 126.

3 *XI Jinping Talks about Governance* (Volume 2) [M]. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2017: 349.

For China, achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires a deeper focus on strategic goals in cultural construction. This includes continuously enhancing the national cultural soft power, such as improving the guiding and unifying power of socialist ideology, innovating in the inheritance of China's excellent traditional culture, fostering the prosperity and development of philosophy and social sciences, and continually boosting the nation's cultural influence. It also involves sticking to fostering a sense of cultural consciousness, independence, confidence, and self-improvement among the country and its people.

## **Commentary On The 23rd International Meeting Of Communist And Workers' Parties**

*Yu Weihai and Hu Zewen*

**Yu Weihai , PhD in Laws, is a professor at Political Science and International Studies, World socialist and Communist Movement, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China**

**Hu Zewen , PhD Candidate, is a researcher at Political Science and International Studies, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China.**

**Abstract:** The 23rd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties was held on 19-22 October 2023 in Izmir, Turkey. It was held against the background of the deepening crisis of capitalism, the continuous outbreak of regional wars, the rise of social and workers' movements, the relentless increase in anti-communist activities, the convening of congresses by new parties, and the success of some political parties in the elections. The meeting explored issues arising from the current regional wars, expressed solidarity with the world socialist and anti-imperialist movements, discussed the new requirements of ideological struggle in a field changed by capitalist information technology, and finally formulated a joint action plan. The international meeting embodied the spirit of internationalism among the various communist and workers' parties, but at the same time it also revealed certain conflicts and differences among the Parties.

The 23rd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (IMCWP) took place on 19-22 October 2023. The meeting was hosted by the Communist Party of Turkey in Izmir, Turkey and attended by 121 representatives of 68 parties from 54 countries. The theme of the meeting was as follows: "The political and ideological battles to confront capitalists and imperialism. The tasks of communists to inform and mobilize the working class, youth,

women, and intellectuals in the struggle against exploitation, oppression, imperialist lies and historical revisionism; for the social and democratic rights of workers and peoples; against militarism and war, for peace and socialism.”<sup>4</sup> The meeting resulted in a Plan of Action, a Declaration and six Solidarity Statements voluntarily signed by some of the participating political parties.

The South African Communist Party stated that “Young people’s vitality, creativity, and determination is a potent force for change. Women, who often bear the brunt of gender-based oppression, have a unique perspective to offer in the fight for equality. Intellectuals, with their critical thinking and analytical skills, can be a bridge towards a deeper understanding of the injustices perpetuated by the capitalist system. It is our duty as communists to engage and educate these groups, forging alliances and empowering them to contribute to the struggle.”<sup>5</sup> The Communist Party of Ireland has also stated that “the historic task before us, is, as it has been since the inception of the Communist movement, the mobilisation of the working class, youth, women, and intellectuals in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism and its replacement by socialism.”<sup>6</sup> In the course of the world socialist movement, united front work can help to unite and coalesce the forces of all classes and groups, harmonize the interests of all parties and promote the forward development of the socialist revolution.

## **The Empirical Relevance Of The Okiahio Theorem**

### **A study on the USA, UK and Japan**

*Pablo Fernández Ruiz*

Pablo Fernández Ruiz, PhD in economics on the Complutense University in Madrid, Spain.

**Abstract:** In this work we examine the empirical evidence of Okishio's theorem in three developed countries: the USA, UK and Japan. This theorem has been seen as one of the most important elements of debates on the Marxian law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Following a process that is difficult to criticize from the logical-mathematical point of view, Okishio’s theorem argues that, given some assumptions, the introduction of technical change in a capitalist economy must cause the rate of profit to increase, and this implies a contradiction of

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<sup>4</sup> 23rd International Meeting of Communist & Workers Parties, <http://solidnet.org/meetings-and-statements/imcwp/23rd-international-meeting-of-communist-workers-parties/>

<sup>5</sup> 23rd IMCWP, Contribution by South African CP, <http://solidnet.org/article/23rd-IMCWP-Contribution-by-South-African-CP/>

<sup>6</sup> 23rd IMCWP, Contribution by CP of Ireland, <http://solidnet.org/article/23rd-IMCWP-Contribution-by-CP-of-Ireland/>

the Marxian law. In this study we will observe how the three economies analyzed have surprisingly similar behavior pattern when we model with econometric software the effects of technical change on the path followed by the profit rate. We can verify that this introduction of advances within production is related to a fall in the rate of profit when we take into account in the model other important variables such as real wages, showing that the results of Okishio's theorem do not resemble reality.

Okishio's theorem has been widely accepted as the standard refutation of the Marxian version of the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (LTRPF). Let us remember that this law did not originate with Marx, but rather it was the classic authors of political economy who theorized this process for the first time. While Adam Smith (1956) attributed the fall in profitability to an inevitable result of the forces of competition between capitalists, which force them to progressively lower prices, David Ricardo (1959) linked this law with his theory of rent. For the Anglo-Portuguese economist, the progressive occupation of less fertile lands and the tendency of the rent to equalize would mean that the surplus left to the capitalist would be progressively smaller as the population grew. Marx, who noticed in this tendency *"the most important law of modern political economy, and the most essential one for comprehending the most complex relationships"* (Marx 1857–1858, 133), nevertheless attributed its origin to the development of productive forces within the capitalist mode of production. Thus, what for a capitalist implied an increase in his individual rate of profit through the introduction of productive advances, for all of them it meant a fall in the general rate of profit when said technical change had become widespread. This law, therefore, expresses the inherently contradictory component of the processes of capitalist accumulation and reproduction. Later Marxists, whether seeing in this principle the fervent proof of the eventual and inevitable collapse of the capitalist system – Grossman, Luxemburg...etc. - or simply pointing it out as one of the forces that cause the increasingly recurrent crises that hit the economies of the world, have recognized the LTRPF as one of the fundamental elements of the Marxian critique of political economy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the publication of Okishio's theorem aroused controversy and numerous debates. This theorem, which appears in the paper "Technical Change and the Rate of Profit" (1966), basically proposes the following: under certain assumptions – the most important of which is that real wages must remain constant – a Marx-biased technical change<sup>7</sup> produces an increase in the rate of profit when produced in a fundamental sector<sup>8</sup> or in one that participates in the production of fundamental goods.

In light of the results, it seems clear that the Marxian LTRPF has not lost its theoretical or empirical validity. For this reason, we consider it appropriate for all economists who really seek to delve scientifically into the connections, relationships and internal laws that govern the movement of modern capitalist societies would do well to take into account a principle, which not only shows the opposite of the movements of capitalist accumulation and reproduction, but is also a tool with an immense capacity to understand the reasons

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<sup>7</sup> This implies an increase in the capital/labour relation and in labour productivity. That is why is called a capital using-labour saving (CU-LS) technical change.

<sup>8</sup> That is, a sector that produces wage goods.

underlying the devastating crises that occur – and increasingly recurrently – within the capitalist economies in the world.

***On Imperialism And The War On Gaza: Ali Kadri Interviewed***

*Karin Leukefeld*

**Ali Kadri is the author of the Journal Arab Development Denied: Dynamics of Accumulation by Wars of Encroachment and The Accumulation of Waste: A Political Economy of Systemic Destruction, and The Unmaking of Arab Socialism.**

**Karin Leukefeld is a freelance Journalist covering the Middle East, She is author of Conflagration: Syria, Iraq, the Arab World and the Islamic State and Syria between shadow and light- people talk about their torn country.**

**Question 1. The 15th of January commemorates the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919. Does Rosa Luxemburg, do the German Communists have any meaning for international communist movements or parties today?**

**Kadri:** Doubtless, the internationalism of Luxemburg provides a much-needed emphasis for guiding working class action today. Her emphases on capitalism's drive to integrate new markets in the South and on militarism as a domain of accumulation still inform us that the laws of capital will only intensify unless labour takes hold of history. Rosa Luxemburg's and Karl Liebknecht's martyrdom is a testimony to their unwavering internationalism. As to German communists, their struggle against fascism also stands as a lesson in commitment to the cause of emancipation. Although the Soviet Union may have, through direct military and other aid to the developing world or because of its weight in international relations, limited opportunities for imperialist aggression in the Third World, the communists of the GDR were at the forefront of developing avant-garde anti-imperialist policies. This history of struggle is not without meaning; however, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the crisis of communist ideology that followed placed communism in a position of revision and self-inspection. Revision of socialist practice centred around the interest of the working class, as opposed to revision that compromises socialist theory to capital, is a welcome attempt to keep track of changing realities with which thought, to use Lenin's point, often fails to catch up.

However, the condition of socialist defeat has since augmented the "global waste phenomenon." What do I mean by "global waste phenomenon?" There are as we speak more prematurely wasted people and pollution in evidence today than all the commodity wealth on display. Capital has become manifest as a system of relations whose activities have placed the planet beyond the point of no return. Global society is repressed and made to pay for and consume the waste. Standard theory says that the use values of commodities are stripped away from their social producers and sold. Since the heap of harmful commodities, the waste,

is way higher than the heap of useful or sane commodities, waste products are also stripped away from social producers and sold back to them. The term “value relation” resonates with the sense of something positive and of use value. To replace value relations with waste relations is closer to facts and delivers more meaning.

**In the preface to your latest book *Accumulation of Waste*, you wrote that “imperialist war in particular, the purest form of waste, is seen as a value-creating activity ... whose saleable product is the premature death of labour.” The cannibalistic classes (in the Global North) consume the cannibalised masses of the Global South. You describe a “raging beast”, evoking Luxemburg. However, your analysis has appeared more than 100 years later. What has changed, or rather, what has become clearer than it was 100 years ago?**

**Kadri:** War, as Marx pointed out, is utter waste. Nations invest in machines, people and know-how that they cast away or destroy. In war, like in any polluting activity aggressing social nature, there are waged soldiers employed with machines that produce the wasted lives, the lives cut short before their historically determined time. We should note as an aside that time is qualitative, the age to which one can live to now is not the same time the age to which one could live to a thousand years ago, given the growth of productive forces and scientific advances. Thus, to say that capitalism lets people live longer than previously is deceptive, since people in earlier times lived subject to hunger and disease. Now the possibility of a good life is far greater, yet the masses die way before average achievable longevity.

*Towards The Future With Lenin!*  
*Address Of The Central Committee Of The Cprf To The*  
*People Of Russia*

*Gennady Zyuganov*

**Gennady Zyuganov, Doctor of Philosophy, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, leader of the Russian Communist Party in the Russian State Duma. Long-term active in the left-wing movement in the former Soviet Union.**

**Dear fellow citizens,**

**Comrades and friends,**

**Each of us can see that in the third millennium humanity has not been spared from misery and suffering. From the horror of wars and bloody conflicts. From mass poverty. World capitalism is pushing us into the darkness of reaction and violence. More and more ruthless is the grin of predators who want to tear the world to pieces and assert their dominance. The deeper the tragic character of events, the brighter shines the great example of the heroes and fighters for the happiness and a worthy life for the working people.**

**Russia was extremely lucky. At Russia's most difficult period of disintegration, disarray, and deep crisis came along the man who understood like no-one else the essence of historical turning points and the way out of the country's tragic situation. He perceived "the nerve of history" and led the movement forward. The name of that man is Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. One hundred years have passed since his large and kind heart stopped beating. We have begun the second century of Lenin's immortality.**

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin passed away on 21 January 1924. The tragic news shook the Soviet Union – the country he founded. Profound grief filled the hearts of millions of working people across the planet. Despite the severe cold, masses of people streamed to Moscow. Up to half a million people came to the Hall of Columns in the Trade Union Building. Each of them wanted to honor the memory of the man who changed the world forever, who made it purer and more just.

World history is vast, complex and multi-faceted. It has many metrics and various “scales,” which determine the contribution of everyone to the course of life. **By any planetary measure, Lenin’s contribution to the destiny of humanity is enormous.** As we enter the second century after his death, Russia and the world will continue to march under the influence of his great discoveries and outstanding achievements.

It would seem that there is nothing eternal under the sun. Yet life shows that time is no obstacle for passing on truly great ideas. After testing their strength, history elevates them to ever greater heights. **It is 175 years since the publication of the Communist Manifesto. But history has not forgotten the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which were taken up and brilliantly implemented by Lenin.**

Communist theory was an unheard-of accomplishment in the history of humanity. For the first time in thousands of years it answered the key, fundamental questions of world history. From century to century the best brains struggled to resolve them. And then **a teaching appeared that discovered the laws of the development of society.**

The CPRF is constantly studying the best of management practices. On this basis, the Party has proposed drafts of laws, government programs, and national projects. Important contributions to this work are being made by **I. Melnikov and V. Kashin, N. Kharitonov and Yu. Afonin, D. Novikov and L. Kalashnikov, N. Kolimeitsev and S. Savitskaya, M. Arefyev and K. Taysyev, O. Smolin and N. Ivanov, N. Ostanina and Yu. Sinelshchikov, V. Sobolev and N. Osadchy, S. Kazankov and A. Kurinny. G. Kamnev and V. Isakov,** as well as all the CPRF deputies.

Our **Victory Program** guarantees a fundamental change of policy. It is aimed at **improving the quality of life and well-being of citizens.** Its provisions include:

- nationalization of strategically important sectors;
- long-term socio-economic planning;
- removing the oligarchy from managing the economy;
- substantial increases in government investments in the high-tech economy, science, education, and healthcare;
- stopping capital outflows from the country;
- comprehensive support of people’s and collective enterprises;
- improving the people’s well-being and providing broad access to cultural achievements.

**We attach paramount importance to uniting society and mobilizing the resources, forces, and means to defeat those who have declared war on the Russian world.** Every patriot must feel personal responsibility for defending our country and its great future.

## **A Guide To Marx’s Eleven Theses On Feuerbach**

*Carlos L. Garrido*

Carlos L. Garrido is a Cuban American philosophy instructor at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He is the director of the Midwestern Marx Institute and the author of *The Purity Fetish and the Crisis of Western Marxism* (2023), *Marxism and the Dialectical Materialist Worldview* (2022), and the forthcoming *Hegel, Marxism, and Dialectics* (2024).

**Abstract:** Karl Marx's *Eleven Theses on Feuerbach* is, as Friedrich Engels argued, the "first document" that "deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook." Its shortness and celebrated phrases have made it a classical pedagogical tool for teaching Marxism. However, with such ubiquity, this philosophically loaded text has provided fertile ground for one-sided interpretations and de-contextualized misunderstandings. To combat this, the present essay historically and philosophically elaborates on the rise of the Young Hegelians and how Marx's *11 Theses* are situated in a broader critique of the philosophical movement he and Engels were once a part of. The essay also provides an exegesis of the *11 Theses* and incorporates critiques of the misconceptions which have arisen with the text's popularity. In the process, the Marxist position on questions of praxis, truth, universals, human essence, and more, is set forth.

In the middle of the 1880s, the editor of *Die Neue Zeit*, the theoretical journal of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, asked Friedrich Engels for a "critical discussion" on Carl Nicolai Starcke's new book, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (Engels 2018, 8). Engels "willingly seized" this opportunity, noticing that his and Karl Marx's thoughts on G. W. F. Hegel and post-Hegelian philosophy, specifically that of Feuerbach, had never been systematically expressed. Before embarking on his writing, Engels went to look for the "two large octave volumes" of work on post-Hegelian philosophy that he and Marx started in 1845 and abandoned to the "gnawing criticism of the mice" (Engels 2018, 7; Marx 1999, 22). This work is what we've known as *The German Ideology*, and its "main purpose," according to Marx, was "self-clarification" (Marx 1999, 22).

Upon finding these manuscripts, Engels recognized they would be "unusable" for the task laid on him by the editors of *Die Neue Zeit*. While valuable, most of it was incomplete, in a dual sense, having not only parts missing, but also showing "how incomplete [their] knowledge of economic history was at that time" (Engels 2018, 8). Engels' response to the journal would culminate in a short pamphlet called *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*.

In his search for their 1845-6 work, Engels stumbled upon an old notebook of Marx's from the same year which contained his *11 Theses on Feuerbach*, simply titled as "1) ad Feuerbach". This was, according to Engels, the "first document" that "deposited the brilliant

germ of the new world outlook,” and was edited and included as an appendix to Engels’ *Ludwig Feuerbach* (Engels 2018, 8). Since its publication, this appendix has developed a life of its own, being used as both a text for teaching Marxism and as an important subject of debate within and beyond Marxist scholarship. The famous 11<sup>th</sup> thesis was even engraved on the new tomb designed by Laurence Bradshaw in 1954 for the reburial of Marx and his family to its current place in Highgate Cemetery, North London.

The *11 Theses on Feuerbach* have a paradoxical character. On the one hand, its short length makes it a tempting text to use in introductory lessons to Marxism, on the other hand, it is so philosophically loaded that to properly understand it an ample process of contextualization, elaboration, and de-mis-conceptualization must take place. Having stated this, I would like to conclude with the sentiment Lenin expressed in the end of his first major publication in 1899, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*: “if the writer of these lines has succeeded in providing some material for clarifying these problems, he may regard his labours as not having been fruitless” (Lenin 1977b, 600).