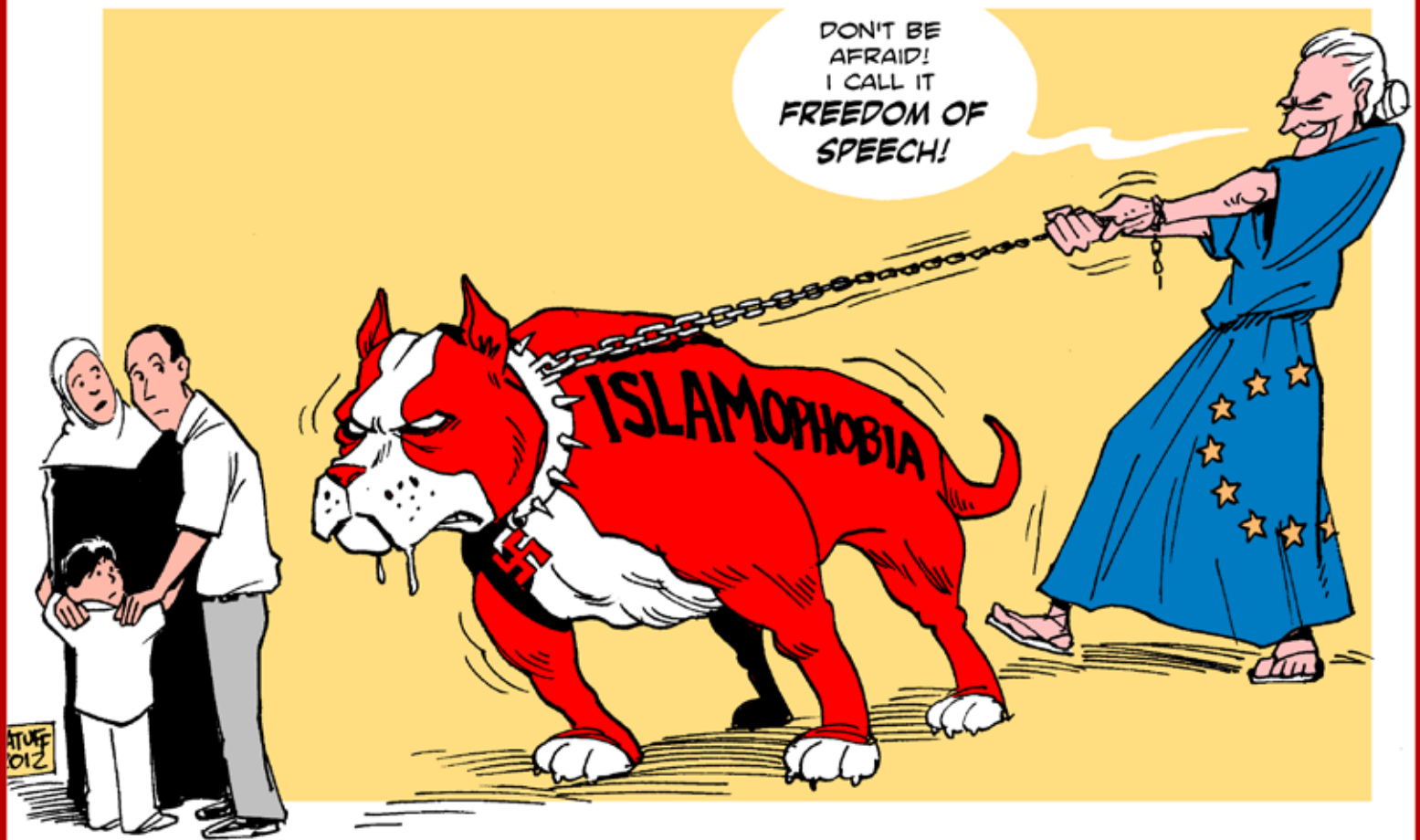




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Advancing Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contradictions

Mark the Opening of a New Political Phase (Part 2)

Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries (January 2016)

Document of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 23 January 2016

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Advancing Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contradictions Mark the Opening of a New Political Phase (Part 2)

Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries (January 2016)

IV. The World Political Situation: Class Struggle in a Phase of Counterrevolutionary Offensive

50. As we have stated above, the decline of the productive forces in the present historic period unavoidably aggravates all fundamental contradictions: (a) the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class, (b) the class struggle between the imperialist monopolies and Great Powers and the oppressed peoples, (c) and the rivalry between the imperialism powers. The following factors shape the specific conditions of the current political phase and give it an *interim character* characterized by the bourgeoisie waging a counterrevolutionary offensive and provoking sharp working class and popular struggles. We do not characterize the present phase as already being counterrevolutionary, since we are currently only at the stage where the bourgeoisie's offensive is causing significant class confrontations, but have still not reached the point at which the working class and oppressed have suffered a series of strategic defeats.

i) The downturn of the economic cycle and the approaching recession reduces the room for compromises of the bourgeoisie in all countries and drives it to develop even more aggressive means to enforce their interests.

ii) Hence the rivalry between the Great Powers, which has already been aggravated since spring 2014, will intensify even more in the coming period.

iii) The imperialist Great Powers will accelerate their military interventions in the semi-colonial world – first and foremost in North Africa and the Middle East – and collaborate more closely with reactionary dictatorships in order to pacify revolutionary popular uprisings. As a result, terrorist attacks will most likely increase too.

iv) The ruling classes – in the imperialist countries but also in the semi-colonial world – will use the “threat of terror” in order to expand the repressive state apparatus and to abolish democratic rights. Likewise, they will accelerate racism and the national oppression of migrants, and in particular of Muslim minorities.

v) The bourgeoisie all over the world will intensify their attacks on the working class by cutting wages, closing enterprises, laying-off workers, etc.

vi) The working class and the oppressed have suffered a number of defeats and retreats due to the reformist and petty-bourgeois populist leaderships. As a result the Arab Revolution is in retreat (albeit it is not liquidated), the right-wing forces in Latin America are in the offensive trying to topple various popular-front and Castro-Chavista governments, and the ruling class and racist forces are on the offensive in Europe too. Therefore, these three regions

are currently the focus of the world situation and it will be of crucial importance if the working class there succeeds in defeating the attack of the ruling class.

vii) However, there are also several other important countries which are experiencing crosscurrents and which, if successful, could turn around the international situation. We name only the four most important and most obvious: (a) The lingering Third Intifada in Palestine; (b) the militant and undefeated working class and youth in South Africa; (c) the working class and youth in Spain and Portugal which is moving to the left; (d) the working class in China which, if it were to massively rise up in an economic class struggle on the backdrop of the slowing down of the Chinese economy could be transformed into political struggles against the Stalinist-Capitalist dictatorship and hence introduce a revolutionary crisis.

51. All in all, it is important to bear in mind the *uneven and combined character* of the international development of the class struggle. While the Arab World, Latin America and Europe face counterrevolutionary offensives in the current period due to the relative political intensity of their respective class struggles, Asia and Africa are at a different stage of development. In the latter two continents the class struggle has, in most cases, taken a more purely economic character. However, this can definitely change given the looming Great Recession to come. Especially the developments in Asia and Africa are difficult to predict as the workers and oppressed of these areas might play a key role for global class struggle in the near future. It is not out of the question that the first phase of a new recession will be accompanied by spontaneous mass uprisings in Asia and Africa, as these continents suffer in particular when the price of food and fuel increases rapidly. However, this time around, such uprisings may also have deeper political consequences, i.e., massive rebellions and revolutions against the state, as well as military interventions by the imperialist forces to smash mass resistance more quickly, with the aim of avoiding developments similar to those we have seen in the Arab World.

52. Before turning in the following sections to our more concrete analyses of these contradictory political developments, we should begin with some preliminary remarks. First, what can we anticipate will happen if the working class and the oppressed *do not* succeed in reversing the retreat of the Arab Revolution, and in defeating the counter-revolutionary offensive in Latin America and Europe? Similarly, what if, at the same time, the Chinese,

Indian, and other Asian proletariats *will not* transform their economic struggles into political offensives? Such a series of serious defeats could open a counterrevolutionary phase. However, it would be extremely shortsighted to ignore the historical background of such a possible phase. For example, we experienced a counter-revolutionary phase in the first half of the 1990s after the collapse of the degenerated workers states in the years 1989-92 and the US victory against Iraq in March 1991. A counter-revolutionary phase in the present historic period of capitalist decay, wars, revolutions and counterrevolutions, i.e., in an extraordinarily unstable and revolutionary historic period, would be very different. Given the exacerbating rivalry between the imperialist powers (hardly in existence in the 1990s, due to the absolute dominance of the US after the fall of the Soviet Union); given the permanent destabilization of any political and social equilibrium due to the crisis-ridden nature of the capitalist economy; and given the discrediting of the political system, together all these factors make it most likely that such a counter-revolutionary phase would be much shorter than that of the 1990s. In any case, it would be a phase incubating future political crises and explosions. Hence, it would be a phase in which revolutionaries will have to combine educating and organizing the vanguard workers and youth on the basis of the lessons of the previous defeats, with a deepening and consolidation of their roots among militant workers and oppressed through exemplary mass work.

53. This brings us to the next point. We have repeatedly emphasized that a correct understanding of the present historic period and its revolutionary character is essential in order to find the correct orientation in such tumultuous and explosive times. Otherwise, the evolving of the world situation only leads one to regular being surprised and disoriented, as so often happens among the reformists and centrists in such periods. It is therefore crucial for revolutionary workers and youth to be aware that the present historic period has a long-term character. In fact we are currently only in its early phases. Due to the nature of the capitalist decay, we may witness in this period a number of revolutions à la Russia 1905–07, i.e., working class and popular uprisings which ultimately fail due to the absence of a strong revolutionary party, but whose

failure may serve as the basis for the proletarian vanguard to learn from its experience and found such a party. Similarly, revolutionaries must be prepared for world events of huge catastrophic proportions which are realistic possibilities in the present period:

- * Great Recessions of qualitatively more catastrophic proportions than the 2008 recession;
- * Major social and ecological disasters or wars in the South resulting in the death of hundreds of thousands if not millions of people and forcing whole populations to flee;
- * Millions of refugees arriving in Europe and the creation of a far more militarized Fortress Europe;
- * An intensification of imperialist wars in the South with disastrous consequences for the oppressed people, the undermining or even abolishing of (bourgeois) democracy and Bonapartist forms of rule around the world, which might spawn a wave of huge terrorist attacks with thousands of dead (including within the imperialist metropolises);
- * Massive political crises between the Great Powers resulting in a massive rupture of world trade and the creation of regional blocs with protectionist walls;
- * Armed conflicts or wars between the major capitalist countries and, sooner or later, even between the Great powers, resulting in a Third World War.
- * Bloody Counterrevolutions (like Indonesia in 1965 or in Chile 1973) in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe or Latin America in order to smash looming revolutions.

The only way to avoid such developments is for the working class, allied with the poor peasants and the urban poor, to succeed in overthrowing the capitalist system and building a world-wide federation of workers' and peasant republics. Since this is impossible without the timely creation of a revolutionary world party, the formation of such a force – and as the first step of an international pre-party organization – is the most important and urgent task for all internationalist Marxists. We therefore refer reader once more to the RCIT's *Open Letter for Revolutionary Unity* in which we have outlined the programmatic response which we consider indispensable for revolutionaries, in order to help the workers' vanguard find the correct orientation in as turbulent and explosive time as this.¹⁰⁷

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IV.1. The Accelerating Rivalry between the Great Powers

54. In past years the RCIT has elaborated in a number of documents the exacerbated rivalry between the Great Powers, enhanced by the emergence of China and Russia as new imperialist powers. At this time we will not repeat all the evidence and arguments which we have presented, as these can be re-read in various party publications. Instead, here we will only summarize the most important conclusions and recent events.¹⁰⁸ As we have shown in the past, the relationship between the Great Powers is characterized by a huge and growing disparity between their respective economic and political/military power. Despite the relative economic decline of the Western imperialist powers in the past decades (see the figures on this in Chapter II of this document), they have retained a nearly absolute dominance in important global institutions like the IMF, the World Bank, etc. In the case of the US, the world's largest imperialist power, this is particularly pronounced. Despite its industrial decline, its over-indebtedness to foreign creditors, its permanent current account deficit, etc., the US-Dollar has remained the dominant world currency and the US is by far the biggest military power. At the same time China, the most rapidly rising imperialist power, does not hold similar political and military power as its rise has been only very recent. And Russia, politically and militarily stronger than it is economically, is also working hard to expand its influence after its collapse in the 1990s. Likewise, Japan's political and military power is far below its economic weight, as is also the case with Germany. Figures 45 and 46 make graphic these very changes in the global economic equilibrium. In short, the world situation is not dissimilar to the 1930s when Trotsky observed such a disparity among the Great Powers, with the US's being an economic giant but without colonies and with a relatively weak army; Britain's still being the biggest Empire with a strong political and military position, but economically much weakened; and Germany defeated after WWI, but with a great economic and military potential.¹⁰⁹

55. As a result of these huge disparities, it is hardly surprising that a growing number of imperialist think tanks fear a complete breakdown of the global order and its retrogression to that of earlier historical periods in which rival empires existed and waged war against one another. The US's *Atlantic Council* and the Russian *IME-MO* have recently published a joint study about future developments expected in world politics. They warn: "Despite the promise of cooperation and integration emanating from the rapid globalization of the past few decades, the potential for major state conflict is growing because of deep fragmentation within and between societies. The old confrontation between capitalism and communism has given way to nationalism and conflicts of intellectual and moral values with more or less religious and historical-psychological overtones. These differences are even more serious when linked to the domestic political interests of particular countries' ruling circles. Compared to the last twenty years, the big powers will be more likely to get involved in various conflicts and to take opposing sides in the period of 2015-35. They might be unintentionally drawn into

direct armed conflict as a result of an escalation of crises. This risk applies most immediately to the differences between Russia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the United States/NATO in the post-Soviet space, and, less likely, to Chinese and US relations with both countries' allies and partners in Asia. The growing turbulence in the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, South and East Asia sets the stage for conflict between the major powers and a potential breakdown of the world order. A conflict involving the great powers would end the already challenged ideal of an inclusive liberal world order and put the global economy at risk." The authors continue: "The potential for breakdown of the international liberal order is greater than ever before. The possibility of turning the clock back to a more inclusive, integrated world order, in which interstate competition was kept in check and there was more scope for cooperation, seems remote." One of the scenario of which they warn is called "A New Cold War" and described as follows: "In a repeat of Churchill's 1946 dictum: a new curtain descends across the world. As was in the first half of the earlier Cold War, establishing an equilibrium in this world order would be an immense feat. Countries do not know each other's redlines. Major state-on-state conflict is no longer unthinkable. Nationalism is rearing its ugly head. Revisionist history is afoot. Globalization is seen as a sham — despite the numbers of people who have climbed out of poverty, the East and South see globalization as a device that has promoted Western interests. In the West, globalization is seen as benefitting the United States' and its allies' enemies. In this scenario, war breaks out between the major powers, first on Russia's borders in the wake of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and then in Asia, where the United States and China come to blows."¹¹²

56. Another think tank, which is close to the Republican Party in the US, has recently published a book in which it outlines its views on the main challenges for US imperialism. The authors warn that "our world could turn much darker with little notice" and compare the world situation with the 1930s where Russia and China play the role of fascist Germany and Japan at that time: "We do not yet face a cataclysm like that of the late 1930s. But it is fair to compare our era to that of the early 1930s, when the democratic powers seemed to have lost much of their military edge and, equally important, their self-confidence and will to use their power. At the same time, pitiless dictators and virulent ideologies were making use of new technologies to threaten, in ways previously inconceivable, the international order."¹¹³ As a conclusion, the authors advocate: "At the heart of American foreign policy should be our conception of international order. That order is only partly about free trade, although it is important to remind ourselves and others of just how important a world of low tariffs and diminished barriers to commerce has been to the prosperity that has brought hundreds of millions out of poverty since the World Wars. That conception of order must include: the freedom of smaller states to live without fear of invasion or military coercion; commitment to the rules that govern the great commons of mankind — including sea and space — and rights of free passage and peaceful use thereof. And it must include as well the maintenance of a world that is friendly to the existence of

free peoples and limited government. The United States does not seek to impose its form of government by conquest, but it should never stint in its defense of the basic ideas that have defined us: limited government; freedom of speech, religion, and assembly; protection of private property; and an independent judiciary."
114

57. *Credit Suisse*, one of the big players in the global financial sector, has also recently published a long-term prognosis about future economic and political developments. It views the rise of rivaling great powers as a significant change which "point towards a more multipolar world. However, there is a narrative that points to the geopolitical risks of such a development—from regional conflicts, cyberwars and 'great power' rivalry." According to the authors there exists the danger of a scenario which "is a darker, negative one that recalls the collapse of globalization in 1913 and the subsequent onset of the First World War. (...) The kinds of things we watch for are—a trend slowing in economic growth and trade with the added possibility of a macro shock (from indebtedness, inequality, immigration), a rise in protectionism, a geopolitical/military clash between the great powers, currency wars, a climate event(s), the rise of broad-based anti-globalization political movements and a backlash against global corporations, or a reversal in transitions to democracy." 115

58. China's character as a belated, backward but rising imperialist power has been confirmed once more by several political and economic developments in the recent past. Several reports showed that China's capitalists are increasingly employing industrial robots in order to raise their corporation's competitiveness against their rivals. Still, China's economy lags still far behind their competitors in terms of productivity: For now, China has just 30 robots per 10,000 manufacturing employees, trailing South Korea (437), Japan (323), Germany (282) and the U.S. (152), according to the International Federation of Robotics. 116 However, China also is investing heavily in robots as its wages soar and its population ages. It has become the world's largest market for industrial robots and is projected to install more industrial robots than any other country by 2016. 117 Likewise China (without Hong Kong and Macao) has overtaken the US as the home country to the largest number of billionaires throughout the world. Today, out of 1,877 US-Dollar billionaires worldwide, 596 have their homes in China while 537 dollar billionaires live in the US. 118 Even official Chinese sources are forced to admit these developments. Two Chinese academics wrote in an official journal that "5% of Americans have controlled 60% of the wealth, while in China 1% of the families have controlled 41% of the wealth of the whole country, a far greater concentration than that of the United States." 119 These figures confirm once more that Chinese monopoly capital has emerged and constitutes the ruling class on which imperialist China is based.

59. The sharp and open outbreak of the rivalry between the Great Powers started in the spring of 2014, intensified in 2015 and will do so even more in the coming period. This is clear from a number of events in the recent past. The civil war in the Ukraine has been frozen temporarily as a result of the *Minsk II* agreement between the Western powers and Russia in February 2015. This confirms, by the way, our assessment that the belligerent parties – the Poroshenko / Euromaidan government in Kiev as well as the leadership of the Donbass Republics – are

primarily not independent actors but rather proxies of US/EU and Russian imperialism respectively. 120 However, the US and EU are continuing their sanctions against Russia, albeit important sectors of the European capitalists and an increasing number of EU governments are feeling uncomfortable with them because of losses to businesses and because they need Putin's collaboration in liquidating the Syrian civil war. At the same time, Russia, while suffering from the economic consequences of the sanctions, does not show any sign of giving in to the West's demands.

60. Syria has become another focus of the rivalry of the imperialist Great Powers as well as of their collaboration against a common enemy – the ongoing Arab Revolution. Currently Russia is the state which has undertaken the most serious military intervention in Syria. While Russia mostly executes air strikes, it does so while using the Syrian regime forces and Iranian units as their ground troops. The US and the EU – despite their rivalry with Moscow – have accepted the fact that they will be forced to accept Putin as a partner in liquidating the Syrian Revolution. After stopping Obama from launching a military strike in Syria in September 2013, then annexing the Crimea formally and the Donbass region de-facto in 2014, Russian imperialism has again demonstrated its vigor by its current massive military intervention in Syria and its ability to force the Western Great Powers to collaborate with it. At the same time, US, UK, French and German imperialism are determined both to collaborate with Assad and Putin in liquidating the Syrian Revolution while at the same time making sure that they will have a sphere of influence in a post-war Syria.

61. Another area of exacerbated rivalry between the Great Powers is the struggle in the economic and financial fields. In December 2015 the *International Monetary Fund* approved China's *Renminbi* into its group of elite reserve currencies. With this decision, the *Renminbi* is joining the US-Dollar, Euro, Japanese Yen and British Pound in the list of currencies the IMF uses as an international reserve asset. 121 This is clear confirmation from the Western imperialists that China has become a capitalist and imperialist Great Power, contrary to the fantasies of various reformists and centrists.

62. At the same time the civil war in the Ukraine has provoked another dispute in the IMF between the Great Powers, one which is likely to have major long-term consequences for the architecture of this global financial institution. The US and its Western allies recently initiated an important change in the IMF's lending policy, ending its traditional policy of "non-toleration of arrears to official creditors." 122 The creditor leverage that the IMF has used until now has been that, if a nation is in financial arrears to any government, it cannot qualify for an IMF loan – and hence, for packages involving other governments. Naturally, this system has helped to retain the dominance of Western imperialism – and first and foremost, that of the US – and the dollarized global financial system. The change of rules was provoked by the Ukraine's pro-Western government defaulting on its payment of interest for its debts to Russia. (Putin provided the former Ukraine government with a \$3 billion loan at a 5% interest rate in 2013.) Instead of refusing to lend any new loans to the Ukraine, the Western powers changed the IMF rules and offered their lackeys in Kiev new loans. While this is a setback for Russia in the

Figure 45. Rise and Decline of Great Powers: China’s and US’s Share of the World Industrial Production 1980-2015 (in Percent) ¹¹⁰

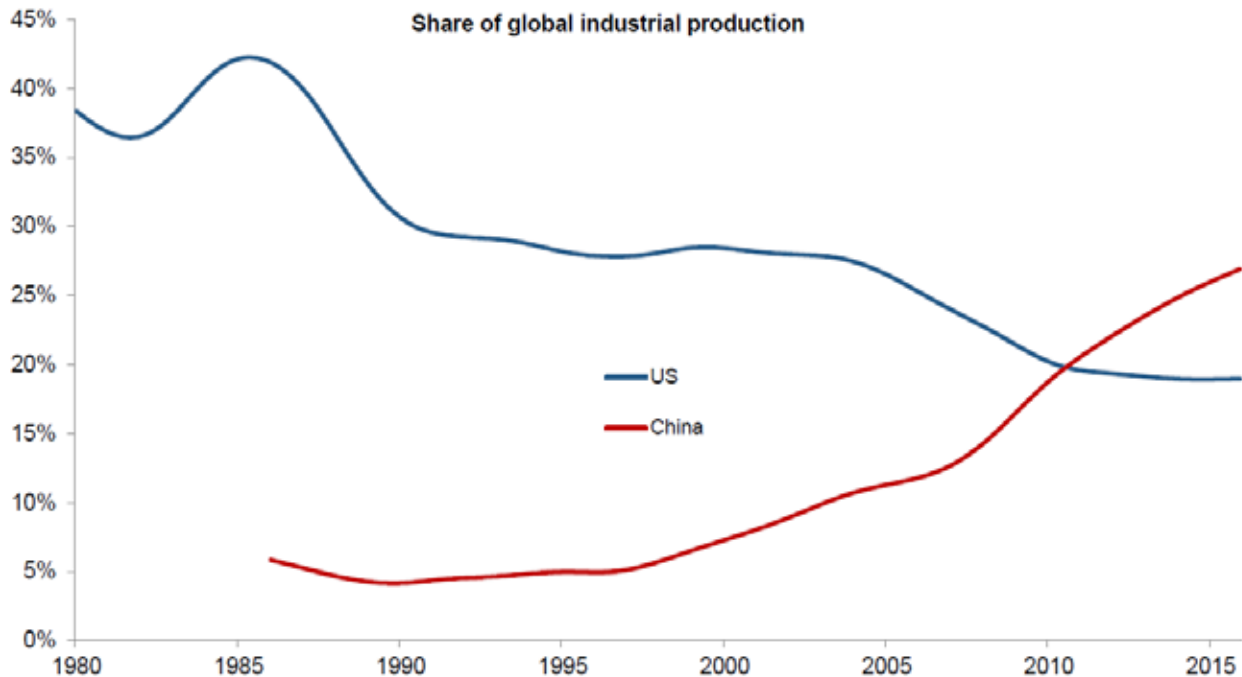


Figure 46. Distribution of Global Fixed Capital Investment, 2003 and 2013 ¹¹¹

Figure 3.4. Global fixed capital investment has shifted to emerging market economies
In per cent of world gross fixed capital investment

A. Global investment shares in 2003

B. Global investment shares in 2013

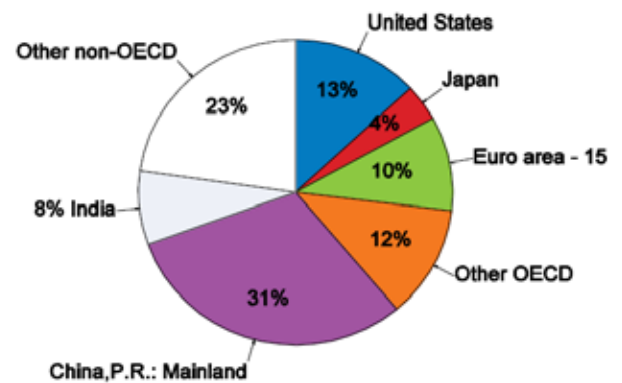
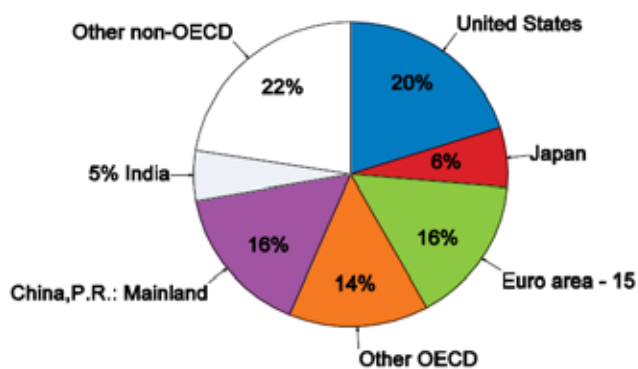


Table 7. Currencies Used for Trade between China and the Asia-Pacific ¹²⁷

Currency	Jan–Apr 2012	Jan–Apr 2015
Australian Dollar	12%	12.1%
US-Dollar	21.7%	12.3%
Hong Kong Dollar	21.8%	16%
Japanese Yen	28%	23%
Renminibi	7%	31%

Table 8. Global Payment Currencies (by August 2015) ¹²⁸

Currency	Share
US-Dollar	44.82%
Euro	27.20%
British Pound	8.45%
Renminibi	2.79%
Japanese Yen	2.76%

short-term, it has long-term consequences for the IMF and the US-dominated financial institutions. It demonstrated to China and Russia that the IMF is the Western imperialist's financial instrument and will further accelerate their drive to build new and alternative financial institutions.

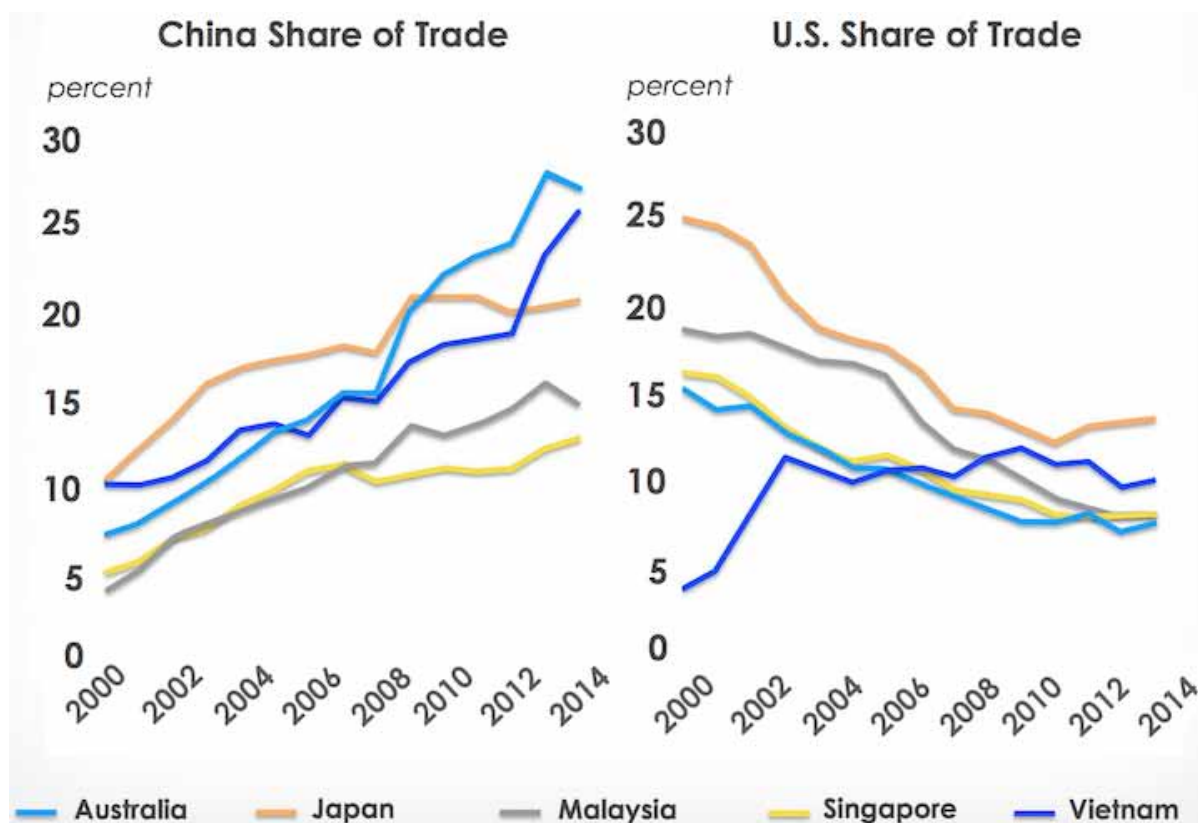
63. In fact, China and Russia have already started to do so. China initiated the foundation of the *Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank*, ratified by China's parliament in November 2015, which is intended as an alternative both to the US/Western-dominated World Bank and IMF as well as the Japan-dominated *Asian Development Bank*. It has an authorized capital of \$100 billion and its headquarter will be in Beijing. China, India and Russia are the three largest shareholders, with a voting share of 26.06%, 7.5% and 5.92%, respectively. China's AIIB project found wide support with 57 founding member states.¹²³ While the US and Japan boycott it, important European imperialist power like Britain, France and Germany have joined it – despite the pressure from Washington not to do so. This is the second project of the Eastern imperialist powers to create alternative financial institutions after they previously created the *New Development Bank* (NDB) in 2014/15. The NDB is a bank of the five BRICS states (China, Russia, India, Brazil, and South Africa). It has starting capital of \$50 billion, which should increase to \$100 billion over time. In addition, the BRICS set up, in a separate agreement, a reserve currency pool worth over another \$100 billion.

64. As a consequence of the accelerated rivalry, China and Russia are increasingly challenging the dominance of the US-Dollar as the main currency for trade and as a reserve currency. In 2014 Russia and China signed two mammoth 30-year contracts for Russian gas to China. The con-

tracts specified that the exchange would be done in Renminbi and Russian Rubles, not in US-Dollars. In addition, the Russian Finance Ministry announced on 6 November that the Russian government will issue state bonds in 2016 to an as yet undetermined amount in Renminbi. In fact, we have already seen for some time an accelerating process of de-dollarization. Today China's Renminbi has become the main currency for payments between China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Its use has more than tripled over the past three years and has outstripped the Yen and the US-Dollar. In international trade settlement and investment, the Renminbi was used in January-April 2015 for 31% of payments between China (including Hong Kong) and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region, up from 7% back in April 2012. The currency's ascent came mostly at the expense of the US-Dollar, which was used in just 12.3% of payments, down from 21.7% in April 2012 (see Table 7).¹²⁴ According to China's *RMB Internationalization Report 2015*, released in July last year, China's Renminbi has become the world's 5th most used payment currency, the 2nd most used trade finance currency, and the 6th most traded currency in 2014.¹²⁵ The *Financial Times* reported in October 2015, that the Renminbi has already surpassed the Japanese Yen and become the 4th most-used currency for global payments (2.8%). Nevertheless, the US-Dollar remains by far the most used currency with a share of 44.8% (see Table 8).¹²⁶ In summary, while the US-Dollar is still the dominant currency, the Chinese are rapidly increasing their influence in the currency market.

65. This development is also reflected in the establishment of an alternative cross-border payments system both by China as well as Russia. Until recently, cross-border

Figure 47. China's and the U.S.'s Share of Asian Trade, 2000-2014¹³³



payments were executed globally using the SWIFT system, which is dominated by the US and the EU. However, after the Western powers excluded Russia from SWIFT as part of their sanctions in the course of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, Russia was forced to establish an alternative system. China had already previously decided to establish its own cross-border payments system (called *Cross-Border Inter-Bank Payments System* or CIPS) and finally succeeded doing so in October 2015. These steps make the Eastern imperialists also financially more independent of the Western-dominated payments system.¹²⁹

66. A further arena where rivalry between the Great Powers increasingly takes place is the current round of free trade agreements. The US recently announced the intention to create the *Trans-Pacific Partnership* (TPP) which should lower or abolish tariffs and making trade cheaper. This agreement includes, besides the US, 11 Asian, Latin American and Oceania countries. As an alternative, China is promoting the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership* (RCEP), a proposed 16-nation free-trade area. RCEP would include, among others, Japan and Australia (which are also part of TPP) as well as India, South Korea and Indonesia (which are not part of TPP). The two free trade projects reflect the struggle of the two imperialist giants: TPP would represent 13% of global trade, RCEP around 12%; in terms of global GDP, TPP represent 36% and RCEP 29%.¹³⁰ The struggle for Asia's market is crucial since it is the second largest regional market (with 32.0% of world merchandise imports and 31.5% of its exports in 2014; Europe is the biggest market with import/export shares of 36.8% and 36.4% respectively)¹³¹ Between the years 2000 and 2014, the US share of trade in Asia declined by nearly half, while China's share grew rapidly (see Figure 47). In 2000, US exports accounted for 12.3% of the Asian import market. Yet, 14 years later, US exports were just 6.6% of the Asian market. Japan fared even worse. At the same time, China's share of the Asian import market grew from 8.3% (2000) to 18.7% (2014) of the total Asian import market.¹³²

67. On a political and military level, China trails behind the US (but not other Western imperialist powers like Japan or Germany). It is now starting to send military abroad by deploying 700 combat troops in South Sudan, a country in which China has major economic interests.¹³⁴ In the maritime realm, Beijing has underlined – via military maneuvers and the construction of military outposts on the Spratly Islands – its own version of the *Monroe Doctrine* according to which, what China calls the South China Sea, belongs exclusively to itself.¹³⁵ Naturally US imperialism is alarmed by China's claims, since it views Asia as its own sphere of influence. The *Council on Foreign Relations*, a semi-official think tank close to the US Administration, therefore call Washington to “thwart Beijing's objective to systematically undermine American strategic primacy in Asia.”

¹³⁶ However, China's *Monroe Doctrine* has provoked the indignation not only of its imperialist rivals but also of smaller Asian nations (like Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, etc.). China's project to build a channel from the Atlantic to the Pacific through Nicaragua (as an alternative to the US-dominated Panama channel) and its plan for a Transcontinental Rail project in Latin America are other examples of its plans to expand its global influence.¹³⁷ All this reflects the rise of the Eastern imperialist Great Powers and the decline of their Western rivals. A recently pub-

lished article by a reactionary British journalist, entitled “*Our spoiled, emasculated, de-spiritualised societies in the West are in terminal decline,*” reflects these developments. The author concluded: “*What we were seeing in 2015, more than ever before, were the signs of one of history's great geopolitical shifts, as the centuries-old hegemony of the West gives way to the new powerhouses of the outside world. In the face of every kind of new external challenge, the leaders of the EU and the USA have never looked weaker or more bemused – as over how to deal with the flood of refugees and the terrorist threat unleashed from a Middle East reduced to chaos by our vainglorious interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. Never have our politicians and political institutions been held in less respect.*” He adds “*We might well be haunted by the brilliant title of that otherwise not very good book written by Otto Spengler in the Twenties, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*). All civilisations, as we know, eventually decline, and Spengler's title was just 90 years ahead of its time.*”¹³⁸

68. In summary, the rivalry between the monopolies as well as between the Great Powers has continued to accelerate. The sharks are fighting more aggressively for their share of fish in a shrinking sea. As a result, the process of monopolization – in which bigger capitalist corporations swallow smaller ones – accelerates, as we mentioned above. In the political sphere, this means that the rivalry between the imperialist powers unavoidable accelerates and increases the danger of a Third World War. While such a war between the Great Powers is unlikely in the near future, such dangers will increase with the deepening of the capitalist crisis and the exacerbation of the contradictions.

IV.2. Counterrevolutionary Offensive: The Retreat of the Arab Revolution Continues Despite Heroic Popular Struggles

69. The RCIT has analyzed the state of the Arab Revolution in a number of documents in the past seven months.¹³⁹ Here we will summarize only the most important conclusions. The retreat of the Arab Revolution, which we noted in 2013, continues. In fact, today the danger of its final defeat is bigger than ever before. The petty-bourgeois left-liberals, the reformists and the Islamists have led the revolutionary upheavals into a cul-de-sac. As a result, in most cases the Arab dictatorships were either able to retain power (Syria except the liberated areas, Bahrain, Algeria, Morocco, the other Gulf monarchies) or the ruling elite managed return power to itself via a coup d'état (Egypt) or "democratic" elections (Tunisia). Currently, the imperialist Great Powers are aggressively intervening – particularly in Syria – in order to increase their respective spheres of influence while at the same time liquidating the revolutionary process. In short, the Arab Revolution faces the sword of Damocles as the Great Powers and their local flunkies continuously try to strangle it by supporting old and new dictatorships, as well as by means of foreign military intervention.

70. However, it is by no means inevitable that the Arab Revolution will end in defeat. In fact, the new uprising of the Tunisian workers and youth completely refutes the idiotic claims of many reformists and centrists that the Arab Revolution had ended in defeat, or that it had been the product of a conspiracy by Western imperialists. The popular rebellion in Syria is continuing despite all obstacles, the Yemeni people are fighting heroically against the Saudi invasion, the Egypt workers and youth continue to take to the streets fighting for freedom and the Palestinian youth is determined to launch the Third Intifada! And if the recent mass uprising in Tunisia continues, it has the potential of not only stemming the counterrevolution which the country experienced in recent years and advancing the previously unfinished democratic revolution which set in motion the wave of Arab revolutions. But in doing so it could also revitalize the Syrian Revolution against Bashar al-Assad, strengthen the mass resistance in Egypt against the dictatorship of General al-Sisi, set an example for and give support to the Palestinian liberation struggle against the Zionist state, and inspire the Yemeni war of liberation against the foreign invasion by the Al-Saud gang. In addition, a successful mass uprising in Tunisia would invaluablely advance the struggle against the reactionary sectarianism promoted by reactionary forces like the Salafi-Takfiri Daash. Finally, it would also strengthen working class and democratic forces in Europe, encouraging them to fight back against the counterrevolutionary wave of racism and state repression which is currently being waged by various conservative and social democratic governments with both tacit and open assistance and support by semi-fascistic forces.

71. The importance of the Arab Revolution goes far beyond the borders of the region. As we have stated repeatedly, (a) the Arab Revolution has constituted the

most advanced phase of the revolutionary process in the historic period since 2008; (b) it directly effects the political conditions for class struggle in Europe because of the wave of refugees;¹⁴⁰ (c) it is the main target (together with Afghanistan) of the military intervention of the imperialists; and (d) it has become the arena for the open display of the rivalry between the Great Powers.

72. The *Syrian Revolution* – despite facing huge threats – continues to live and struggle and, hence, deserves more than ever the solidarity of the international workers' movement. It remains the forward post of the Arab Revolution. The revolutionary struggle finds its expression in numerous local resistance committees and militias, as well as in larger armed rebel factions under petty-bourgeois-nationalist leaderships (Islamists and secular). The Revolution basically faces the following threats: (a) an intensified military offensive by the Assad forces with the massive support of the Russian air force and ground troops of Iran and the Hezbollah; (b) the Great Powers military intervention, as well as their conspiracy to enforce a negotiated settlement (the negotiation process in Vienna); (c) the continuous attacks by the arch-reactionary Daesh forces; and (d) the possible betrayal of rebel leadership groups which the Western Powers, Saudi-Arabia and Qatar try to bribe and push to capitulate. The RCIT repeats: if the Great Powers succeed in their plans, this would be a major blow to the Arab Revolution in general and the Syrian Revolution in particular. The Bolshevik-Communists therefore call revolutionaries as well as workers and migrant organization around the world to rally in solidarity with the Syrian popular masses fighting against the Assad dictatorship as well as against the intervention of the Great Powers.

73. In *Yemen* the popular masses continue their heroic resistance against the invasion by Saudi forces and their proxies, all supported by Western imperialist powers as well as by the other Arab monarchies and dictatorships. Naturally, the Saudi aggressors are superior in terms of military technology, their air force, their ability to implement a naval blockade, etc., and it is therefore hardly surprising that they have been able to make some advances in the South. However, despite their vast military superiority, the Saudi forces have not managed to come anywhere near the capital Sana'a or the city of Saada. At the same time, Yemeni revolutionaries are fighting for the workers and popular independence from petty-bourgeois Islamist forces like the Houthis who currently constitute the leadership of the national resistance. The RCIT send its greetings to the Yemeni revolutionaries participating in the difficult task of national liberation while combining it with the struggle for a socialist program.

74. Two and a half years after the reactionary coup d'état of General Sisi, the dire situation in *Egypt* unfortunately confirms our characterization at that time: the coup was a huge blow for the working class and popular struggle in Egypt and constituted a strategic defeat. It established a brutal, pro-imperialist dictatorship, a kind of

"*Mubarakism without Mubarak*".¹⁴¹ Thousands have been murdered and tens of thousands are rotting in prison. In Egypt the unfinished democratic revolution has turned into an *unfinished despotic counterrevolution*. The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood has been deeply split since then and, due to its bourgeois limitations, is incapable of offering a perspective for the militant youth. Unsurprisingly, the so-called left in Egypt does not show any sign that it has learned anything from its betrayal of the democratic revolution at the time of the coup and in its wake. However there are huge sectors of vanguard fighters – particularly amongst the youth – who are continuing the resistance and who are eager to learn lessons from the past. There has also been a rise of workers strikes and demonstrations last year. There was also an increase of worker strikes and demonstrations last year. According to *Democracy Meter*, an NGO that monitors the Egyptian labour movement, 1,117 labor protests took place in 2015 – an average of around three a day.¹⁴² Revolutionaries in Egypt should intervene in this process and offer an alternative to the Islamist-Guerillaist cul-de-sac, an alternative which focuses on the programmatic clarification and propaganda as well as combining open and clandestine work among the working class and the urban poor.

75. In *Libya* the civil war continues between the arch-reactionary camp of General Haftar (based in Tobruk) and the bourgeois Islamist forces called *Fajr Libya* ("Libyan Dawn", based in Tripolis). Haftar's pseudo-government is built on the remnants of what remains of Gaddafi's state apparatus and receives support from the Western imperialists as well as from General Sisi and the Gulf monarchies. The Tripoli government represents many rebels who oppose both the Western imperialist intervention and the continuing influence of the ex-Gaddafi forces in the state apparatus. After the Haftar forces proved incapable of defeating the Islamists, the Western powers are now trying to pressure both sides into ending the civil war via a negotiated compromise solution. If this pressure fails to satisfy the imperialist interests, a military intervention by the EU is not out of the question. Socialists should support the struggle against the Haftar forces as well as against the reactionary Salafist-Takfiri *Daash* which has built a small base around Sirte, the home town of the Gaddafi clan. In the event of an imperialist military intervention, revolutionaries should call for the defeat of the European invaders and support those forces that are resisting the aggressors. At the same time it is crucial to advance the formation of militant trade unions and an independent working class party.

76. In *Tunisia* the unfinished democratic revolution has turned, with the election of the pro-imperialist, bourgeois *Nidaa Tounes* government in late 2014, into an *unfinished democratic counterrevolution*. *Nidaa Tounes* represents primarily the old guard of the Ben Ali dictatorship which is acting as loyal servants of the imperialist Great Powers. However, the most recent, spontaneous workers' and youth uprisings of January 2016 could dramatically change the situation and open a new phase.¹⁴³ Revolutionaries in Tunisia are supporting workers and youth to reorganize the struggle against unemployment, for higher wages and for democratic rights. They try to win the best elements from the working class youth attached to the petty-bourgeois left which – mostly influenced by the

Stalinist/Hoxhaist as well as Nasserist/Baathist tradition – shamefully supported the *Nidaa Tounes* forces against the former bourgeois Islamist *Ennahda* government, instead of fighting for an independent proletarian program.

77. The youth uprising in *Occupied Palestine / Israel* is a crucial factor for the future of the Arab Revolution. Naturally it faces harsh repression by the Zionist state. In addition, it faces open hostility by the collaborationist PA administration of Abbas and only rhetorical support by Hamas. Given the lack of leadership and perspective, it is currently reduced to repeated street battles of Palestinian youth with the Israeli army and individual-terrorist attacks mostly directed against the occupation forces and settlers. Hence, we can currently not speak about a fully developed Third Intifada. However, revolutionaries fight in order to transform the protests into such a Third Intifada. For this it will be crucial to build popular committees in the workplaces, neighborhoods, villages and universities. Such an uprising should be combined with an internationalist perspective of combining the Intifada with the Arab Revolution, directed against reactionary dictators and all Great Powers, as well as appealing for solidarity with all progressive Israeli Jews who are ready to defend the Palestinians.

78. The bourgeois Islamist AKP government of Recep Erdoğan in *Turkey* is currently waging a war against the Kurdish people. This is part of Erdoğan's plan to deflect public attention from his corrupt government and widespread poverty amongst the Turkish masses. While revolutionaries reject the nonsense about the fascist character of the Turkish state – widespread amongst various Maoist/Hoxhaist groups – there can be no doubt about Erdoğan's desire to transform the Turkish state from a mixture of (limited) bourgeois democracy with a strong Bonapartist component in the form of the army command into a state where he himself would be the Bonapartist component. Revolutionaries must support the Kurdish people's struggle for self-determination and their own state – both against the Turkish army as well as against Daesh. At the same time, they denounce the collaboration of the PKK leadership with US imperialism and, in the past, with the Assad dictatorship. Equally, supporting the struggles of workers and youth against the Erdoğan government must not lead Turkish revolutionaries to lend any support to Erdoğan's rivals in the camp of the bourgeoisie (the pro-US Islamist movement of Fethullah Gülen, the Kemalist CHP, etc.).

79. The recent outburst of hostilities between *Saudi Arabia and Iran* demonstrates the potential for war in the Middle East. Revolutionaries clearly denounce the reactionary execution of the Shia religious leader Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr. The RCIT opposes the oppression of the Shia minority in Saudi-Arabia (as well as the Shia majority in Bahrain) and their struggles for equality. Such support however must not lead revolutionaries to side with either the reactionary regime in Teheran or the monarchy in Saudi-Arabia, who both are trying to utilize this murder to improve their position as a potential leading power in the Middle East. While both regimes have their own interest in this conflict, they could not act as they do if they did not enjoy the support by the Great Powers which stand behind them: the US in the case of Saudi Arabia and Russia (and China) in the case of Iran.

IV.3. Counterrevolutionary Offensive: Imperialist Wars Abroad – Repression and Racism Within

80. In several documents released in the recent months, the RCIT has analyzed the accelerating drive towards war of the imperialist states – particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. We have pointed out the intensification of the imperialists' military intervention in the South: the US, UK and France in Iraq, the same plus Germany and Russia in Syria, the US in Afghanistan and France and now Germany too in Mali. We have analyzed the close relationship between increased militarization abroad and the increasing repression and chauvinism within Europe. In particular, we want to draw attention to our document from early December 2015 "*Increasing Instability and Militarization in the European Union.*"¹⁴⁴ Hence, here we limit ourselves to quoting from our summarizing theses in the latter document:

"The last few months have inaugurated a new political phase in Europe of increasing disequilibrium, one characterized by accelerating political and social polarization between the classes around the issues of: (i) refugees and racism, (ii) imperialist wars and terrorism, and (iii) the neo-liberal governmental policy of austerity. This political phase is marked by an anti-democratic impetus in the direction of increasing chauvinism and militarism by certain sectors of the ruling class which manifests itself both in domestic repression and foreign policy. However, there is both mass resistance against this trend as well as divisions within the bourgeoisie on specific issues. Hence, we characterize this new phase as an '*interim phase.*'"

"The background for the accelerating political and social class polarization inside the EU are a number of crucial developments which have intensified the political crisis of capitalism in 2015:

- i) The continuation of economic stagnation and the approach of yet another great recession in the near future;
- ii) The intensification of the political crisis of the ruling class as reflected in the strengthening of forces outside of the bourgeois mainstream – both of right-wing racist forces (Le Pen in France, *Lega Nord* in Italy, Strache in Austria, *AfD* in Germany, *PiS* in Poland) as well as left-reformist and left-populist formations (Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, *Bloco de Esquerda* and *PCP* in Portugal, *SYRIZA* in Greece, *Podemos* in Spain);
- iii) The arrival in Europe of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria and other places, fleeing war and hunger, has brought the consequences of the misery caused by the imperialist world (dis)order back home to the perpetrators;
- iv) The destabilizing effects of the Syrian civil war as well as those of other wars on dictatorships (Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Afghanistan, etc.) throughout the entire region of the Maghreb and Mashreq (North Africa and Middle East) has increasingly been undermining the conditions necessary for the profitable exploitation of these regions by imperialist monopoly capital;¹⁴⁵
- v) The accelerating rivalry between the Great Powers reflected in the intensified military intervention of Russian

as well as French and British imperialism in Syria;

vi) The terrorist attack of *Daesh* in Paris on 13 November – a barbarous act against workers and youth which socialists unequivocally condemn – has demonstrated that Europe cannot escape the consequences of the civil wars in the Middle East;¹⁴⁶

vii) The ever-deepening alienation of significant sectors of Europe's population – in particular migrants and progressive sectors of the working class – from the ruling class' political system. This has been reflected in broad-based opposition to the bourgeoisie's austerity policy (Portugal's election, OXI in Greece, mass support for Corbyn in UK), the spontaneous mass solidarity with the refugees as well as the rejection of Islamophobia by broad sectors of the popular masses. The mass pro-refugee movement is of particular importance, since it emerged completely spontaneously and independent of any bourgeois party.

"These contradictory developments culminated in the autumn of 2015 with the Paris attacks which symbolically ushered in a new political phase for Europe. These developments have provoked splits and divisions among the ruling classes in Europe. As we indicated above, the characteristic element of the present phase is a drive of the European bourgeoisie towards increasing repression and expansion of the repressive state apparatus and towards more military interventions in the Maghreb and Mashreq. However, at the same time the ruling class is not at all certain, and certainly not united about the future course to be taken. It is even more divided on the question of how to deal with the refugees reaching Europe.

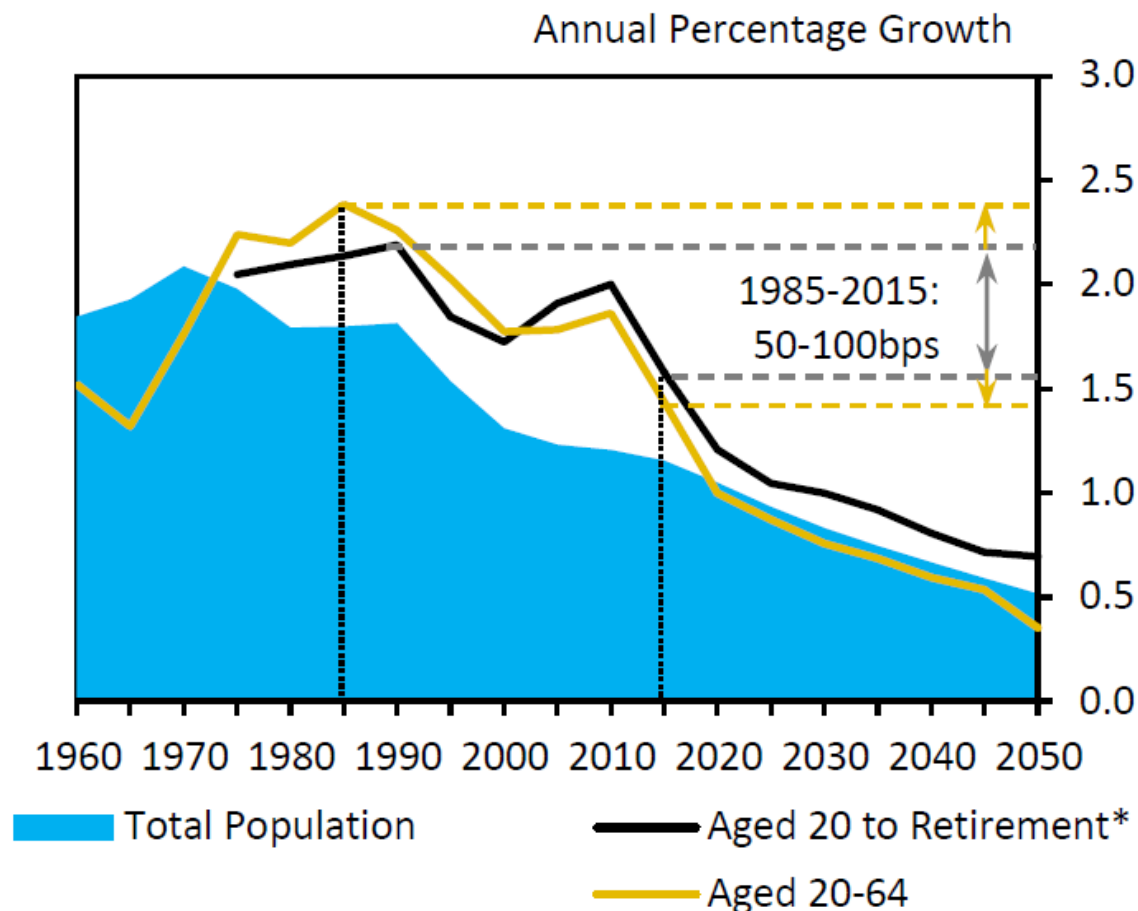
"These developments and the confusion of the ruling bourgeoisie classes about how to deal with them go hand in hand with a process of polarization, politization and mobilization of substantial sectors of the popular masses. While some are rallying behind racist parties, others are becoming more politically conscious, adopting anti-racist and anti-imperialist convictions. Consequently, the political phase which was opened in the autumn of 2015 will be characterized by political instability and sharp political confrontations. This being the case, it is incumbent upon Socialists to mobilize the workers' movement and all organizations of the oppressed and rally them against the intensifying attacks on democratic rights. Most importantly, this is both vital *and* possible because the current leaderships of the working movement and migrant organizations – mostly reformists or petty-bourgeois nationalists and Islamists – are undermining the struggle or openly betraying it. Therefore, the Bolshevik-Communists of the RCIT declare that the crucial task before us remains to advance the formation of a revolutionary leadership, i.e., the founding of new revolutionary parties on the respective national levels as well as the establishment of a new Workers' International."

81. At this point we only want to add the following remark. We re-emphasize our thesis of the strategic dilemma for the European bourgeoisie: on the one hand, a sec-

tor of monopoly capital is aware that they need migrants and refugees since the latter – mostly relatively young and male – are a welcome source of cheap labor that can enable the capitalists to increase their depressed rate of profit. On the other hand, another sector of the ruling class wants to seriously reduce the flow of refugees or even entirely stop it since it wants to use chauvinism in order to split and distract the working class as well as because it fears the politically destabilizing effects of the refugees' presence. The recent racist hysteria in Germany and other European countries after the events in Cologne on New Year's Eve strongly underlined the latter tendency.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, various think tanks of the monopoly capitalists emphasize the need for more migrants and refugees as labor force. The *Bank of England* recently published a study which concluded that the reduction of the size of the labor force might be the most important factor for a decline of economic growth until the year 2050 (see Fig-

ure 48). The *McKinsey Global Institute* reaches similar conclusions, forecasting a decline from 1.7% to 0.3% in per annum growth in employment for the 20 most important imperialist and semi-colonial countries over the next 50 years.¹⁴⁸ The declining rate of growth of the working-age population is certainly not the cause for capitalism's stagnation from a Marxist point of view; rather such predictions of the bourgeoisie primarily reflect the desire of the capitalists to counter the falling rate of profit by raising absolute surplus value via cheaper migrant labor forces.
82. Finally, the advance of the Taliban in *Afghanistan* and the looming collapse of the pro-imperialist collaborationist government underline the failure of the US/NATO occupation. After one and a half decades of war and occupation, the imperialists have not succeeded in pacifying the country. Instead rather face the same forces, which they drove from power, returning amid widespread popular support.

Figure 48. Growth of Global Population and Labor Supply 1960–2050 (in percent)¹⁴⁹



IV.4. The Consistent Struggle against Imperialism, Militarization and National Oppression – A Key Issue in the Current Period and a Litmus Test for Authentic Marxists

83. Strategists and think tanks of all Great Powers are well aware of the necessity for the Great Powers to increasingly intervene militarily in the countries of the South in order to keep the political order which allows them to super-exploit the oppressed peoples. Likewise, they understand the central importance of the rivalry between the Great Powers as a key factor in shaping the world political situation. But in contrast to them, many who consider themselves Marxists fail to grasp this crucial axis of contradiction of imperialist capitalism. It is well-known that various Stalinists and left-reformists in North America, Western Europe and Japan present the imperialist “war on terror” not as a reactionary offensive of “their” own ruling classes against the oppressed people in the semi-colonial world as well as against the migrants in their own country. Rather, they paint this reactionary war as a “*defense of civilization*” or “*democracy*” against “*Islamofascism*” or “*barbarism*.” To give just a few examples, we refer to the support of the French “Communist” Party for Hollande’s three-month state of emergency (introduced in November 2015) and their abstention in the parliamentary vote on sending French military aircraft and naval vessels to war in Iraq (in January 2015); the open solidarity of leading LINKE politicians in Germany for Apartheid-Israel against the Palestinian resistance; the support of Bertinotti’s *Partito della Rifondazione Comunista* for Italy’s participation in the occupation of Afghanistan as well as the imperialist intervention in Lebanon in 2006 is yet another example. Similarly, the Japanese “Communist” Party defends the possession of several disputed islands by their own imperialist bourgeoisie – against the claims of South-Korea or China.

84. Numerous centrists, who desire to get a place at the table of the reformist bureaucrats and, to achieve this, are prepared to sacrifice a few principles without turning a hair, shy away from going so far as the left-reformist. But they characterize the ongoing war as a conflict between “*equally reactionary forces*” (e.g., CWI, IMT, the Mandelist FI, LO/UCI, Lambertism).

85. In the semi-colonial world we could see the Iraqi “Communist” Party supporting the US occupation after 2003 and even participating in its colonial administration. And numerous groups coming from the Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist tradition supported the US-backed coup d’état of General al-Sisi in Egypt in July 2013. All these are examples of direct or indirect adaptations by “Marxist” organizations to their own bourgeoisie and to Western imperialism.

86. The same is true for “Marxists” who adapt to the Eastern imperialist powers, China and Russia. This is most obviously the case with the Stalinist-chauvinist parties like the Russian KPFER, the Indian CPs, numerous smaller Stalinist parties and the Castro-Chavistas in Latin America. But there are also various “Trotskyists” and ex-“Trotskyists” in Western countries who support China and Russia against the US or EU (e.g., the WSWS, the WWP

and the PSL in the US, the Spartacist splinters, etc.). They either claim that China is a “socialist” country, a “degenerated workers state” or a “semi-colonial” country. Whichever of these variants they choose, the consequences are the same: they support (“critically” or uncritically) imperialist China and Russia against the Great Western Powers or against oppressed people (Syria, Chechnya, East-Turkestan etc.). Hence these fake-socialists call for the support of Russia in its confrontation against NATO in the Ukrainian conflict. Likewise, they support China’s *Monroe doctrine* in East Asia, i.e., Beijing’s claim to exclusively rule the entire southern sea, excluding not only the US but also all the smaller, semi-colonial countries located along its periphery (e.g., Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, etc.).

87. This follows a well-known schema developed by the patriotic social-democrats in World War I and further developed by Stalinism in the 1930s. First Bernstein & Co., later Scheidemann, David, Kautsky, Vandervelde, Huysmans, Plekhanov and Axelrod and finally the Stalinists, the Brandlerites and the German SAP – they all replaced the Marxist analysis of imperialist states of oppressed people in colonies and semi-colonies respectively (regardless of their specific physiognomies and political regimes) with opportunist, petty-bourgeois characterizations. Hence capitalist states were differentiated between “*democratic*” vs. “*autocratic*” countries, “*civilized*” vs. “*uncivilized, backward*” nations or “*fascist*” vs. “*anti-fascist, democratic*” states, etc. This was their ideological cover to become – or adapt to – *social-patriots*, also called *social-imperialists*. This means that these socialists opportunistically adapted to the imperialist bourgeoisie under the cover of “socialist” phrases. In some cases these forces also became “*inverted social-imperialists*,” i.e., supporting a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie against their own national bourgeoisie for opportunistic reasons (e.g., like the German social democrats, Stalinists and the Brandlerites in the 1930s until 1945 supporting Britain, France and the US after Hitler came to power). Of course, *social-imperialism* and *inverted social-imperialism* do not necessarily exclude each other but can be linked or easily adapted to one another according to the political conjuncture.¹⁵⁰

88. The RCIT and its predecessor organization have always declared war on those reformists and centrist who failed to consistently oppose US, EU and Israeli imperialism in their economic and military wars and adventures in occupation. No less so, we declare war on those reformists and centrist who fail to consistently oppose Chinese and Russian imperialism, as they try to expand their own influence at the expense of their imperialist rivals by oppressing smaller nations like the Chechens or the Uyghurs in China’s East Turkestan. The new revolutionary world party – and any pre-party organization as a step towards its creation – must apply the program of consistent revolutionary defeatism against all imperialist Great Powers. They must not support *any* form of economic, political

or military aggression against a rivaling Great Power. In every war they must raise Liebknecht's slogan "*The main enemy is at home!*"

89. We also draw a sharp distinction between a mechanistic "anti-imperialism" and a Marxist anti-imperialism. The first is an anti-internationalist deviation which can be observed in particular among certain national-centered groups. Starting from the specific national conditions in the country (or its imperialist bloc) in which they reside they automatically put a minus sign wherever the bourgeoisie of their country/bloc puts a plus. Hence, when their bourgeoisie rhetorically supports this or that democratic struggle or national liberation struggle in a country of the South, these blockhead-"anti-imperialists" automatically support the enemies of these liberation struggles. We can see this, e.g., on the issue of the Syrian Revolution where various left-wing groups choose to sympathize or even openly support Assad because the US and EU governments have rhetorically opposed him in recent years. The RCIT has always rejected such nonsense. We have pointed out that, in a world of rivaling Great Powers, it is unavoidable that one Power tries to weaken its rival by giving some kind of support to the latter's internal enemies. However, *Marxist* anti-imperialism means to oppose *all* Great Powers equally, and not to see one of them as a "lesser evil." Furthermore, the victory of democratic and national liberation struggles in one or several countries is a victory for the world proletariat, irrespective of whether it weakens only this or that Great Power in the short term, and not all of them.¹⁵¹ We remind these confused anti-imperialists of Lenin's advise:

"Britain and France fought the Seven Years' War for the possession of colonies. In other words, they waged an imperialist war (which is possible on the basis of slavery and primitive capitalism as well as on the basis of modern highly developed capitalism). France suffered defeat and lost some of her colonies. Several years later there began the national liberation war of the North American States against Britain alone. France and Spain, then in possession of some parts of the present United States,

*concluded a friendship treaty with the States in rebellion against Britain. This they did out of hostility to Britain, i.e., in their own imperialist interests. French troops fought the British on the side of the American forces. What we have here is a national liberation war in which imperialist rivalry is an auxiliary element, one that has no serious importance. This is the very opposite to what we see in the war of 1914-16 (the national element in the Austro-Serbian War is of no serious importance compared with the all-determining element of imperialist rivalry). It would be absurd, therefore, to apply the concept imperialism indiscriminately and conclude that national wars are "impossible". A national liberation war, waged, for example, by an alliance of Persia, India and China against one or more of the imperialist powers, is both possible and probable, for it would follow from the national liberation movements in these countries. The transformation of such a war into an imperialist war between the present-day imperialist powers would depend upon very many concrete factors, the emergence of which it would be ridiculous to guarantee."*¹⁵²

90. Likewise, the new revolutionary world party must – as we outlined in our *Open Letter for Revolutionary Unity* – consistently support the resistance of oppressed people against imperialist invaders. This is why the RCIT support the resistance struggle in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Mali against the imperialist forces without giving any political support to the Islamist leaderships of these forces. It is equally crucial that revolutionaries consistently defend migrants and refugees in the imperialist countries and fight for "Open Borders," equal rights (including the right to use their native language in schools and public administration), equal wages, etc. Only armed with such a program will the new revolutionary world party – and any pre-party organization as a step towards its creation – be able to lead the workers' vanguard in the class war against the bourgeoisie and the Great Powers in addition to their social-imperialist lackeys.¹⁵³ In short, revolutionaries must rally the class conscious workers and youth to the slogan: *Down with all Great Powers (US, EU, Japan, China, and Russia)! Defeat the Imperialists and Dictators – Defend the Oppressed People (Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Mali)!*

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IV.5. Counterrevolutionary Offensive: The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Populism and the Right-Wing Shift in Latin America

91. During the past decade, Latin America has been dominated by bourgeois “progressive” and populist government like Rousseff in Brazil, Chavez / Maduro in Venezuela, Morales in Bolivia, Correa in Ecuador, and Kirchner in Argentina. Against the backdrop of popular mass mobilizations, an economic upswing caused by rising commodity prices for raw materials exports, as well as the rise of China as a new great power rivaling US imperialism – which traditionally dominated Latin America – these governments were able to make some concessions to the working class and poor and to withstand the pressure of US imperialism and the IMF. However, the recession in Latin America, the fall in export commodity prices – in particular for oil and soya – (see Figure 49) and the economic downturn in imperialist China have reduced the room for maneuvering for these “progressive” bourgeois governments. Their launching of austerity attacks against the popular masses has accelerated the political exhaustion of Kirchnerism, Bolivarism and Castro-Chavism and weakened their popular support. To this we should add that the two main imperialist rival – the US and China – are competing for spheres of influence in the region and support different local clients for this.

92. *Brazil* – the largest country in South America, encompassing around half of the continent’s population – is currently facing an offensive of right-wing forces to overthrow the popular government of Dilma Rousseff. They have organized several reactionary mass demonstrations against which the trade union federation CUT and other mass organizations close to Rousseff’s PT have also organized demonstrations by the masses. While some smaller semi-fascist forces openly call the military to overthrow the government, the majority of the right-wing forces prefer an impeachment process. The RCIT section in Brazil clearly opposes the reactionary offensive of the right-wing, pro-US forces and defends the popular front government against any attempt of the bourgeoisie to overthrow it. We denounce the “Trotskyist” forces (like the Morenoite PSTU/LIT and the UIT) who openly or clandestinely lend support to these right-wing protests. At the same time, the RCIT calls workers to fight against the austerity plans of Rousseff’s government and to prepare politically for the working class struggle to replace this popular front government by an authentic workers’ government.¹⁵⁵

93. In *Argentina*, the right-wing camp succeeded in defeating the Kirchner forces in the recent presidential elections held in late November 2015. The new pro-US President Macri is determined to launch an austerity offensive; he has already massively devalued the peso, and demonstrated that he is willing to rule via anti-democratic methods (e.g., appointing by decree new judges to the Supreme Court when the Senate is not in session, arresting the Kirchnerist popular leader Milagro Salas, sacking the renowned radio host Víctor Hugo Morales from his posi-

tion, etc.). He may be forced to rule via Bonapartist means, seeing that he faces mass popular opposition, that he only narrowly won the elections, and that his *Cambiamos* alliance does not possess a majority in the parliament. Here, too, the right-wing forces profited from the exhaustion of the Kirchnerist-populist project which was a bourgeois government and not a “popular” government. As the RCIT pointed out in a recent statement regarding Argentina, in the current situation revolutionaries are right to mobilize for a broad united front against Macri and his looming austerity offensive. Such a call for a united front should be directed to all mass organizations including the Peronist trade unions, the Kirchnerist mass organizations, as well as the centrist FIT alliance, etc. At the same time it is crucial to arm the workers’ vanguard with the necessary lessons of the failure of Peronist populism, apolitical syndicalism, and centrist opportunism as well as to help the workers’ vanguard in the struggle for an independent mass workers’ party based on a revolutionary program.¹⁵⁶

94. In *Venezuela*, the right-wing forces around the *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática* (MUD) alliance are also on the offensive. The Chavista government under President Maduro has suffered tremendously from the collapse of the price of oil in the world market. The position of Venezuela as a major oil producer and exporter together with the commodity’s previously high prices enabled the Chavista government to strengthen its rule during the past 17 years, allowing it to finance social programs while at the same time building an alliance with sectors of the national bourgeoisie.¹⁵⁷ However with the collapse of the price of oil and the ongoing recession, these circumstances have now changed dramatically. We note in passing that this development confirms once more Trotsky’s program of permanent revolution: socialism cannot be built in one country, given its dependence on the world market – which is even truer for a relatively poor semi-colonial country. The strategic goal must *not* be to come to a compromise with the national bourgeoisie, *but to expropriate it*, to build a workers’ republic and to strive for the internationalization of the revolution to all of Latin America and beyond.

95. At the recent parliamentary elections in Venezuela, MUD got 52% of the votes against 48% for the Chavista PSUV. Given the electoral constitution, introduced by the Chavistas themselves, this enabled the conservative forces to get nearly a 2/3 majority in parliament which would enable them to impeach President Maduro. The PSUV government only managed to stop MUD by ruling out the validity of the election of three MUD deputies. At the same time, the army command has emphasized its loyalty to Maduro. In addition, Maduro announced a reshuffle of his government, i.e., reaching out for even further compromises with the bourgeoisie. In contrast to such right-wing reformism, revolutionaries in Venezuela should call upon the masses of workers and popular organizations,

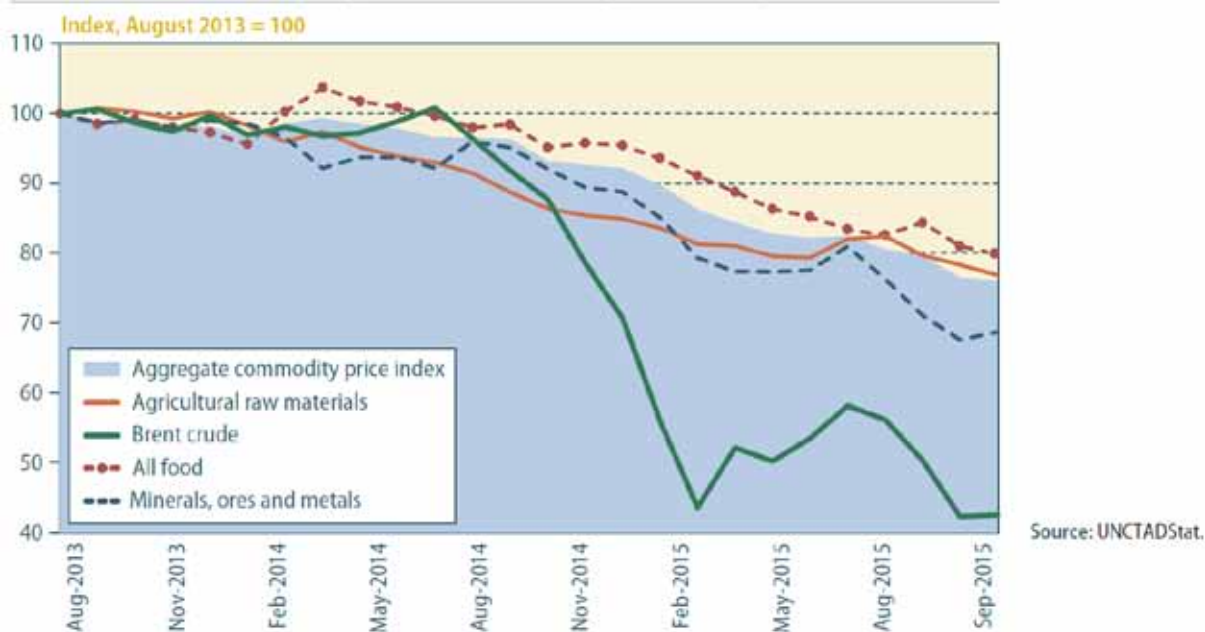
the trade unions, the Bolivarian organizations of the urban poor, the PCV, etc., to mobilize against the right-wing threat and to arm of the masses. At the same time, revolutionaries should call for political independence of the workers' organizations from the Maduro government and oppose all austerity attacks – whether they be launched by the MUD-dominated parliament or by the Maduro government. Most importantly, revolutionaries should explain to the workers' vanguard the necessity to break with the bourgeois-populist PSUV and to build an independent mass workers' party based on a revolutionary program.

96. *Mexico* has witnessed several important workers' and popular struggles in the recent years. Most importantly has been the mass movement in solidarity with the 43 students who were abducted and murdered by the criminal alliance of politicians and drug gangs in the Ayotzinapa in September 2014. This incident was just one exam-

ple, albeit a particularly brutal and shocking one, of many such corrupt alliances which demonstrate the reactionary nature of the capitalist state. The RCIT is in solidarity with revolutionaries in Mexico fighting to transform such movements into a national political movement against the reactionary PRI government. Likewise, we support the call for the formation of workers' and popular militias in order to defend the masses against the terror of the drug gangs as well as against the police and army. As in other Latin American countries, it is crucial to break workers and youth away from all forms of bourgeois populism like the PRD and AMLO's recently founded party *Morena*. Naturally, this should not prevent revolutionaries from deploying the united front tactic to such mass organizations, but the strategic goal must be the formation of an *independent* mass workers' party based on a revolutionary program.

Figure 49. Price Indices of Selected Groups of Commodities, August 2013–September 2015 ¹⁵⁴

Price indices of selected groups of commodities, August 2013–September 2015



The British Left and the EU-Referendum

The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism

An analysis of the left's failure to fight for an independent, internationalist and socialist stance both against British as well as European imperialism

A Pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

Price: €3 / \$3,5 / £2 (plus delivery charges)

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

IV.6. The Political Situation and Class Struggle in Asia

97. While other regions currently play a more central role in the world class struggle, this could change very soon given the importance of Asia and Africa. As we have pointed out in the past, Asia is not only the biggest continent and home of three Great Powers but also of 60% of the global industrial proletariat.¹⁵⁸ Africa, while much less industrialized, is the continent with the second-largest and fastest growing population, and is home to a rapidly growing industrial proletariat. Sub-Saharan Africa's workforce is expected to increase by 830 million people between 2010 and 2050 (plus an additional 80 million in North Africa). Under these conditions, Africa's workforce would represent two-thirds of the growth in the worldwide workforce during this period (see Figure 50).¹⁵⁹ When the working class of these two continents awakens politically and rises up, they will be proletarian giants who will shake the entire world!

98. As we have elaborated above, *China* has become strongly impacted by the crisis of the capitalist world economy. The party and state leadership under Xi Jinping are trying to curb the crisis by pumping billions into the economy as well by trying to regulate the stock market. Likewise, Xi is attempting to expand China's global influence with the "One Belt, One Road" strategy which is also an initiative to export the problems resulting from the over-accumulation of capital given the country's vast output during the past 25 years. However, until now the regime has not been able to stop the declining growth rates of the country's industrial production nor the slump in the stock market. At the same time, the Chinese proletariat has enormously gained in self-confidence. Since 2011, according to the Hong-Kong based *China Labour Bulletin*, the reported number of strikes and protests in the country has doubled every year since 2011 and in particular in the second half of 2015 (see also Figure 51 and 51). The construction industry accounted for 36% of all incidents in 2015 with manufacturing at 32%. However, until now, these workers' protests have been mainly on economic issues.

99. In the event of a full recession this could change, since such circumstances would undermine the legitimacy of the regime. Naturally, it is difficult to predict how such a crisis would develop. It is quite possible that the first step could be – like in 1989 at the beginning of the Tien-an-men Square movement – an open division inside the ruling party. Given the dramatic economic crisis such rifts are quiet likely. This could open the space for mass protests which at the beginning – given the lack of political experience of the Chinese working class – might rally to support one camp against the other. Likewise, revolutionaries have to be aware of the danger that, in such a situation, the ruling class might instigate a wave of Han chauvinism – which could be directed against domestic "terrorist enemies" (e.g., the Uyghurs fighting for national liberation) and/ or against enemies abroad (e.g. Japan or the US). However, this could easily get out of hand and be transformed into a revolutionary situation. As we have said above, such a possible revolutionary situation in the world biggest country and one of the two biggest imperi-

alist powers would have global ramifications and immediately change the character of the current political phase. Revolutionaries should support all economic protests, but try to link them with the democratic struggle and with the political struggle to overthrow the Stalinist-capitalist dictatorship. They should fight against all expressions of Han chauvinism and help the workers' vanguard to take a consistent internationalist position – i.e., against all forms of Han domination, for complete equality for all minorities and their right of national self-determination, and for an anti-imperialist stand against the expansionist plans of their ruling class. Such a perspective must be connected with a program for working class power.

100. The working class in *India* has been on the defensive for some time. This is reflected in the decreasing number of strikes during the past 12 years and, in particular, since 2012. Between 2003 and 2014, the number of strikes and lockouts has fallen by nearly 75% (from 552 strikes and lockouts in 2003 to only 143 in 2014). The number of workers participating in strikes dwindled as well, from 1.81 million (in 2003) to one million (in 2014). In the same period, the number of person-days of work lost was reduced from 30.25 million in 2003 to 3.63 million in 2014 (see Table 9).¹⁶³ However, things might change now: An alliance of nearly all trade unions organized on 2 September 2015 declared probably the biggest general strikes in human history, with 150 million people participating.

101. The significant decrease in the number of strikes in recent years has gone hand in hand with the electoral victory of Narendra Modi and his right-wing Hindu-chauvinist BJP in 2014. At the same, time the traditional reformist parties – the "Communist" Parties CPI(Marxist) and the CPI – have been experiencing crises and decline. In 2011, the CPI(M) lost control over the state of West-Bengal – a state it had run since the early 1970s and which became a highly-corrupt principality of the party bosses. During their decades in power, the reformist CPI(M) bureaucrats closely collaborated with foreign monopolies and helped to expel peasants when this was demanded by the former. They also participated in the suppression of the Naxalite movement – led by the CPI(Maoist) – which has become a leading force of poor peasants and Adivasi (India's substantial indigenous minority).

102. The increasing public attention to the numerous horrible rape incidents against women have sparked a mass women's movement which continued to take to the streets in 2015. It also led to the formation of armed militias of rural poor women who organize their defense against oppression and sexual assaults (often perpetuated by men from higher classes and castes). Such developments are a significant achievement given the difficult conditions in India, where only 31.2% of women are formally integrated into the economy. This is also true for the whole of South Asia (see Figure 53). Revolutionaries unconditionally support these protests and self-organizing and call for it to be oriented towards working class and poor women (i.e., the Dalits).

103. In *Pakistan* a de-facto cold coup d'état has taken

Figure 50. Projected workforce growth, 2010-50: Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, China, India, Europe and the United States ¹⁶⁰

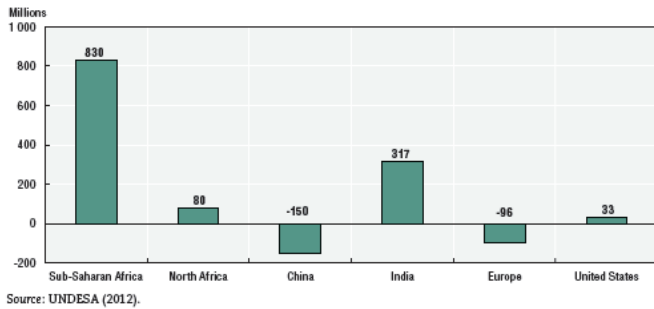


Figure 52. Strikes and Workers Protests in China in 2015 ¹⁶¹



Figure 51. Increase of Workers Protests 2012-15 ¹⁶⁰

Reported labor protests or strikes, quarterly

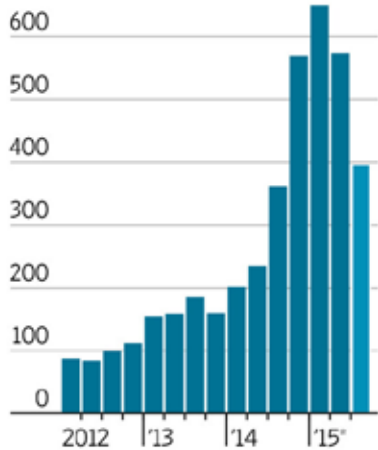
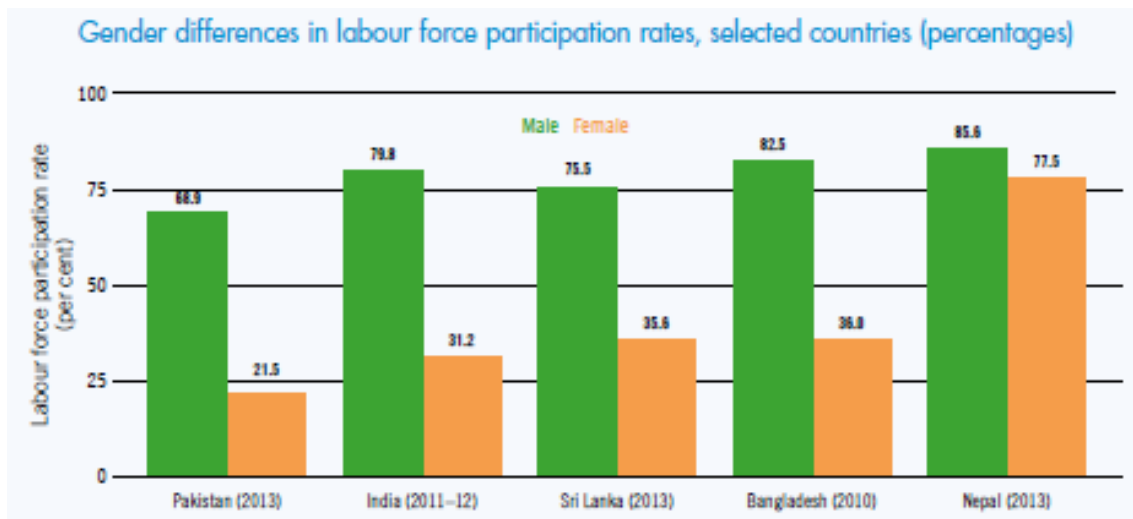


Table 9: Strikes and Lockouts 2007-2015 ¹⁶³

Year	Strikes and Lockouts	Workers Involved	Person-Days-Lost (in thousands)
2007	389	724,574	27,167
2008	421	1,579,298	17,433
2009	345	1,867,204	17,622
2010	371	1,074,473	23,131
2011	370	734,763	14,458
2012	447	1,307,505	12,876
2013	198	1,057,887	3,665
2014	143	1,008,275	3,636

Figure 53. Participation of Men and Women in the Labor Force in South Asia (in %) ¹⁶⁴



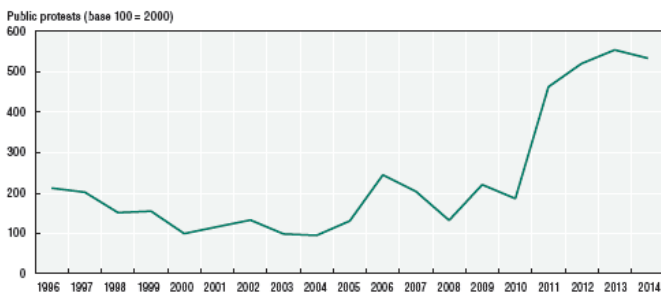
place in which the army command took control while leaving the discredited and corrupt PPP government formally in place. The mass protests have declined since the days of the *Inqilab* and *Azadi Marches* in the autumn of 2014. However, important workers struggles have taken place in 2015, like those of the power workers and the protests against the privatization of public sector enterprises. Also, the heroic struggle of the Baloch people for national self-determination – despite the brutal repression by the Pakistani army – is continuing. (Pakistan is a multi-national and multi-ethnic state in which many nationalities and peoples are oppressed.) Furthermore the army – together with US forces – is continuing its war against the various factions of the Pakistani Taliban. There is no doubt that the Taliban are reactionary Islamist forces and enemies of the working class. While most Stalinists and centrists side in this war with the army, revolutionaries in Pakistan recognize that the main enemy is the powerful army (with their puppet government) and their imperialist backers. The struggle of the Taliban – who are closely linked to the Afghan Taliban – reflects the resistance of poor peasants and local ethnic groups against foreign domination.

104. The electoral victory of Sirisena in the *Sri Lankan* presidential elections one year ago against the long-time

ruler Rajapaksa – who launched the genocide of at least 40,000 Tamils in 2009 (according to the UN) – opened a new political phase in the country. Sirisena, a former member of Rajapaksa’s cabinet, collaborates closely with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and his conservative UNP. Sirisena’s victory reflected both the determination of sectors of the Sinhala rural poor and Tamil and Muslim minorities to get rid of the reactionary-chauvinist Rajapaksa regime as well as a growing dissatisfaction of sectors of the Sinhala, pro-US bourgeoisie which felt uncomfortable with Rajapaksa’s Bonapartist rule which had become too idiosyncratic and pro-Chinese. However these developments unfortunately took place on the backdrop of serious defeats suffered by the working class and oppressed in recent years – in particular the historic defeat of the Tamil national liberation movement in 2009. Revolutionaries support all efforts to revitalize the workers’ movement and to strengthen the struggle for national self-determination of the Tamil people. This includes supporting the struggle of hundreds of Tamil prisoners – held under the notorious *Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)* – for their release. Likewise, socialists call for the defense of the Muslim minority which faces chauvinist attacks organized by chauvinist Sinhala-Buddhists.

Figure 54. Public Protests and Violence by Non-State Actors in Africa, 1996–2014 ¹⁶⁷

Figure 10. Public protests and violence by non-state actors in Africa, 1996-2014



Violence by non-state actors (base 100 = 2 000)

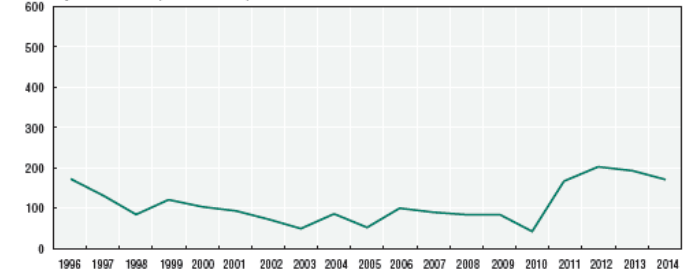
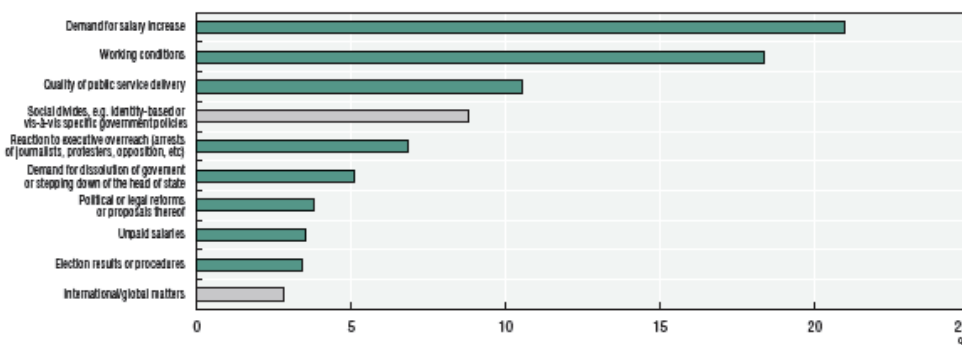


Figure 55. Top Drivers of Public Protests in Africa, 2014 ¹⁶⁸

Figure 11. Top drivers of public protests in Africa, 2014



Source: Authors’ calculations based on news verified by AFP and Reuters.

IV.7. The Political Situation and Class Struggle in Africa

105. *Sub-Sahara Africa* suffers in particular from the recent collapse of the prices of primary commodities and the slowing down of the Chinese economy. About 38.3% of all Sub-Saharan African exports go to China, India and Brazil. Fuels, including oil and coal, make up a large share of exports to these countries, accounting for approximately 55.6% of the region's total export receipts in 2013, while non-fuel commodities, such as copper, platinum and gold, accounted for a further 24.8%.¹⁶⁶

106. Africa is of growing interest for the greedy appetite of the imperialist monopolies and Great Powers, since it is considered as a fast-growing market of 1.1 billion people which is expected to more than double and grow by about 1.2 billion additional persons by 2050. Furthermore, Africa is home to abundant and largely under-exploited natural resources, including an estimated 10% of the global reserves of oil, 40% of gold and 80–90% of chromium/platinum group of metals, as well as large-scale, vast areas of land, including around 24% – 600 million hectares – of the world's arable land.¹⁶⁷

107. The continent has witnessed a tremendous increase (between 200–250%) of strikes and mass demonstrations since 2011 (see Figure 54). This represents, by the way, yet another global and highly progressive consequence of the Arab Revolution – despite its reactionary slander by many Stalinists and pro-Eastern social-imperialist eulogists. In most cases these were struggles for economic demands like wage increases and better working conditions, as well as demands for better public services (see Figure 55).

108. However there have also been important revolutionary uprising against corrupt dictatorships – first in Burkina Faso in late November 2014 and in Burundi in May 2015. Given the lack of a revolutionary leadership, the ruling class has managed to suppress and channel these uprisings.¹⁷⁰ However, the combination of Africa's rapidly-growing working class and youth, the aggravated social and economic contradictions, and the fact that it is becoming a target for the rivaling interests of the Great Powers (in particular the US, EU and China) are a guarantee that this continent will play a key role in the worldwide working class struggle in the not too remote future.

109. *South Africa* currently constitutes the most important country of Sub-Sahara Africa. It too was negatively impacted by the slowdown of the Chinese economy as the Eastern Great Power has become South Africa's largest trade partner. Furthermore, Chinese capital is an important foreign investor in the South African economy. In 2007, for instance, the *Industrial and Commercial Bank of China* bought a multi-billion-dollar stake in the *South African Standard Bank*, constituting the largest foreign investment in South African history.¹⁷¹

110. South Africa is home to a growing, self-confident proletariat with the historical experience of the decades-long struggle against Apartheid. Furthermore, South African workers gained important political experience with the treachery of reformist Stalinism and the popular front government based on the triple alliance ANC-COSATU-

SACP. As a result, first we saw the heroic struggle of the Marikana miners in 2012, then the split of COSATU led by the biggest single union, NUMSA, and the formation of the so-called *United Front* which could constitute the basis for a new Workers' Party. In October 2015, the students launched a wave of mass protests with the support of the NUMSA-led trade union alliance, and successfully defeated the plans of the Zuma government to abolish free education. Revolutionaries in South Africa should focus their work on the establishment of a democratic and militant, un-bureaucratized union federation, the overcoming of the limitations of the NUMSA and United Front leaders' fixation on the Stalinist-inspired *Freedom Charta* and, most importantly, the formation of a new Workers' Party, in which Marxists will fight for a revolutionary program.

111. In *Burkina Faso*, millions took to the street in late October and early November 2014 against the pro-imperialist government of President Compaore. We witnessed a general strike as well as the parliament being set on fire by the masses, forcing the president to flee the country. Burkina Faso saw also one of the more organized protests in Sub-Saharan Africa, during the food strikes in 2008, as the trade unions organized a two-day general strike. Seeing how the huge majority of the more than 18 million Burkinabe are living on the edge of a subsistence economy, the country is not only one of the poorest in the world; rather Burkina Faso also demonstrates the extent of suffering that can be caused by a country's domination by imperialism, distorting economy, and forcing it to become the second biggest producer of cotton in the African continent (after Egypt). The corrupt government which was led for 27 years by the same president, the weak economic base, the imperialist influence, and the high proportion of poor people is an explosive mixture which can lead to new mass uprisings in the coming phase.

112. *Nigeria* has become the biggest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa and is the country with the largest labor force in the entire African continent. In 2014 Nigeria had a GDP of 1,053 billion US-Dollars, much higher than that of South Africa's equaling 707 billion US-Dollars. However the GDP per capita of Nigeria in 2014 was just about 3,298 US-Dollar which is much less than South Africa's (5,902 US-Dollars). Furthermore, Nigeria is currently experiencing a certain boom, with last year's industrial production having grown by 6.8% while South Africa is close to recession and its industrial production declined by -0.2% during the same period. Nigeria has become an important semi-colony for the parasitic imperialist countries as its main exports are petroleum and petroleum products, which together constitute 95% of its entire export sector. We can also see a growing influence of Chinese imperialism in Nigeria, although the more dominant imperialist powers in the country are still several European imperialist countries as well as Japan. Labor strikes in Nigeria are increasing, and the past few years have witnessed a number of indefinite strikes by food workers, health workers, teachers and others. In 2012, the country even experienced a huge general strike. An important factor for the political

situation in Nigeria is the reactionary forces of Boko Haram which is mainly attracting the poorer Muslim peoples of the north of Nigeria to fight against the corrupt government. However, the political leadership of Boko Haram is fighting not only the government but primarily the Christian population of Nigeria, which in both parts of the country – north and south – is on the average better off economically than the Muslims. Consequently, a reactionary civil war in Nigeria is a real possibility and, should it break out, would pose a real threat to the rise of a militant vanguard of the country's working class. The next Great Recession will have a deep impact on Nigeria, and will likely lead to an explosion of labor strikes but may also bring in its wake the start of such a reactionary civil war. Therefore, the workers and oppressed of Nigeria must simultaneously fight against the corrupt government and the imperialist parasites on the one hand, and the growing reactionary forces of Boko Haram, on the other. To do so, the formation of a new workers' party based on a revolutionary program is an urgent task not only for the Nigerian people but for the entire region.

113. The *Ivory Coast* plays an important role in Sub-Saharan Africa because of its extraordinarily developed infrastructure, making it a vital base for the European imperialists, particularly France, in their West African business. As the Ivory Coast is a direct neighbor of Mali, it also constitutes an important strategic position for every military intervention undertaken by the imperialists in this region. This will continue to make the place, regardless of its relatively small population and labor force (similar in size to that of Burkina Faso), an important country for

the western imperialists for the near future. The workers' movement of the Ivory Coast is much weaker than those of other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the country has been shattered by repeated civil wars waged by rebel forces fighting the corrupt government, a long-time puppet of French imperialism. This strife actually led to a division of the country in 2004 after a two-year military conflict between the rebel-led north against the south of the country, the latter region being dominated by the pro-French government. The civil war ended in 2007 with the capitulation of the official leadership of the rebels but flared up again after the presidential elections in 2010/2011. This time the imperialist forces intervened immediately and pacified the country to secure the infrastructure which they need for their businesses. It was a bitter lesson for the anti-imperialist fighters to see the hero of the rebels from the civil war in the early 2000s, Laurent Gbagbo, become an unabashed lackey of imperialism after he came to power. However, the imperialists turned around and sacked him after the presidential elections 2010 by supporting Outtara. Thus, here too, it is an urgent task for the workers and oppressed in the Ivory Coast to build a revolutionary workers' party which can lead a consistent anti-imperialist fight. The next Great Recession and its impact on France may have severe consequences on the Ivory Coast since it may very well weaken the country's traditional ruling power. Other imperialist forces are liable to exploit for their own interests a just fight in the future by the rebels against French imperialism or even intervene directly in the event that the rebels refuse to collaborate with the Great Powers.

New Book!

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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

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

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

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

25 years.

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

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

**Building the
Revolutionary Party
in Theory
and Practice**

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



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

IV.8. The Political Situation and Class Struggle in Europe

114. From the perspective of class struggle, currently the three most important countries in Europe are Spain, Portugal and Greece. These countries have seen a significant shift to the left, reflecting a rising political consciousness of the working class and particularly that of the proletarian youth. The elections in *Spain* on 20 December 2015 saw the defeat of the conservative party and the spectacular rise of the petty-bourgeois left-populist PODEMOS party (as well as of the far-left pro-independence *Candidatura d'Unitat Popular* party in Catalonia, in the earlier regional elections). At the moment it is unclear if the social democratic PSOE will succeed in forming a coalition, which would most likely constitute a popular-front government, or if new elections will take place. Revolutionaries in Spain should advocate preparing a general strike to repeal the past attacks of the Rajoy government which were directed against social gains and women's and democratic rights. They should also advocate the abolishment of the reactionary and corrupt monarchy and support the Catalan and Basque peoples struggles for independence.

115. In *Portugal*, the recent elections also resulted in the defeat of the ruling right-wing alliance and a victory for the Socialist Party, as well as the centrist *Bloco de Esquerda* and the Stalinists. Here, too, revolutionaries should call the workers' movement to organize mass demonstrations and strikes up to a general strike in order to repeal the regime of austerity. Revolutionaries should utilize such mass strikes to demand from the "left-wing" government the immediate implementation of a number of measures like nationalization of the banks and corporations. They should combine this with calls for the formation of action committees in the factories, neighborhoods and schools, in order that the struggle be controlled by the rank and file workers and not the bureaucrats.¹⁷²

116. *Greece* experienced in the past year the first political cycle of a popular-front government. After the spectacular electoral victory of SYRIZA one year ago, it formed a coalition with the right-wing ANEL party. After a series of compromises with the EU, it was forced under popular pressure to hold a referendum over the EU Troika memorandum which resulted in a massive victory for OXI, i.e., rejection of the memorandum. However, the Tsipras government soon betrayed this vote and capitulated to the EU. The resulting split of the left wing and the formation of the new LAE party failed to achieve a breakthrough because of its inconsistency, hesitation and adaptation to petty-bourgeois Keynesianism and nationalism. In Spain, Portugal and Greece it will be crucial for revolutionaries to combine a flexible united front tactic directed at fighting shoulder to shoulder with workers and youth who still support reformist parties, while clearly criticizing these parties' bureaucratic leaderships and investing energetic efforts to advance the formation of a revolutionary workers' party.

117. *France* has been at the forefront of the counter-revolutionary wave in Europe in recent months. "Socialist" President Hollande presents himself as a mixture of a Bonaparte and Bismarck and expands the Bonapartist

elements which always have been present in France's political super-structure. The three month state of emergency is qualitatively a new form of attack against democratic rights not seen in Europe since the downfall of the dictatorships in southern Europe in the mid-1970s. Until now it has resulted in 3,000 house searches, some 1,000 people have been arrested and 51 people jailed, mostly related to illegal weapons or drugs. Nearly all of this state repression has been directed against Muslim migrants. Add to this the repression of the anti-COP21 protests.¹⁷³ Underlying this reactionary tendency is the fact that the extreme right-wing racist *Front National* has become the strongest party both in the European as well as in the regional elections. The pathetic capitulation of the "Communist" PCF and the *Front de Gauche* (part of the ex-Stalinist *Party of the European Left*) who supported Hollande's state of emergency decree demonstrated, once again, that such social-imperialist parties invariably join the camp of the counter-revolution in every difficult situation. It is also shameful that a FO trade union in the North-West region of France, led by right-centrist Lambertists, adopted a resolution supporting "national unity." The centrist NPA and LO correctly opposed any call for "national unity." But they are organically incapable of calling for the defeat of the French imperialist invaders in Mali or in Syria and supporting the anti-occupation resistance. Neither are they capable of defending the Muslim migrants against the wave of repression. The task of revolutionaries in France is to mobilize for the defense of the Muslim migrants against repression and to call the workers' movement to fight against attacks on democratic rights.¹⁷⁴

118. In *Germany* in 2015 we witnessed a number of important strikes (rail drivers, postal workers, kindergarten workers, etc.). However due to the treacherous role of the bureaucracy of the trade unions as well as that of the social democratic and LINKE parties these economic struggles could not be transformed into a political working class offensive against the conservative / social democratic coalition government. An important political movement has been the pro-refugee movement, which challenges an essential pillar of the imperialist state – its ability to completely control who is allowed to enter the country and who is not. This movement reflects an important politization of sectors of the working class, migrants and youth. (The same is true for Austria which also has a similar movement.) However, right-wing forces are intensifying their racist offensive which already began more than a year ago with the PEGIDA movement and which is now escalating after the events of Cologne on New Year's Eve. Again, like in France, the LINKE (part of the *Party of the European Left*) has failed to consistently defend migrants. Their party leaders Sahra Wagenknecht and Dietmar Bartsch have threatened refugees (allegedly) involved in criminal actions with deportation.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, the left responded pathetically against the participation of German soldiers in the occupation of Mali and the war in Syria. Revolutionaries in Germany should call for a broad united front of the trade unions, reformist parties, migrant and

Muslim organization and pro-refugees groups to fight back against racist mobilizations and fascist provocations. Likewise, it is important to forge links between the pro-refugee movement and industrial struggles. At the same time, revolutionaries should advocate a socialist transitional program which includes the struggle for open borders and complete equality for migrants, as well as a consistent anti-imperialist position of solidarity with the resistance against the imperialist crusaders.

119. The general situation in *Britain* during the past year was characterized by the clear defeat for the Labour Party and an electoral victory for David Cameron and his Tories. Nevertheless, Britain has already seen several important mass mobilizations against austerity organized by the TUC and the People's Assembly. Furthermore, hun-

dreds of thousands people – amongst them many youth – have recently joined the Labour Party and helped the left-reformist Jeremy Corbyn to become the new leader despite the resistance of the huge majority of the party's bureaucracy. Revolutionaries in Britain are right in looking for opportunities to work side-on-side with these left-moving workers and youth inside the Labour Party on the basis of a revolutionary platform. Likewise revolutionaries in Britain support mass mobilizations against the government's decision to bomb Syria. However, contrary to the Stalinists and centrists leading the *Stop the War* coalition, they do not combine this with support for Assad and Russian imperialism but with support for the Syrian Revolution against the Assad dictatorship.

New Book!

Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony

The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – *GREECE: A MODERN SEMI-COLONY*. The book's subtitle is: *The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features*. It contains six chapters (144 pages) and includes 12 tables, 35 figures and 4 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

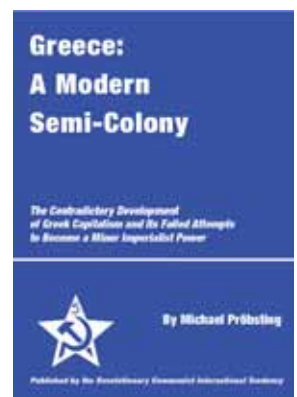
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

Greece is at the forefront both of the capitalist crisis in Europe as well as of the class struggle. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that what the Arab Revolution has been for the world in the past few years, Greece has been for Europe.

Subsequently, the question of the class character of Greece is of crucial importance both for the domestic as well as for the international workers movement: Is it an imperialist

state, a semi-colonial country or something else, and what are its specific features?

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Marxists' theoretical conception of imperialist respectively semi-colonial states. In Chapter II we give a brief historical overview of the development of Greek capitalism. In Chapter III we deal with Greece's failed attempt to become a minor imperialist power. In Chapter IV we outline the historic crisis of Greek capitalism from 2008 until today. In Chapter V we elaborate the most important programmatic conclusions and in the last Chapter we present a summary in the form of theses. The book contains 12 Tables, 35 Figures and 4 Maps. ■



IV.9. The Political Situation and Class Struggle in the US

120. In the *United States*, the upcoming presidential election of 2016 will be an important event of global significance. Hillary Clinton basically represents the continuation of Obama's policy, i.e., trying to maintain the leading global position of US imperialism, while at the same time making concessions to allies and rivals as dictated by the weakening of US capitalism (e.g., Obama's Syria policy, negotiations with Iran, his attempt to avoid or at least to reduce political tensions domestically – as his response to the police killings of black people has shown). However, the ongoing economic crisis has led to the decline of significant sectors of the middle class, which forms the social base for the ultra-reactionary *Tea Party* movement. At the same time, significant sectors among the monopoly bourgeoisie think they will be able to reverse the decline of the US by launching an ultra-reactionary, full military offensive. This adventurist, arch-reactionary wing is represented by various presidential candidates of the Republican Party, with the billionaire Donald Trump being the leading contender. It is symptomatic that the candidate from the Bush clan appears to be one of the more moderate contenders, while Trump is reaping much success in the polls with a campaign which combines elements of Hitlerism with clownery. If Trumps becomes president, he will make George W. Bush look like a dove.

121. An interesting phenomenon is the successful campaign of Bernie Sanders – a left liberal in the Democratic Party who is usually characterized by the US media as a “socialist.” While Sanders is no socialist by any meaningful standards ¹⁷⁶, his success reflects an important shift to the left among sectors of the working class and youth.

However, while revolutionaries should pedagogically address his supporters, they should also sharply denounce those centrists who opportunistically adapt to Sanders and might even support him (e.g., the SA/CWI's public figure Kshama Sawant). For Marxists, support for a presidential candidate of the Democratic Party – an imperialist party of the US monopoly bourgeoisie – is not permissible under any conditions.

122. In the realm of class struggle, the *Black Lives Matters* movement has been the most important development brought on by the clearly racist-motivated serial exoneration of police who have killed black Americans. This mass movement arose spontaneously, outside of the control of the black middle class establishment which is closely related to the Democratic Party (e.g., Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton). It reflects the potential for a *revolutionary black movement* in the US today. Revolutionaries wholeheartedly support this movement and combine this with agitation for building self-defense units (composed of black as well as sympathetic Latino and white militants), action committees in black neighborhoods, and efforts to build links with anti-racist forces among the white workers' movement. Similarly, it is important to support the struggle of Latino migrant workers and poor and to link them to the black movement and to progressive white sectors of the working class. A revolutionary black movement has to be linked to the slogan of a *revolutionary movement of people of color*, which is the application of the slogan for the revolutionary migrant movement to the concrete circumstances of the US.

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V. Building a New Revolutionary World Party: The Crucial Task in the Coming Period

123. The RCIT has outlined in its *Open Letter for Revolutionary Unity* the urgent need to advance the building of a new revolutionary world party. The sharp aggravation of the contradictions between the classes as well as between the Great Powers, the counterrevolutionary offensive of the ruling classes, the defeats and disorientation of the workers' movement as well as the revolutionary upheavals which lie ahead – all these make the struggle to replace the existing reformist and populist leaderships with a revolutionary party a question of life and death for the working class liberation struggle.

124. We call upon revolutionaries around the world to join us in the struggle to advance political and organizational unity. The immediate task ahead is to win over sectors of the workers' vanguard to a solid and tested revolutionary program. This cannot be done purely by means of propaganda, but absolutely requires exemplary mass work in the most important struggles of the workers and

oppressed.

125. This however should *not* be done on a purely national level, but rather in the international domain. The Marxist program and its method of struggle and organization do not derive from local or national conditions, but from the international and historical experience of the revolutionary workers' movement. The RCIT calls upon revolutionaries around the world to engage with us in collaboration and discussion around the issues raised in the *Open Letter*. True, authentic revolutionaries are still small in numbers today. But with a revolutionary program, an activist orientation, and a correct understanding of the main developments in the present historical period, Marxists will be able to fuse with the most advanced sectors of the proletariat and the oppressed and make leaps forward in the formation of the key instrument for our liberation struggle: the formation of a new revolutionary world party.

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Books from 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

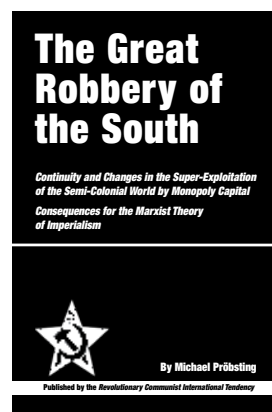
The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *THE GREAT ROBBERY OF THE SOUTH*. The book's subtitle is: *Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital*. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. The book is in English-language. 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.

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Michael Pröbsting: Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?*. The book's subtitle is: *The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism*. The book is in English-language. It has 5 chapters plus an appendix, 108 pages and includes 19 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who is the International Secretary of the RCIT.

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The author demonstrates how the Cuban Revolution, despite the initial modest intentions of its leaders, was spurred forward to more radical policies by grass roots struggles of Cuban workers and peasants. In fact, the very abolishment of capitalism by the Cuban regime was no part of the original game plan of either Castro's Movimiento 26 de Julio or of the official Cuban communist party (PSP), but rather was a product of precisely such pressures from below.

Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? describes in detail how a number of relatively recent political, economic, and social measures were

purposely taken by the Cuban government to open the road back to capitalism. Pröbsting elaborates the key role of the world's new great imperialist power, China, in Cuba's state policy as exemplified in the June 2011 Sino-Cuban agreement for a first Five-Year Plan of cooperation between these two states.

Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? examines these developments from the viewpoint of Marxist theory, the nature of the ruling bureaucracy in Stalinist states, and the process of restoration of capitalism under such regimes.

In conclusion, the book proposes a socialist program for political and social revolution in Cuba to halt the advance of capitalism and to eradicate the country's bureaucratic dictatorship.

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The Author: Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 34 years. He is the author of many articles and pamphlets in German and English language. He published books or contributed to books on Rosa Luxemburg (1999), on the World Economy (2008), on Migration (2010) and the Arab Revolution (2011). In addition to *The Great Robbery of the South* and *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* he also published in 2014 the book *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. He is the International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency.

What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for only this class has the collective power to bring down the ruling class and build a socialist society.

The revolution cannot proceed peacefully because a ruling class never has nor ever will voluntarily surrender its power. By necessity, therefore, the road to liberation includes armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasants' republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in councils democratically elected in rank-and-file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods, and schools. These councils, in turn, elect and control the government and all other state authorities, and always retain the right to recall them.

Authentic socialism and communism have nothing to do with the so-called "socialism" that ruled in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and which continues to do so in China and Cuba, for example. In these countries, the proletariat was and is dominated and oppressed by a privileged party bureaucracy.

Under capitalism, the RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of the workers and oppressed, while simultaneously striving to overthrow this system based on economic exploitation of the masses.

Towards these ends, we work from within the trade unions where we advocate class struggle, socialism, and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy perniciously connected with the state and capital via status, high-paying jobs, and other privileges. Thus, the trade union bureaucracy is far from the interests and living conditions of

its members, based as it is on the top, privileged layers of the working class – a labor aristocracy which has no real interest in replacing capitalism. Therefore, the true struggle for the liberation of the working class, the toppling of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their "representative" from the upper trade union strata.

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

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

While the RCIT strives for unity of action with other organizations, we are acutely aware that the policies of social democrats and pseudo-revolutionary groups are dangerous, and ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class, peasants, and the otherwise oppressed.

In wars between imperialist states we take a revolutionary defeatist position: we do not support either side, but rather advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class in each of the warring states. In wars between imperialist powers (or their stooges) and a semi-colonial countries we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed countries.

As communists, we maintain that the struggle against national oppression and all types of social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) *must* be led by the working class, because only the latter is capable of fomenting a revolutionary change in society. Therefore, we consistently support working class-based revolutionary movements of the socially oppressed, while opposing the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism, etc.), who ultimately dance to the tune of the capitalists, and strive to replace them with revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class be victorious in its struggle for liberation. The establishment of such a party and the execution of a successful revolution, as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks in Russia under Lenin and Trotsky remain the models for revolutionary parties and revolutions in the 21st century.

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For a 5th Workers International to be founded on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

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