



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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* Brazil: Mass Protests against Temer

* Does the EU Represent

"Bourgeois Democratic Progress"?

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Solidarity with Aleppo! Hands off Syria!

Joint Statement, 4 October 2016

In recent days, the people of Aleppo are once again suffering unspeakable horror. They are living under siege and are daily experiencing devastating bombardment by the air forces of Assad and Russia.

We stand with the people of Aleppo in their heroic efforts to defend the city against occupation by Assad's army!

Furthermore, we reiterate our support for the Syrian people in their ongoing liberation struggle which will continue as long as the dictatorship of the Assad clan continues to exist!

We denounce the murderous war against the Syrian people by the Russian and the Iranian states.

Likewise we denounce the so-called "War on Terror" in Syria by the US as well as a number of European powers! In fact, the terrorist war is being waged by them, among others, against the Syrian people!

We also denounce the military intervention of the Turkish state in northern Syria being directed against both the Kurdish people and the Syrian people fighting against Assad's dictatorship.

We warn that the Great Powers – with the help of regional powers – are preparing another *Sykes-Picot Agreement* (better called the *Kerry-Lavrov Agreement*). This conspiracy aims to divide Syria, liquidate the Revolution, and retain the Assadist state apparatus.

We say: "Great Powers – Hands off Syria!"

Finally we denounce Daesh (the so-called "Islamic State")

which is waging a reactionary war against the people of Syria.

We call for a militant international campaign in solidarity with the heroic Syrian people defending Aleppo against the terrorist Assad regime. Such a campaign should be directed simultaneously against intervention by the Great Powers in Syria.

* *Solidarity with Aleppo!*

* *Down with Assad!*

* *Great Powers: Hands off Syria!*

* *For the arming of the Syrian people to defend themselves against Assad and imperialist aggression!*

Signatories:

Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Israel/Occupied Palestine, Yemen, Tunisia, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, New Zealand, Britain, Germany and Austria), www.thecommunists.net

Smif Savaşı (Turkey), <http://dorduncublok.blogspot.com/>

International Revolutionary Workers (Zimbabwe), <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100013062453108>

Workers International Vanguard Party (South Africa), <http://www.workersinternational.org.za/>

(We would like to add the importance of workers coordination committees to expropriate all imperialist assets without compensation and to place them under workers control as well as the creation of a workers government.)



Rally in Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution on 30.09.2016 in Vienna (Austria)

The Looming Kerry-Lavrov Agreement – A Great Power Conspiracy against the Syrian Revolution!

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 06.10.2016

From its beginning in 2011 until today, the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) has always supported the heroic Syrian Revolution as part of the Arab Revolution. (1)

We have always recognized the democratic character of the Syrian Revolution as an uprising of workers and poor peasants outraged by the bloody and sectarian dictatorship of the Assad clan. This democratic revolution has been distorted and hampered by the petty-bourgeois secular nationalist and Islamist leadership. But contrary to the numerous pseudo-left doomsayers, until now the Syrian Revolution has neither been defeated nor has it lost its democratic and progressive character. The Revolution continues to live through the *Local Coordination Committees*, through the numerous popular organizations, through the tens of thousands of rebel fighters and their militias and the millions of Syrian workers, peasants and refugees who are supporting the ongoing liberation struggle.

The RCIT reaffirms that the most significant failure of the Syrian Revolution has been both a product and a manifestation of the absence of a revolutionary party and independent mass working class organizations. Therefore, the strategic task of authentic Syrian revolutionaries is to fight against the non-revolutionary leaderships and for the creation of independent proletarian organizations by participating *inside* the camp of the Syrian Revolution.

Numerous Dangers for the Syrian Revolution

However, the ongoing heroic Syrian Revolution which started in March 2011 is in a state of crisis and faces numerous obstacles and dangers. The most imminent danger is the barbarous war which Assad and his Russian backers are waging against the Syrian people and, in particular, against the besieged people of eastern Aleppo, a brutal siege which threatens to annihilate this enclave of resistance in the country's biggest city.

Furthermore the Syrian Revolution is under attack by *Daesh* (the so-called "Islamic State" or – as most Muslims would say – "*Un-Islamic State*"). This reactionary, counter-revolutionary force is focusing its struggle not on attacking the Assad regime but rather on attempting to destroy the Syrian and Kurdish rebels.

In addition, the Kurdish PYD/YPG leadership – while standing at the head of a legitimate struggle for national self-determination for the Kurdish people – is betraying both the Syrian Revolution as well as the Kurdish liberation struggle by voluntarily offering itself as a willful servant both to US as well as Russian imperialism.

Another danger is the Erdoğan regime which sent the Turkish army – with the help of some corrupt *Free Syrian Army* (FSA) leaders – into northern Syria to occupy a 960 square kilometer buffer zone and to weaken the Kurdish liberation struggle.

Last but not least, the Syrian Revolution is threatened by the betrayal and backward goals of its fragmented leader-

ship. A sector – like those in the *Syrian National Council* – has always looked for help from US imperialism and is ready to offer itself as servants to Washington's plans.

Another sector of the leadership – among them a number of FSA leaders – has proven to be self-serving, corrupt and incompetent.

The petty-bourgeois Islamist forces like *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* (formerly *Jabhat al-Nusra*) and *Ahrar al-Sham* certainly have many dedicated fighters in their ranks and are also far more competent militarily than various FSA units. Without a doubt, these petty-bourgeois forces are currently the most significant defenders of the areas liberated from Assad's hordes and the latter's foreign mercenaries which are militarily much more numerous and significant than the official army. (2) However, the leaderships of various Islamist groups have created unholy alliances with the ruling class of various Gulf States and are consequently combining the progressive struggle against the bloody Assad dictatorship with the perspective of a reactionary social order. Furthermore, these Islamist groups take a chauvinist position denying the Kurds' national rights.

Finally, many leaders of *Local Coordination Committees* as well of various armed rebel units are honestly serving the revolution, but unfortunately lack a working class perspective for the road to liberation.

Nevertheless the Syrian Revolution is far from dead – irrespective of the fact that some of the literary friends of the Syrian Revolution have already written its obituary. (3) The heroic struggle of millions of Syrian workers, peasants and youth is living testimony to the ongoing revolutionary process.

However, while Assad and Putin's bombs might be the most immediate threat to the Syrian Revolution, strategically the biggest danger is the looming agreement between the two main imperialist powers – the US and Russia – which would divide Syria and open a counter-revolutionary settlement.

Imperialist Interventions in the Syrian Civil War

The imperialist intervention in Syria has been catastrophic for some years now. Russia and its Iranian ally (plus Hezbollah) have provided tons of modern weapons and ammunition, troops, etc. to the Assad regime which quickly ran out of Syrian soldiers. In fact, the regime's war against the revolution is hardly being fought by the official Syrian army itself which is instead focusing its efforts on extracting tribute from the local population. Rather, the fighting is being waged by private militias and foreign troops as Mikhail Khodarenok – a Russian military expert and retired officer working for the General Staff – noted in a recently published article:

"The actual fighting against opposition groups is mostly done by Syrian militias, the Lebanese Hezbollah Shia units, Iranian and Iraqi volunteers and Private Military Companies. The main military actions Assad's army engages in is extorting a tribute

from the locals." (4)

In short, without Russia's and Iran's massive support the Assad regime would have collapsed years ago.

For a long time US imperialism hoped to replace Assad – who collaborated with the CIA torture program after 2001, but who has primarily been a long-time ally of Russian imperialism – with a more compliant lackey. However, Washington was always clear that it didn't desire to achieve this goal via a popular revolution which would destroy the state apparatus. Since 2011, the Libyan Revolution – which the pro-Russian social-imperialists still absurdly claim was a US conspiracy – has been a daunting example for Washington, with its ambassador, Chris Stevens, being killed in Benghazi in 2012 and all ambassadors of the Great Powers being expelled from the country. (5) In other words, from the beginning US imperialism intended to keep the Assadist state apparatus without Assad.

However, Washington came to realize that this goal was impossible to achieve. US imperialism is simply too weak to impose its goals. (6) Washington has hardly any loyal troops on the ground. The few Syrian rebels who are fighting with US advisors as part of the *Syrian Democratic Forces* hardly count. The only relevant force on the ground which is closely collaborating with the US and Western imperialists are the Kurdish PYD/YPG who refused to support the Syrian Revolution from the beginning. However, as they are a Kurdish nationalist force with only a limited number of soldiers, they cannot be used to pacify the whole of Syria, as the Kurds constitute only 9–10% of Syria's population. Furthermore their use is also hampered by the fierce opposition of Turkey – a key player in the region.

Contrary to the repeated claims by the pro-Russian social-imperialist friends of Assad, Washington didn't provide any meaningful support for the Syrian rebels. They hardly sent any modern anti-tank or anti-aircraft weapons to the rebels that would enable them to defend themselves against the murderous artillery and aircraft attacks by the Assad regime and the Russians. (7)

Quite the contrary, US imperialism is, under the pretext of its war against Daesh, actively targeting a sector of the Syrian rebels – in particular those of *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* – and has already killed numerous militants as well as civilians. In the past weeks, US forces killed three leading members of *Jabhat Fatah al-Sham* – Abu Hajer al Homs, Abo al-Farej al-Masri, and Abo Omar Saraqeb. (8) According to reports, the US-led coalition has carried out more than 5,300 airstrikes in Syria since September 2014, likely killing at least 850 civilians and potentially over 1,200. (9)

The South African Think Tank *Afro-Middle East Centre* correctly observes:

"The US views the fight against IS and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (formally Jabhat al-Nusra), still believed by the Obama administration to have links with al-Qa'ida, as more pertinent, and believes that a political solution, however skewed in the regime's favour, would help attempts to combat these groups. (...) Conversely, the Russians possess strategic interests in Syria, are fearful of a power vacuum were the regime to fall, and perceive most Islamist rebel groups as terrorists that pose a threat to the country. Since September 2015 Russia has acted directly, militarily, to protect these interests. Convergences over IS, and US reticence to confront Russia, meant that the USA endorsed or ignored Russia's actions." (10)

In order to achieve its goals, US imperialism actively opposes any meaningful actions against the Assad regime. The *Washington Post* reported recently that the Obama administration put huge efforts to prevent the US Congress from putting any sanctions on Assad:

"The White House worked behind the scenes last week to prevent a bipartisan bill to sanction the Assad regime for war crimes and atrocities against civilians from getting a vote in the House of Representatives. The Democratic leadership bowed to White House pressure and withdrew its support for voting on the bill for now." (11)

In short, the goals of US imperialism are to weaken and finally destroy the Syrian Revolution and to achieve a political settlement for Syria which keeps the old state appa-



Rahime Berisha (l.) and Marek Hangler (r.), spokespersons of the Austrian Section of the RCIT give interviews at the pro-Syria Rally on 30.09.2016 in Vienna

ratus in place and which gives Washington as much influence as possible.

The US secretary of state made this unambiguously clear to some leaders of the Syrian opposition as recently leaked audio files have shown.

"Mr. Kerry told the Syrians that their best hope was a political solution to bring the opposition into a transitional government. Then, he said, "you can have an election and let the people of Syria decide: Who do they want?" (...) At one point, Mr. Kerry astonished the Syrians at the table when he suggested that they should participate in elections that include President Bashar al-Assad, five years after President Obama demanded that he step down." (12)

Finally, the ongoing imperialist aggression of both Russia and the US has lent legitimacy to Daesh which (wrongly) presents itself as the only consistent opposition against the Great Powers. This is particularly the case given the fact that both the US and Russia are targeting Daesh but not the Assad regime despite the fact that the latter have killed one hundred times more people than Daesh has. Many people in Syria and around the world rightly recognize this as further prove of the reactionary and hypocritical character of the imperialist powers.

The Biggest Danger: The Reactionary Kerry-Lavrov Agreement

As we noted above the biggest strategic danger for the Syrian Revolution is the looming Kerry-Lavrov Agreement. Such an agreement would be a local repetition of the reactionary Sykes-Picot Agreement between France and Britain of May 1916 which divided the Middle East between these imperialist powers. Likewise, a Kerry-Lavrov Agreement could lead to the division and occupation of Syria. It would be an agreement in order to liquidate the Syrian Revolution and to establish a counter-revolutionary order in the country.

There already have been ongoing negotiations between the Russian and the US foreign ministers for several years (as expressed, for example, in the Geneva I Conference in 2012 and the Geneva II Conference in 2014). As the RCIT has pointed since long ago, both Great Powers have a joint interest in liquidating the Syrian Revolution and in pacifying the country. Not surprisingly, they have been arch-enemies of the Arab Revolution from the beginning in 2011. This, by the way, has also been the reason why they both supported the military coup of General al-Sisi in Egypt in July 2013. (13)

No one should have any illusions: Such an agreement would not mean peace. Rather it would pacify the civil war on some fronts (i.e., between the regime, the pro-Western sectors of the rebels and the Kurds) and unify the military firepower of Assad, of the Kurdish YPG, of some pro-Western rebels as well as of Russia, the US, Iran and Hezbollah against Daesh, as well as against intransigent petty-bourgeois rebel forces.

To quote again the *Afro-Middle East Centre*:

"The USA, believing that IS poses a greater threat than the Syrian regime, and having misgivings about the main Islamist rebel components, and which would benefit most from Assad's fall, will go along with a Russian initiative. The balance of power on the ground heavily favours Russia, and dissuades active

interference by other foreign powers for fear of confrontation with Russia. Further, the Turkish incursion into Syria is also likely to lead to a weakening of support for opposition groups, especially in light of the recent Turkish-Russian and Turkish-Iranian rapprochements and the belief that Turkey is reassessing its position on Assad. Already, thousands of Turkey-backed fighters have withdrawn from east Aleppo to focus on consolidating Turkey's control of its 900-square kilometre incursion, and to prepare for a push towards the IS-held town of Al-Bab." (14)

A reactionary Kerry-Lavrov Agreement would unite and increase the counter-revolutionary pressure, forcing sectors of the rebels to cease their struggle against the regime and accept a truce with the Assad regime. It would lead, most likely, to the killing or disarming and capitulation of huge numbers of rebels.

The "Yemeni" and the "Bosnian" Solution

Theoretically, two basic scenarios for such a counter-revolutionary settlement resulting from a Kerry-Lavrov Agreement are possible, with a number of conceivable combinations of the two. One scenario would keep Syria relatively united (probably on a federal basis) with a joint government and state apparatus. Such a government would keep the Assadist state apparatus while integrating sectors of the opposition into it, perhaps with Assad himself moving to a backstage position after some time. The process in Yemen in 2011, in which Saleh retreated and his vice-president took power and various oppositional parties joined or supported the government, could be a model for this scenario.

The alternative would be a solution similar to that imposed on Bosnia in 1995 where the Great Powers divided the country into three regions. In this case, the formal unity of Syria might be preserved, albeit only in name, but in reality the country would be divided into different regions – probably an Alawi-dominated region ruled by the Assad clan supported by Russia and Iran, a Sunni-Arab region ruled by some pro-Western opposition forces with US and EU backing, and a third, Kurdish, region.

If this second scenario were to transpire, it is unclear which Great Power would dominate the Kurdish region, as the PYD leadership has been making advances both to the US and to Russia. Obviously this question will be also influenced by the foreign policy maneuvers of Turkey's Erdogan and which Great Power would give more assurances to the PYD leadership.

It seems to us that the "Bosnian" solution is the more likely of the two for the following reasons:

a) The deep hatred of the regime by the popular masses would make it very difficult for the opposition leaderships to sell the people such a betrayal, while a Sunni-Arab mini-state could be sold as the only realistic option, however unfortunate this may be.

b) The increasing rivalry between the US and Russia which would be a destabilizing factor in the case of a united Syria with a joint government.

Regardless, it is clear that both of these scenarios would constitute a tremendous counter-revolutionary defeat for the Syrian workers and peasants. It would mean either the disarming and suppression of the popular masses by an essentially Assadist government (with some oppositional Quislings among their ranks) or a division of the country

with the a very likely massive population exchange (i.e. ethnic cleansing) as took place in Bosnia in the 1990s.

A recent example of such a reactionary “peace” solution based on ethnic cleaning took place in Daraya, the historic birthplace of the Syrian revolution, during the past five years. The UK-based *Syria Solidarity Campaign* reports:

“The regime’s surrender terms included the forced displacement (“evacuation” according to the Assad regime and UN) of more than 7,000 Syrian civilian residents and families. In the aftermath of Daraya’s fall it has also emerged that the regime is resettling Iraqi Shia militiamen and families in their place — comprising a clear attempt at engineering a forced demographic change and continuing a policy of sectarian/ethnic cleansing pursued in other recaptured territories of Syria.” (15)

Various Obstacles

However, there are various obstacles to such an agreement based on dividing Syria. First, there are tens of thousands of rebel fighters supported by millions of Syrian workers and peasants who deeply despise the Assad regime and who are determined to continue the revolution. True, after years of fighting there may be signs of exhaustion. But at the moment such signs are difficult to see. These rebel fighters and popular masses despise and distrust not only Russian imperialism but US imperialism as well. This is hardly surprising, since Washington considers several Islamist resistance organizations like *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* as “terrorist” organizations and kills their leaders.

The popular rejection of the US-Russia conspiracy against the Syrian Revolution has been reflected in numerous statements released not only by the Islamist organizations targeted by the US, but also by many others.

For example, a group of 150 Syrian intellectuals, composed mostly of writers, artists, academics, and journalists, all identifying themselves as secular democratic opponents of the Syrian regime, have issued the statement to express their condemnation of the role being played in their country by both Washington and Moscow. The signatories include globally known figures such as Paris Sorbonne Professor Burhan Ghalioun, who was the first chairperson of the Syrian National Council in 2011–12; award-winning novelist Samar Yazbek, whose works are published in many languages; the famous Syrian intellectual Sadik Jalal Al-Azm; Farouk Mardam-Bey, a writer who edits the most important journal dedicated to the Arab world in France; playwright Mohammad Al-Attar; and Yassin al-Haj Saleh, a prominent independent voice of the Syrian opposition. (16)

Yet another example is a statement by 21 brigades of the Free Syrian Army, condemning the recently negotiated (and failed) truce agreement struck between the US and Russia. (17)

Second, the Assad regime – as well as the Russian and the Iranian rulers – still hopes to defeat the rebels and to regain control over at least significant parts of the country. However, these efforts are completely dependent on the will of the Russians and Iranians to support such an effort. From the moment Putin and Khamenei reach a deal with the US, Assad will be forced to stop his war. However, currently Assad and his backers are encouraged by the fact that US imperialism – in contrast to that of the Russians – is hardly in a position to seriously engage in the Syrian civil war against Assad (see the quotes by Kerry which we cited above). The US lacks a serious proxy force on the ground in Syria and is completely unwilling and



Comrades of *Sınıf Savaşı* (Turkey), fraternal organization of the RCIT, at a rally in solidarity with Refugees and the Syrian people

unable to commit ground troops to the war there (particularly in light of the opposition of Russia and China).

Third, while both the US and Russia have a mutual interest in liquidating the Syrian Revolution, they are also imperialist rivals competing against one other for spheres of influence. This is why Russia has been keeping Assad in power and why the US has been trying to get some influence among the official Syrian opposition. This is also why the two Great Powers stood on opposing sides in the civil war in the Ukraine.

As an aside, we note that the recent events in Syria have once more convincingly proved that Russia is an authentic imperialist Great Power and not some semi-colonial lackey of the US – contrary to the foolish claims of various centrist groups. (18)

Finally, a reactionary settlement in Syria is hardly possible without occupation troops to enforce it. But who could provide the necessary numbers of soldiers? The US and Russia both very unlikely prepared to send any meaningful number of ground troops to Syria. The popular hatred of Syrians against both these Great Powers, their respective US and Russian public opinions opposing such involvement, and the US's recent debacles in Afghanistan and Iraq (while Putin is already finding it difficult to justify having sent soldiers to the Ukraine) practically exclude this option. Neither are EU troops, in any meaningful numbers, likely to be deployed.

The only conceivable alternative is to create a force of ground troops from states in the region to enforce a settlement reached by the Great Powers. However, troops from Saudi Arabia (or other Gulf States) in are also not very likely to be sent in larger numbers, in light of their military limitations already attested to during their invasion of Yemen. Turkey, with its large and experienced army, is a realistic candidate – also given the fact that it is less discredited among the majority of the Syrian people. However, here the problem – from the Great Powers' point of view – is that the Erdoğan regime is not very reliable, as has been recently demonstrated by the attempted coup d'état attempt and the president's foreign policy zigzagging. Iranian troops – in territories dominated by the Alawi minority – are another possibility.

Regardless of whichever country sends a larger contingent of troops to Syria as a "peace-keeping force" (i.e., an army of occupation), in advance it is quite clear that such a country will become the target of popular hatred and armed resistance. It could face a fate similar to that of the US in Lebanon in 1983 or of India in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka in the late 1980s. In both cases, the occupying forces faced massive armed resistance and ultimately had to end their occupations with a bloody nose. Furthermore, such a highly risky operation abroad is very likely to provoke substantial opposition among the domestic population of the country or countries involved, and make these countries even enhance their identity as targets of terrorist operations (as we have already seen in France and Belgium). In short, while a reactionary pacification of the Syrian civil war could lead to some stability in the short term, it is likely to provoke even more political instability in the long run.

The Strategic Lessons of the Crisis of the Syrian Revolution

The crisis of the Syrian Revolution makes it urgent for the revolutionary vanguard in Syria and internationally to learn the strategic lessons of the past failures. As we have outlined in our *Theses on the Arab Revolution*, as well as in other documents, there are several key lessons which, in our opinion, must be assimilated in order to revitalize the Syrian Revolution along with the revolutionary struggles in other countries. (19)

First, the most important failure is the lack of independent mass organizations of the working class. While hundreds of thousands, even millions of workers and poor peasants support the revolution, their leaderships have been hijacked by petty-bourgeois nationalists and Islamists. The *Local Coordination Councils* are a distorted expression of a democratic organization of the popular masses. However, they limit themselves mostly to organizing daily survival (which naturally is extremely important) but do not desire to play any political or military role. As a result, the political leadership is either in the hands of aspiring bourgeois politicians who are ready to sell out the interests of the people at the negotiating table in exchange for some posts, or it is in the hands of various strands of Islamists who oppose any authentic social and democratic revolution, and who often follow a more or less sectarian policy. Furthermore, while there are numerous militias which obviously do have connections with the popular masses, they do not represent workers and peasant militias, as they are not elected and controlled by the people.

Fighting for the creation of authentic workers' and poor peasants councils in liberated areas and of popular militias is the foremost task for authentic revolutionaries in Syria today!

Second, the workers and *fallahin*, in order to be victorious, must pursue the revolution to its end, and not stop in the middle. This means essentially that, first of all, the democratic, to say nothing of the socialist, revolution must smash the old state apparatus which is so dramatically overblown both in Syria as well as throughout the entire region. This means the revolution must destroy the huge "bureaucratic-military machine" (Karl Marx) including the army, the secret services, the judiciary, etc. which constitutes the direct foundation for the Assad regime (just like for other regimes in the region).

Third, the workers and peasants must erode the social basis of the Assad regime. Thus, they must expropriate the rich business men and the foreign corporations and put them under control of the toilers.

Fourth, the democratic revolution in Syria can only succeed if the workers and poor peasants take power and create a workers' and peasants' republic. The popular masses will always be betrayed if they leave the power in the hands of the old elite or transfer it to a new aspiring elite, instead of taking it into their own hands.

Fifth, it is urgent to fight against all forms of intervention by the imperialist forces – both by Russia as well as by the US. Furthermore, it is dangerous to build a strategy on relying on the supposedly "well-meaning" intervention of any Great Power (or regional power like Turkey, Saudi-Arabia or Iran). The ruling classes of these countries will always put their own strategic political and economic interests first and subordinate to them the interests of

the Syrian people. The US is an excellent example of this *realpolitik*: while it opposed Assad in words, it has never supported the rebels fighting against Assad in any meaningful way with weapons, and today it wants to force the opposition to accept a transitional government which will be based on the Assadist state apparatus (and maybe even Assad himself). The entire strategy of the *Syrian National Council*, which hoped for a victory against Assad with the help of the “international community,” i.e., the Great Powers in particular the US and the EU, has proven to be a castle of sand.

In other words revolutionaries must never seek to align the rebellious masses with the US or the EU or with Russia and China, nor with the regional powers!

Such a socialist perspective can only be implemented if revolutionaries combine fighting for such goals with actual participation in the ongoing mass struggles against the Assad regime – in the country itself as well as in the international arena where many migrants and solidarity activists have been organizing protests for years. It is alien for revolutionaries to excuse themselves from participating in such struggles on the basis of the united front tactic, and by deferring to the petty-bourgeois nationalist and Islamist leaderships of such struggles.

Revolutionaries must fight against the various Islamist and secular petty-bourgeois leaderships which so often possess significant influence among the popular masses, as well as against various reformist and centrist forces which often join the camp of the open counterrevolutions, or instead take a neutral stand on the sidelines in struggles of life and death.

Finally, the most important task in order to revitalize the Syrian revolution and to successfully complete its tasks, i.e., to foment a *permanent revolution*, is the creation of a revolutionary leadership of the workers and poor peasants; in other words, the formation of a revolutionary party in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, as part of a new *World Party of Socialist Revolution*. However, until now such a party has been sorely missing in all countries, and this absence has been the most important factor in the defeats which the Syrian (and all Arab) proletariat has faced in the past few years. From this it follows that the most important task for revolutionaries today is to create an international Bolshevik organization – as a precursor to such a world party – with sections throughout the world, including in the countries of the Arab world.

Building a revolutionary party – national and international – is the most important factor to achieve political independence of the working class and to lead it successfully towards the socialist revolution!

Footnotes

(1) We refer readers to the numerous documents and articles which the RCIT has published on the Syrian Revolution since its beginning in 2011; in particular: Joint Statement: Solidarity with Aleppo! Hands off Syria! 4 October 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/joint-statement-aleppo/>; Syria: For an Independent Revolutionary Road! Down with the Bombing and Siege against Aleppo! Stop the Turkish Invasion and Occupation! No to the Imperialist Conspiracy against the Syrian Masses! Joint Statement of the RCIT and Sinif Savaşı (Turkey), 25.09.2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/defend-aleppo/>; Yossi Schwartz: The Revolution in Syria won a Tactical Victory! Down

with Assad the Butcher! 21 August 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/aleppo-victory/>; RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Arab World: An Acid Test for Revolutionaries, 31 May 2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-arab-revolution/>; RCIT: The Arab Revolution is a central touchstone for socialists! Open Letter to All Revolutionary Organizations and Activists, 4.10.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/open-letter-on-arab-revolution/>. For many more RCIT documents on the Arab Revolution see on our website: <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>

(2) See e.g., Martin Chulov and Kareem Shaheen: Sectarian fighters mass for battle to capture east Aleppo. Hundreds of Syrian troops and an estimated 5,000 foreign Shia fighters plan imminent advance into besieged area of city, 29 September 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/29/aleppo-attack-foreign-syrian-fighters-plan-shia-islamic>

(3) See e.g., the “League for the 5. International” which recently wrote: “Meanwhile, the Islamist forces, even those defending the besieged populations, are, at the same time, trying to smother the most progressive aspects of the Syrian revolution. In short, the Syrian revolution is on the point of expiring.” (L5I: Statement on the Assault on Eastern Aleppo, 30/09/2016, <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/statement-assault-eastern-aleppo>)

(4) Mikhail Khodarenok: Here’s why Assad’s army can’t win the war in Syria, 09.09.2016, Gazeta.ru, <https://citem.org/here-s-why-assad-s-army-can-t-win-the-war-in-syria/>

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The image displays four covers of the journal "Revolutionary Communism", an English language journal of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT). Each cover features a red star with a hammer and sickle symbol in the bottom left corner and the slogan "WORKERS AND OPPRESSED UNITE!" at the bottom.

- Cover 1 (July/August 2013):** Headline: "Down with the Military Coup in Egypt". Sub-headline: "History: Israel's War in 1967 plus: Pakistan, Syria, Brazil, Venezuela, ...". Image: A cartoon by Carlos Latuff showing a man with a rifle and a speech bubble saying "Free at last!" standing next to a large green sphere labeled "SCAF".
- Cover 2 (September 2013):** Headline: "The Military Coup in Egypt". Sub-headline: "Analysis, Program & the Failure of the Left". Image: A cartoon by Carlos Latuff showing a man in a military uniform being executed by a man in a yellow shirt.
- Cover 3 (March 2015):** Headline: "Arab Revolutions at the crossroad". Image: A photograph of a woman wearing a white headscarf and a red and white scarf, looking directly at the camera.
- Cover 4 (June 2013):** Headline: "Palestine!". Sub-headline: "• Al-Nakba and the 1948 War • Permanent Revolution today". Image: A black and white photograph of a group of people, including children, carrying large bundles on their heads and backs, likely refugees.

Syria: For an Independent Revolutionary Road!

Down with the Bombing and Siege against Aleppo! Stop the Turkish Invasion and Occupation! No to the Imperialist Conspiracy against the Syrian Masses!

Joint Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and Sınıf Savaşı (Turkey), 25.09.2016

Every day the situation in Syria gets more precarious for the popular masses. The so-called “peace deal” which was negotiated by the imperialist Great Powers, Russia and the United States, constitutes a tremendous threat to the Syrian Revolution. In these negotiations it was clear that neither Russia nor for the United States, not the EU nor the regional power Turkey, desire to topple the bloody dictatorship of Assad. Instead, the highest priority for western and eastern imperialism is to fight against those forces which are not under the direct control of one of the Great Powers. This means, on one hand, the arch-reactionary IS/Daesh while on the other it means the Syrian popular masses who are currently under the leadership of various, non-revolutionary or even openly reactionary rebel groups.

The cease fire agreement was broken by Assad’s army and Russian imperialism which saw no reason to stop their well-fed and well-armed troops from advancing against eastern Aleppo and other areas under the control of various poorly-armed rebel-factions.

The RCIT and Sınıf Savaşı stand against this new offensive by Assad’s army, supported directly by Russian imperialism. Although we cannot give political support to any of the rebel factions who are led by petty-bourgeois Islamists or nationalists, we do stand for the defense of the areas held by them. Syrian revolutionaries need to organize independently in authentically revolutionary cells and brigades and fight against Assad’s army as well as against imperialism. This means opposing all bombing campaigns, no matter if the bombs are dropped by Assad’s, Russian, American, French or British planes!

We also stand against the invasion of northern Syria by the Turkish army. This invasion was agreed upon in advance with both western and eastern imperialism as well as with Assad. The reason for this invasion – which was also supported by small forces of pro-imperialist rebel groups – was not to overthrow Assad or to fight IS/Daesh, but to stop the Kurdish forces from uniting the two areas held by them and establishing a contiguous area under

the control of PYD/YPG adjacent to the southern border of Turkey. This would have been a tremendous danger for the instable Turkish state and its war against the Kurdish masses.

While we absolutely defend the PYD/YPG against every attack by the Turkish army or by IS/Daesh, we sharply criticize its leadership for openly collaborating with imperialism. We call upon the leadership of PYD/YPG to break with western and eastern imperialism, since only in this way can Kurdish revolutionaries build a truly multi-national movement against the arch-reactionary IS/Daesh, imperialism and capitalism.

The Syrian masses are in their current dreadful position due to the conspiracy of nearly all the imperialist Great Powers (Russia, the US and EU), the bourgeois Assad-dictatorship, but also the various non-revolutionary forces who hijacked the attempted democratic revolution which started in 2011.

The two so-called “Communist” (in reality Stalinist) parties of Syria bear a major responsibility for this situation as they have been long-time allies of the reactionary dictatorship of the Assad clan and have thereby slandered socialism and communism in the eyes of the Syrian masses. Likewise, the liberal-secularist opposition bears responsibility for the current situation, as they have always been open to deals with imperialism and the regime.

The only real alternative for the Syrian masses is to wage a struggle against all Great Powers *and* against the Assad dictatorship (which is now seen by Western imperialism as the lesser evil, and even as a respectable partner) for freedom, bread and justice! Therefore we need to form a “counter-conspiracy” of the popular masses in the region and throughout the entire world against the conspiracy of the Great Powers, the dictators, and the kings!

The RCIT and Sınıf Savaşı are dedicated to building revolutionary organizations in every country which will act as a single, united international organization. This is the only way in which the masses of the workers and oppressed can win – not separate but united!

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Rally in Solidarity with Aleppo

Report (with Photographs and Videos) on an Austrian Rally in Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution on 30 September 2016

The Syrian community in Austria called for a rally in solidarity with Aleppo on Friday, 30 September 2016. More than 200 people – mostly Syrian migrants and refugees – participated in the rally and shouted various slogans against the Assad regime as well as against the US and Russia and for the continuation of the Syrian Revolution.

The organizers – the *Austrian Coordination Council for Support of the Syrian Revolution* – invited the *Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION (RKO BEFREIUNG, Austrian Section of the RCIT)* to participate in the rally and to address it. Comrade Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, and comrade Marek Hangler, Spokesperson of the Austrian section of the RCIT, emphasized in their speeches the need for international solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. Furthermore, they stressed our intransigent opposition to both Russian and

US imperialist intervention in the conflict and warned against a Kerry-Lavrov agreement as a sell-out of the Syrian Revolution. They said that the only road to liberation is for the working people in Syria to take power.

Not surprisingly, not a single Austrian left-wing organization except ours joined the rally. This reflects the abstentionist or even pro-Assadist position of large sectors of the Stalinist, social democratic and centrist left, as well as the increasing Islamophobia in Europe, something which regrettably has also infected the so-called “left”.

To view photographs and videos of the rally, follow this link: <http://www.rkob.net/wer-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei/syrien-30-september-2016/> (scroll down)

To view the speeches of comrades Pröbsting and Hangler, follow these links: <https://youtu.be/qFAGMGEP7i0> and <https://youtu.be/5HvsHo970eI>



Syrian Women protest against the massacre in Aleppo (l.). Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT (r.), speaks in Solidarity with the Syrian people

Israel – Hands Off Balad!

Statement by the Internationalist Socialist League (Israel/Occupied Palestine), Section of the RCIT, 28.09.2016

On 18 September tens of activists of the *National Democratic Assembly Party* – Balad were detained by the police over unclear suspicions. The Israeli police and court have kept the allegations secret and were withholding them from both the public and those that have been arrested.

“There is no way for us to know what their intentions are. The material is kept secret from us. There are discussions between the police and the court, without our input,” Khaled Titi, a lawyer and spokesman for the party told Al Jazeera. *“They have not yet presented the charges to us.”* (1)

Mainstream Zionist media claims the detainees were involved in funding fraud of a few millions of Shekels in total. Balad leaders denied the accusations and accused the government and the police of engaging in *“political persecution”* of Israel’s Arab politicians.

Six party members and activists, including party chairman Awad Abdel Fattah, have remained in police custody, while at least 29 others were released after varying periods of interrogation.

We demand the immediate release of all of Balad Members as part of the defense of the democratic rights in this country!

Behind this raid is the fact that the Israeli state cannot accept Palestinians who do not dance to the Zionist tune of anti-Arab racism. The northern branch of the *Islamic Movement* led by Sheikh Raed Salah, was banned by the Israeli state in November 2015, allegedly for close ties with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. If that were in any way true – it would have been outlawed decades beforehand.

What actually lies behind this cynical use of Israel’s permanent *“state of emergency”* laws, is that the northern branch of the *Islamic Movement* became known around the world for defending the Mosques in Jerusalem. In the past the Israeli government used to persecute anyone who called for the establishment of a Third Jewish Temple replacing the currently standing Al-Aqsa area, as a

provocateur and inciter of riots. However, in June this year chief Rabbi Lau stated that he supports the building of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount. (2)

History of Israeli Persecution against Balad

Balad is a middle class liberal anti-imperialist party that stands for a democratic state for all the citizens of Israel and has not resolved the issue of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian nation in the form of one or two states. It has suffered persecution throughout its existence. Most notable is the Israeli state’s accusation of the party’s historical leader, Azmi Bishara, of treason and providing aid to terrorist organizations after visiting neighboring Syria and Lebanon in the wake of the 2006 Lebanon War.

During that war, Israel used unprecedented force while committing serious war crimes against civilian population. However, it did not manage to win the war against Hezbollah’s resistance.

Bishara chose not to return to Israel to avoid being sent to prison on false charges. In 2009 the *Central Elections Committee* disqualified Balad over alleged support for armed struggle against Israel. The Supreme Court overturned that decision. Then, the right wing parties went after Haneen Zoubi, first Arab woman to get elected to the Israeli Knesset running for an Arab list, for her participation in the Free Gaza Flotilla.

Even before the Gaza Flotilla, hostile articles were written about her. For example, over her refusing to sing the Zionist national anthem. She was on the board the *MV Mavi Marmara* when Israeli commandos stormed the ship, captured her and killed nine civilians, while some soldiers were beaten up by resisting passengers.

On 13 July 2010, the Knesset decided, in a 34–16 vote, to strip Zoubi of three parliamentary privileges as punishment for her participation in the flotilla. She was also stripped of the right to participate in Knesset discussions and to



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

vote in parliamentary committees. In December 2012, it was announced that the *Central Elections Committee* will deal with the issue of disqualifying Zoubi and indeed, it disqualified her in a 19–9 vote. A decision that that the Supreme Court unanimously voted to overturn.

Lately, the Israeli Knesset passed a law known as *Zoubi Law* which allows a special majority to remove any member of parliament whose positions they dislike.

Thus we have all the reasons to believe that the latest story is merely a part of the persecution of Balad and another step in the direction of its illegalization, as happened to the *Islamic Movement*.

We call on all people and organizations who defend democracy to raise their voices and demand: *Israel – Hands off Balad!*

In particular we call on the other forces in the Joint List (like *Hadash* and the CP as well as the *Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement*) as well as progressive Zionists to form a united front to protest against this attack on Balad.

The Illusion of Democracy

Israel is not doing a favor to the Palestinian citizens of Israel by allowing them to vote for a racist Parliament. As a matter of fact the decision by Menachem Begin in the early 1980s to allow the existence of independent Arab parties was part of the attempt to create an image of Israel as a democratic state. An image that the right wing Zionists of today do not care for as they want to openly turn the West Bank into part of an open Apartheid Zionist state from the river to the sea.

Unfortunately, the majority of the Palestinian citizens of Israel still have illusions in the possibility of achieving

certain gains and reforms by participating in the elections. As socialist revolutionaries our task is to do and say what is necessary to convince as many of them as possible to abandon any such illusions, even if it means calling to vote for the Joint Arab List (or for Balad should this list eventually fall apart) – to test illusions against reality.

Footnotes

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New Book of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today

The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today.

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – MARXISM AND THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC TODAY. The book's subtitle is: The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today. On the Application of the Marxist United Front Tactic in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the Present Period. It contains eight chapters plus an appendix (172 pages) and includes 9 tables and 5 figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

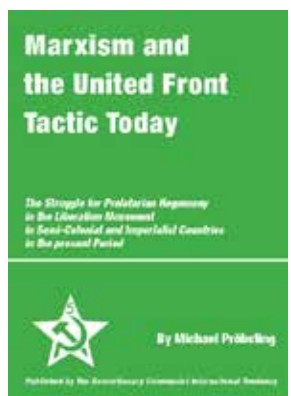
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

The united front tactic is a crucial instrument for revolutionaries under today's circumstances in which the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed are dominated by social democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois-populist forces.

The purpose of this document is both to summarize the main ideas of the Marxist united front tactic while at the same time explaining its development and modification which have become necessary due to political changes which have transpired in the

working class liberation movement since the tactic's original formulation.

In this book we initially summarize the main characteristics of the united front tactic and elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics to this issue. We then outline important social developments in the working class and the popular masses as well as in their political formations in recent decades. From there we will discuss how the united front tactic should be applied in light of a number of new developments (the rise of petty-bourgeois populist parties, the decline of the classic reformist parties, the role of national minorities and migrants in imperialist countries, etc.). The eight chapters of the book are accompanied by nine tables and five figures.



Brazil: Towards a General Strike to Halt the Attacks of Michel Temer against the Workers and Oppressed

By Corrente Comunista Revolucionária (CCR, Brazil Section of the RCIT), 24 September 2016

By a vote of 61 to 20 in the Brazilian senate, on August 31, 2016 the long process to impeach the now former President Dilma Rousseff of the workers' Party (PT) came to an end with her removal from power and the taking of office, as president, of the vice president, Michel Temer (from the PMDB). Temer served as an interim president since May of this year, when the Senate voted for Rousseff's removal.

In his first public statement after taking office, Temer declared that he would no longer tolerate being called a golpist (putschist) and insisted that the government would have to be "very firm" with its critics.

Even before becoming president, in fact, the political and economic agenda of Michel Temer has been marked by a turn to right the likes of which have not been seen since the end of the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003) which was known for its extensive policy of privatization. The new government of Temer augurs a series of attacks on social and democratic rights that, if achieved, will send Brazil back to the beginning of the 20th century.

The Reactionary Goals of Temer

Let's see some examples of these attacks in the form of proposed bills. Among others, they include: one that would rescind a change to the Constitution adopted in 1988 in which the workweek and workday were reduced from six 12-hour days, totaling up to 72 hours per week (today the work week is 44 hours); the making of social rights achieved by workers via struggles throughout the 20th century "more flexible," including the right to 30 days of annual paid vacation; abandoning the mandatory Christmas salary bonus paid at the end of each year (the so-called thirteenth salary); a shortening of the recognized length of maternity leave; eliminating the FGTS (Fund for Guaranteed Time of Service), which is a kind of negative incentive to discourage employers from dismissing employees; the end of employee participation in company profits; the elimination of public tenders which would consequently end stability in the public sector; an end of mandatory career advancement of civil servants; setting 65

as the universal minimum age for the retirement, while today, in the private sector, the retirement is variable because it depends on each individual case and, for public servants, there is a differentiated arrangement which makes it possible to retire at the age of 50.

One of Temer's proposals calls for the privatization of Brazil's entire energy sector, including the giant state-owned Petrobras and the pre-salt petroleum deposits, which is obviously in accordance with demands made by the oil multinationals and US and European imperialism for their supporting the coup. Another project calls for a 20-year freeze on any investment in education and health that would exceed the rate of inflation. Currently, Brazilian law obliges the mandatory investment by the government in these areas, and the federal government and the municipalities must invest between 18% and 25% of their respective budgets on education and between 12% and 15% on health. In addition to making far worse what is already a very bad situation in terms of the quality of services provided to the public, such a measure will mean that all employees in these areas will in all reality face having their wages frozen during the same 20 year period.

In foreign policy, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, former senator Jose Serra, the PSDB candidate defeated for the presidency in 2010, is playing an even greater role in undermining the status of the Maduro government in Venezuela, this clearly under the guidance of American imperialism. Foreign Minister Serra announced that he would not accept the government of Venezuela's being assigned the next presidency of the Mercosur block because of its "lack of democracy." Serra's proposal was accepted this week by the governments of Paraguay and Argentina, with an abstention by Uruguay. The hypocrisy in this case is outrageous: Under the guise of supposed legality, the Brazilian Parliament, with the cooperation of the media, the judiciary, and the help of organs of repression like the federal police, fomented an institutionalized coup, essentially disenfranchising 54,000,000 Brazilian voters who had cast their ballots for Dilma Rousseff in the last presidential election and, as the victors in this coup *they* have the temerity to accuse the Bolivarian bourgeois nationalist government of Venezuela

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with a lack of democracy!

In a recent meeting in Washington with the Brazilian ambassador there, Sergio Amaral, Foreign Minister Serra discussed resumption of negotiations with the US for America's use of Brazil's Alcântara Launch Center in the state of Maranhão. Due to the center's proximity to the equator, fuel consumption for satellite launches from Alcântara is less than that from bases situated at greater latitudes. Within the market of international space missions, the Brazilian center will probably become the only real competition for the Kourou Space Centre in French Guiana. According to a report by the journalist Tereza Cruvinel from the Brasil247 website, such an agreement was already made with the American Government during the tenure of former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 2000, but observers viewed that agreement as having given overly "broad powers to the US" and was denounced as submissive and harmful to Brazilian national sovereignty. When he took taking office in 2003, former president Lula withdrew the agreement for ratification by congress and put it aside as a dead issue. The return of this issue to the bilateral agenda, under Michel Temer and José Serra, concerns many including Brazilian military sectors who fear the addition of new clauses which will further diminish Brazil's national sovereignty. "

Shortly after taking over as president, in fact, Michel Temer hastily set off to the G-20 meeting in Hangzhou in China, and among his other commitments there held a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The whole process of impeachment of Dilma Rousseff was not seen favorably by the Chinese Government, as Beijing had established a good working relationship with Brasilia during PT governments, including the creation of the BRICS group of large emerging nations in which Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa are members, and the strengthening of the BRICS group in the G20 during Lula's tenure. A professor of international law from Fundação Getúlio Vargas School, Evandro de Carvalho, said that "the change of government, as is happened, worried the Chinese Government and in some ways negatively impacted Brazilian-Chinese bilateral relations (...). There is

a geopolitical issue involving Chinese apprehension, and the need to understand how the change of governments will affect Brazil's relations with the United States, and how this will possibly impair Chinese interests (...) and whether Chinese businesses will be harmed as a result of the greater proximity between the US and Brazil under the government of Temer."

What the Leaders of Mass Movements Propose

Long before the removal of Dilma Rousseff was finalized, the Brazil Popular Front, the Brazilian Front without Fear (a coalition composed of the Landless Workers' Movement [MST], the Movement of Homeless Workers [MTST], the Unified Workers' Central [CUT], the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), the National Union of Students [UNE], and several parties) called upon the masses to participate in large demonstrations encompassing thousands of people, first against the ongoing coup as well as against the governmental measures and attacks on workers and social movements. However, now, with the final impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, the main slogan of the social movements is the demand for "Eleições Diretas Já!" (Direct Elections for president Now!). The only exception is the Workers' Cause Party (PCO) that calls for the convening of a constituent assembly. Most recently, September 22 was designated by social movements as a day of general strikes throughout the country to make this demand.

The Character of the Protests since 2013

Throughout the international arena, not just in Brazil, we are witness in the last few years to a rise of the conservative right, even bordering on fascist tendencies, manifested, for example, in reactionary offensives like: the coup d'état in Egypt; the election of the rightist Macri in Argentina and the advance of the right wing in Venezuela; the 2014 coup d'état in Thailand; the 2012 coup in Paraguay; the increase of Islamophobia and racism against migrants and refugees in Europe; the explosive success of the candidacy of Donald Trump in the US; the neoliberal reform attacks

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The image shows five covers of the journal 'Revolutionary Communism' (RCIT). Each cover features a red background with a hammer and sickle logo in the bottom left corner. The covers are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner. The headlines on the covers are:

- Cover 1 (Issue No. 5, September 2012):** South Africa: The Miners fight, ANC/SACP betrays... plus: Revolution in Libya, Greece, WikiLeaks, Bosnia, Turkey, Maoism
- Cover 2 (Issue No. 4, August 2012):** China as an imperialist power: background, influences and tactics
- Cover 3 (Issue No. 3, June 2012):** Elections, United and the struggle for workers' Government
- Cover 4 (Issue No. 2, January 2012):** and Resistance in Pakistan, General Strike in Greece... plus: Occupation Movement, Fifth International, Iran, Lybia, Israel...
- Cover 5 (September 2011):** Revolutions of the Arab Revolution, Rising of the Poor in Britain... plus: Theses on Migration, Workers Struggle in Pakistan, What We Stand For

At the bottom of each cover, there is a price tag: "Price: €5 / \$7 / €4,5". The journal title 'REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM' is prominently displayed at the top of each cover.

on workers in Mexico, etc. What has happened in Brazil is very much consistent with this trend.

The June 2013 demonstrations in Brazil began as a form of protest against the high cost of public transport, in which young people played a dominant role. The spread of demonstrations shook the country as hundreds of thousands took to the streets questioning the entire political system, from both the left and the right. Because of the lack of revolutionary leadership, this social ferment ended up being dominated by the conservative right and fascist sectors. The announcement on 21 June 2013 by the governor of the state of São Paulo (PSDB) and the mayor of São Paulo (PT) that they were relinquishing the increased public transport fares represented a huge unprecedented victory. On the very same day a great demonstration to celebrate the victory was held. Suddenly, armed gangs attacked groups of left-wing participants (PCO, PCR, PSTU, PT and other smaller groups) knocking them down and burning their flags, attacking them with pepper spray, stun grenades and metal tubes, and ultimately causing the demonstrators to flee in fear. To make clear that this attack in São Paulo was not some isolated incident, but rather an action organized by fascist gangs with help of rabid members of the petty bourgeoisie, the same thing occurred yet again in Rio de Janeiro and in a number of other cities, attesting to a well-organized campaign, doubtless coordinated with the military police.

These rightist forces began to steer the of policy of the leaders of protests away from the fight for social equality, chanting the slogan "No parties!" and instead denounced political corruption, high taxes and a high rate of crime. For the first time since the end of military dictatorship in

1985, the fascists open returned to the streets.

This evolving process of reactionary conservatism was accelerated during the 2014 presidential elections when Brazil was split between those voting for the popular front of the PT-PMDB and the other side identified with the Western imperialism (USA-Europe and Japan). The PT (Workers' Party) governments of Lula and Rousseff (in power from 2003 to 2016) tried to keep their balance between the demands of Western imperialism while, at the same time, maintaining commercial and political agreements with Bolivarianism and BRICs (Brazil, Russia between India, China and South Africa). The global economic crisis that exploded in 2008, and which caused the prices of commodities (raw materials) to drop, seriously impacted Brazil. At this, point the tacit agreement that had allowed the rise of the Popular Front could no longer be tolerated by Western imperialism and the Brazilian bourgeoisie. Rather, it was necessary that the bourgeoisie get rid of the PT, despite the latter's having followed neoliberal policies, such as: the pension reform of 2003, some privatizations like in the road transport and airport sectors; sending troops to Haiti at the behest of the US; non-implementation of agrarian reform; their agreement to host the soccer World Cup and the Olympics, generating many millions of dollars in profits to the bourgeoisie; and other policies that attempt to maintain equilibrium while meeting the demands of the wealthy elite by exacerbating the poverty of the masses. But because of its own proletarian origins, PT was unable to intensify attacks against workers to the extent that the putschist government of Michel Temer now does. This is what lies behind the parliamentary coup d'état that took place in Brazil in August of this year.



Joao Evangelista, spokesperson of the CCR (Brazil Section of the RCIT), speaks at a demonstration against the attacks of President Temer

What the CCR Defends

We in the CCR believe that direct elections for president, or even general elections including those for seats in the National Congress, are an electoral trap. While the mass movements are unanimous in denouncing the coup d'état, in practice they still trust the bourgeois democratic process. All elections within a bourgeois democracy are in essence a farce, but one that only gets worse and becomes more visible when such elections are totally controlled by the bourgeoisie, resulting in the ascent of conservative agendas like those we are now witnessing, the path to which was cleared by a coup d'état. It is for this reason that we in the CCR reject the slogan calling for "direct elections now!"

At the same time, we call for mobilizing resistance against the coup carried out by the Temer government and against its attacks on the workers and the oppressed. It is necessary to create action committees in the neighborhoods and factories to fight against the coup; to organize mass demonstrations; to prepare for an indefinite general strike against the measures of the new government. To do so, a genuinely serious resistance against the coup must consider breaking with the old leaders who sold us policies of reconciliation with the bourgeoisie, policies which resulted in the current political disaster and the coup d'état. It is necessary to found a truly revolutionary movement controlled by the workers themselves and by the oppressed, along with the youth and women. And in this process of broad mobilization we need to call for the convening of a national constituent assembly, called and elected by the workers themselves and which will deal with a workers agenda.

Furthermore, the CCR advocates breaking the working

class and the oppressed away from the popular front. Thus, we call upon the CUT, the MST and MTST and all other mass organization of the working class and the oppressed to break all alliances with bourgeois forces. Likewise, we call upon the PT and the PCdoB to break their alliances and electoral blocs with openly bourgeois forces (sectors of the PMDB and others) and to stand alone at the elections.

Such an application of the united front tactic is predicated on the understanding that these workers' and popular organizations still represent the class conscious sectors of the proletariat. The strategic goal of a united front tactic is to entirely break the subordination of the workers and oppressed to the bourgeoisie, while at the same time breaking these sectors of the proletariat away from the reformist bureaucracy which unfortunately still dominates the trade unions and other popular organizations. In this way advanced workers will be able to build a revolutionary workers' party as an alternative to the PT whose leadership is thoroughly corrupt and bound to the capitalist class.

** For the mobilization of autonomous worker resistance and the convening of a national constituent assembly!*

** For an unlimited general strike against the regime of puchists! For mass mobilization against the offensive pro-austerity policies of the extreme right! For the setting up of action committees in factories, unions, neighborhoods, slums and outlying regions in defense of our rights and against the government of puchists!*

** For a national conference of delegates of all mass anti-puchist organizations to discuss and adopt a plan against the new regime!*

** For a working class government in alliance with the peasants, urban poor and the landless! We can only guarantee our future and our rights if we bring down capitalism, the source of our misery!*

Books of the RCIT

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 with Specific Features

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.

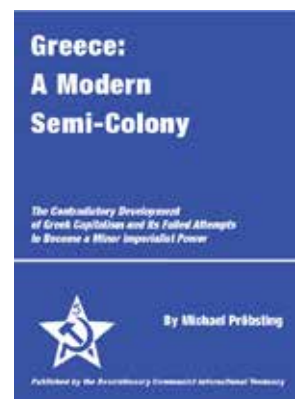
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

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. ■



Does the EU Represent “Bourgeois Democratic Progress”?

Once again, on the EU and the Tactics of the Working Class – An Addendum to our Criticism of the L5I’s Turn to the Right and Its Support for EU Membership

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, September 2016

Recently the RCIT published a detailed work on the imperialist nature of the EU, the referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, and the tactics of revolutionary organizations on this issue. (1) We closely examined the rightward turn of the centrist organization “League for the 5th International” (L5I). As we reported, the leadership of L5I recently changed its decades-long position on the EU and now considers it as something progressive for the working class. Therefore, in cases of referenda on EU membership – such as the one which took place in Britain in June 2016 – the L5I will call for workers, socialists, and revolutionaries to vote to enter the EU, if the state is not already a member, or to remain within the EU if it is. In our essay we demonstrated that the justification given by the L5I leadership for such tactics amounts to nothing more than opportunistic whitewashing of the EU and that the consequences of adopting such tactics clear the path for social imperialism. Unlike the L5I, the RCIT steadfastly defends the orthodox Marxist position – which until recently was also supported by the L5I itself. We reject support either for the imperialist EU or for the imperialist nation-state. We stand for an independent position of the working class and, therefore, refuse to support both the pro-EU faction and the anti-EU faction of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Consequently, we call upon workers, socialists and revolutionaries to cast neither a YES nor a NO vote in such referenda on EU membership, but to actively abstain.

Shortly after we published our essay, the L5I published a new edition of its German-language theoretical journal. In it there is an article that deals with the question of the unification of Europe. (2)

This article largely recycles arguments already put forth in earlier L5I articles. However, it also includes a few new arguments which only further entrench and solidify the revisionism of this organization.

In the following present article – a sort of addendum to our longer essay referred to above – we shall respond to the new arguments provided by the L5I and thereby complete our criticism of this organization’s turn to the right. We recommend that readers read the current article

in conjunction with the recently published longer essay by the RCIT.

The New Arguments of the L5I Leadership

Essentially the new L5I article raises the following additional points which we will deal with briefly here.

First, the L5I leadership confirms even more explicitly than before their view that the imperialist EU is something progressive for the working class and therefore worth defending. This becomes unmistakably clear from the following quotations:

“In contrast to a purely national-state order, a capitalist, bourgeois-democratically oriented federation is a progressive development. This is often forgotten by the critics of the EU ...” (3)

“In this context one would have to wage the struggle against the border regime in the British Isles, which gives rise to catastrophic conditions on the other side of the Channel. This could more readily be conducted in the context of a bourgeois-democratic federation which would give the labor movement, jointly with the refugees, the opportunity to organize a strong proletarian response against the emerging racist and nationalist movements of the bourgeoisie.” (4)

“Certainly no one on the left is actually shedding tears over [the tribulations of] an imperialist “unification project.” At the same time, one should never forget: The EU’s disintegration into separate “independent” nation states, the withdrawal from the Union or the euro zone is – on the basis of a capitalist state – a reactionary response to the crisis. The expansion of the productive forces, a larger economic space, closer, transnational economic connections, standardized communication and transport systems, greater freedom of movement of labor represent progress, even if they were carried out under the aegis of finance capital ‘from above.’ The collapse of the EU into individual nation-states will reconstruct boundaries between the workers of Europe and will further intensify the racist bankruptcy. This is why the effects of the Brexit referendum were and are reactionary.” (5)

Second, the L5I leadership has now abandoned its previous position that the creation of an imperialist EU

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state apparatus is actually possible. Instead, it has now adopted the traditional argument of Stalinism, which explains that such an imperialist unification of Europe is impossible and incorrectly quote Lenin in defense of this view. Furthermore, while the L5I leadership uncritically reproduces Trotsky's incomplete and undeveloped position from 1915 and uses it as a justification for their opportunistic support of the imperialist EU, they conceal and distort Lenin's position on the slogan of the United States of Europe.

"The EU's crisis also illustrates one thing. The capitalist classes and the imperialist states are not able to unite the continent." (6)

"The EU is therefore not an independent imperialist actor, there is no 'EU-imperialism' as such, but only a pooling of national-imperialist intersections in the construction of transnational bureaucratic structures which only have a certain political sovereignty and leadership. Therefore, all assumptions à la 'super state' are fundamentally wrong, as they are put forward by the 'left' critics of the EU. There is no 'ultra-imperialism,' as was hoped for by Kautsky for the time after World War One. (...) In contrast, the 'left' critics of the EU believe that there is a European imperialism. In this way they support Kautsky's revisionist theory of ultra-imperialism against which Lenin strongly polemicized. (...) The EU is a semi-finished structure with the problem that, under capitalism, it cannot be completed." (7)

The "Bourgeois-Democratic" Imperialist EU – A Step Forward for the Working Class?

In our recent essay, we already pointed out that the L5I leadership considers the imperialist EU as a progressive factor in the interests of the working class and wants to defend it against withdrawals by member states. The comrades incorrectly view the EU primarily as a progressive manifestation in the development of the productive forces and as an objective factor for increasing the internationalist consciousness and the international struggle of the working class.

In their new article, the L5I leadership develops this objectivist and economic line of argument further. Now the imperialist EU is viewed not only as economically progressive and as an objectively progressive factor for the class struggle, but also and more generally as a manifestation of *"bourgeois democratic progress"*.

Such a position demonstrates how much the L5I leadership has been swept away by their revisionist deluge. Instead of recognizing the EU primarily as an *imperialist* state formation, the comrades focus their attention on its ostensibly bourgeois-democratic character. But, as we elaborated in our essay, the key feature of the EU is the merger of national imperialist bourgeoisies – mainly the great powers with Germany and France at the top – into an imperialist federation of states (with all its internal contradictions).

In reality, the arguments of the L5I leadership merely reflect the traditional social-democratic myth that Western European states primarily represent (bourgeois) democracies and not imperialist states. From this they deduced, during the first half of the 20th century, that it was necessary for the working class to defend France and Britain in the imperialist world wars. In contrast, we Trotskyists always rejected such opportunistic fool's

wisdom. We, in contrast, focused our analysis on the *imperialist* character of these countries and thus drew from this the conclusion that workers should not support these countries under any circumstances.

The L5I leadership has forgotten a crucial principle of Marxism: the imperialist states in Europe and the European Union – representing a merger of the same – does not and cannot represent any kind of progressive bourgeois democracy. Rather, they are the states or a federation of states of imperialist bourgeoisies each of which domestically exploits its own respective working class, oppresses migrants, and increasingly restricts democratic rights while abroad it individually exploits the peoples of the South or as part of a coalition it wages more and more imperialistic wars. In short, these countries do not represent progressive bourgeois democracy but reactionary imperialism.

Lenin already pointed out this principle one hundred years ago: *"Today, it would be ridiculous even to imagine a progressive bourgeoisie, a progressive bourgeois movement, in, for instance, such key members of the 'Concert' of Europe, as Britain and Germany. The old bourgeois 'democracy' of these two key states has turned reactionary."* (8)

We do not deny that there still exists a certain degree of bourgeois democracy in the European countries – although this is increasingly restricted (see, for example, the emergency regime in France). Rather, precisely *because* of this does the RCIT give great importance to the struggle for democratic rights within the European countries – a struggle which becomes more urgent as the ruling class in all European countries are increasingly transformed into an openly anti-democratic, reactionary force. (9)

But this must in no way leads us to support for the EU. Contrary to the misconception of the L5I leadership, the EU does not at all embody *more* bourgeois democracy than the individual European nation states. On the contrary, praising the EU as a *"bourgeois democratic progress"* it is not without its irony. As is common knowledge, there is hardly a European country in which parliament has so few powers as those of the European Parliament, and in which the "government" (the European Commission and the EU Council) are so much beyond any control by its parliament. (10)

So we can safely add the position of the L5I leadership regarding the "democratic nature" of the EU to the other myths they give to justify their opportunistic support for the imperialist EU.

Is Trotsky a Key Witness for the L5I-Slogan of the "United States of Europe"?

The L5I leadership advances the slogan for the unification of Europe as a progressive slogan in itself. They ignore that such a union under imperialist auspices – i.e., under the leadership of one or two major imperialist powers – is in no way progressive, but instead creates a larger, more powerful imperialist state federation which, in addition, is accompanied by the greater oppression of smaller and economically weaker nations.

Therefore Marxists do not advance the slogan of the *United States of Europe* (which, without class characterization, is implicitly *pro-imperialist*), but only the slogan of the *United Socialist States of Europe*.

While the L5I leadership also repeats this slogan of the socialist unification of Europe in their new article, they also refer, explicitly and in the affirmative, to the slogan of the “United States of Europe!”. To this end, they reproduce statements made by Trotsky in 1915, in which he put forward the slogan of a republican United States of Europe and the L5I comrades add that this slogan is timely even today. (11)

Prudently, however, the L5I conceals that Lenin formulated a sharp and unequivocal criticism of this solution:

“From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the “advanced” and “civilised” colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.” (12)

One can hardly reconcile the difference between the viewpoint of Lenin and that of the L5I: While Lenin states that the “United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary”, the L5I thinks that “a capitalist, bourgeois-democratic oriented federation is a progressive development.”

It is significant that the L5I leadership fails to mention Lenin’s criticism even in a single word. Do the comrades consider his criticism as wrong? If so, then they should say this.

Finally, as we already stated in our essay, we note that the L5I leadership liberally refers to statements by Trotsky which he expressed before having completely overcome his own centrist weaknesses and joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917. Trotsky himself, as is generally known, developed further this slogan and put it in the form of the *United Socialist States of Europe* or the *United Soviet States of Europe* in 1923. For a detailed discussion of the development of Lenin and Trotsky’s understanding of the slogan of the United States of Europe we refer readers to another work we have published. (13)

Did Lenin Consider Impossible the Unification of Europe under Imperialist Conditions?

Not only does the L5I leadership conceal Lenin’s criticism of Trotsky’s slogan for a republican United States of Europe, they also falsify Lenin’s actual position. By claiming that Lenin considered a unification of Europe under imperialism as impossible, they parrot Stalinist and centrist interpretations.

As the cited quotation from the new L5I article demonstrates, today the comrades claim – as have in the past various Stalinists, Peter Taffees’ CWI, Alan Woods’ IMT and others – that unification is impossible. They even claim that the thesis of the possibility of capitalist unification of Europe would be a concession to Karl Kautsky’s revisionist theory of ultra-imperialism.

This is of course nonsense. In reality, Kautsky’s theory of ultra-imperialism referred to the mistaken belief that a worldwide fusion of imperialist monopolies and great powers would be possible, which could – as the chief theoreticians of centrism believed – lead to the overcoming of the arms race and the danger of a world war. This assumption was and is theoretically absurd and politically dangerous. But it would be completely wrong to assume that even the capitalist unification of Europe would be

impossible. In the past we have replied to this hypothesis of the Stalinist and centrist critics:

“Kautsky’s revisionism was not based on his notion that two or more imperialist states could merge. Rather, his revisionism was based in his accepting as possible the merger of all major capital around the world into a single ultra-imperialism – or a “general cartel” as Hilferding called it. Neither is it revisionism to consider possible the merger of two or more corporations so that they can better stand in competition. It is, however, indeed revisionism to consider the peaceful, organic unification of all capital around the world.” (14)

This is why Kautsky concluded from his theory of ultra-imperialism, that in such a case the danger of a world war would be averted. This is also evident from the following quotation from Kautsky’s famous article on the theory of ultra-imperialism:

“What Marx said of capitalism can also be applied to imperialism: monopoly creates competition and competition monopoly. The frantic competition of giant firms, giant banks and multi-millionaires obliged the great financial groups, who were absorbing the small ones, to think up the notion of the cartel. In the same way, the result of the World War between the great imperialist powers may be a federation of the strongest, who renounce their arms race. Hence from the purely economic standpoint it is not impossible that capitalism may still live through another phase, the translation of cartellization into foreign policy: a phase of ultra-imperialism, which of course we must struggle against as energetically as we do against imperialism, but whose perils lie in another direction, not in that of the arms race and the threat to world peace.” (15)

The L5I leadership’s conflating our recognition of a possible imperialist unification of Europe with Kautsky theory of ultra-imperialism by is therefore completely wrong.

As we demonstrated in detail in another essay on the question of the unification of Europe in the light of Marxist theory, Lenin, the theoretician of the Bolsheviks – and even Trotsky, in some quotes – considered a unification of Europe under imperialist conditions as indeed possible. (16) This is also evident from the above quotation from Lenin, according to which the “United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.” In the same article, Lenin stated:

„A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. (...) Of course, temporary agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists . . . but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile. Compared with the United States of America, Europe as a whole denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America’s more rapid development.” (17)

In short, and in light of the above, we can also confidently relegate to the dustbin and the realm of centrist storytelling this additional justification of L5I leadership

for their social-imperialist adaptation to the EU (i.e., that Lenin allegedly considered a unification of Europe under imperialism to be impossible).

Is a Unification of Europe under Imperialist Conditions Impossible?

Finally, we come to the question of whether a unification of Europe is virtually impossible even under imperialist conditions. We have always maintained – and, until recently, the L5I did too – that while such a unification would encounter major obstacles, it is by no means impossible.

“The central, strategic task of the European bourgeoisie is, therefore, to take forward the formation of the EU as a strong challenger to the US empire on the world stage. For this it has to make a qualitative step forward towards a more economically competitive, politically unified and militarily independent (from the USA) entity that is capable of challenging the US empire.” (18)

„We can state the following ‘law’: The more successful the European bourgeoisie is in attacking and defeating the working class, the easier the creation of a unified European imperialist bloc and state structure (under a Franco-German leadership) will be for them. Equally, if the working class resistance is too strong, and attempts to raise the rate of exploitation sufficiently fail, then subsequent attempts by the Franco-German bloc to subordinate the rest will also fail. From this flows the strategic importance of the German and French working classes since they are situated in the heart of the European beast.” (19)

Decisive is not the question of whether a unification of Europe will take place under imperialist conditions or not. No one can foresee the feasibility of such a development. Ultimately, this will depend on many factors which are a product of the capitalist crisis, the global rivalry between the great powers and the class struggle.

Rather the following question is crucial: *Has there been for quite some time and will there be in the foreseeable future a real and serious attempt by the main monopoly bourgeoisies of Europe to unite the continent (in whatever form) so that the EU can become a major great power on a global scale?* For the following reasons, the only possible answer to this question is a clear affirmation:

* The experience of the past decades and the massive integration of the EU (Maastricht, etc.) which has taken place;

* The openly expressed plans by several leading representatives of the EU-monopoly capital;

* The objective necessity for European imperialist states to join forces in order to withstand the pressure of the other great powers (the US, China, Russia, Japan).

A second, even more decisive, question is: Even if unification of the continent by the imperialist EU will not be achieved, *is it permissible for revolutionaries to subordinate the working class to the monopoly bourgeoisie by calling upon them to support either joining or remaining inside of the imperialist EU?* As we have shown in our essay and numerous other works, Marxists can only answer this question with an unequivocal NO.

The L5I leadership asserts that EU membership would objectively force the working class to increasingly fight on an international scale. Yes, a common enemy in the form of the EU can objectively push the European proletariat in the direction of fighting against it. (However, it can also objectively push the proletariat to follow the nationalist rhetoric “against the EU bureaucracy” of right-wing populists!) Regardless, – and this is the politically crucial point – this is hardly a reason to call the working class to support EU membership and thereby *voluntarily* support its own captivity and its jailers! According to this absurd logic of the L5I, workers should vote in favor of TTIP and CETA, since these agreements would lead to a pan-European and even cross-Atlantic class struggle.

In general, this objectivist logic of the L5I leadership is alien to Marxists. Such objectivist reasoning would lead them, for example, to support the ruin of the peasants in semi-colonial countries, since doing so objectively weakens the rural petty bourgeoisie and strengthens the proletariat. However, while Marxists naturally welcome the strengthening of the ranks of the proletariat, they instinctively fight *against* the ruination of the poor peasants by the monopolies and advocate demands to prevent such ruin.

In short, the latest article by the L5I leadership provides absolutely no reason to follow their turn to the right and their support for the imperialist EU. By adopting such a

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position, they have unabashedly betrayed the traditional Marxist principle which calls for consistent, international anti-imperialism and revolutionary defeatism.

Footnotes

(1) Michael Pröbsting: Marxism, the European Union and Brexit. The L5I and the European Union: A Right Turn away from Marxism. The recent change in the L5I's position towards the support for EU membership represents a shift away from its own tradition, of the Marxist method, and of the facts; August 2016, in: Revolutionary Communist No. 55, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-and-brexite/>

(2) Tobi Hansen: EU-Krise und die Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa, in: Revolutionärer Marxismus 48, August 2016, pp. 47-85

(3) Tobi Hansen: EU-Krise und die Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa, p. 60 (Our emphasis and our translation)

(4) Tobi Hansen: EU-Krise und die Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa, p. 64 (Our emphasis and our translation)

(5) Editorial Board: Wohin treibt Europa? in: Revolutionärer Marxismus 48, August 2016, <http://www.arbeitermacht.de/rm/rm48/vorwort.htm> (Our emphasis and our translation)

(6) Editorial Board: Wohin treibt Europa? in: Revolutionärer Marxismus 48, August 2016, <http://www.arbeitermacht.de/rm/rm48/vorwort.htm> (Our translation)

(7) Tobi Hansen: EU-Krise und die Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa, p. 61 (Our translation)

(8) V. I. Lenin: Under A False Flag; in: LCW Vol. 21, p.141

(9) See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting; The Struggle for Democracy in the Imperialist Countries Today. The Marxist Theory of Permanent Revolution and its Relevance for the Imperialist Metropolises, August 2015, in: Revolutionary Communism Nr. 39, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/democracy-vs-imperialism/>

(10) We have dealt extensively with the EU treaty and the

political power relations inside the EU in the following pamphlet: Michael Pröbsting: Der EU-Reformvertrag, seine Hintergründe und die revolutionäre Strategie, Frühjahr 2008, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-reform-vertrag/>. A shortened version in English language has been published in the journal *Fifth International* Vol.3, No.1 (2008), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-reform-treaty/>.

(11) See e.g. Tobi Hansen: EU-Krise und die Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa, p. 55, 53 and 60

(12) V. I. Lenin: On the Slogan for a United States of Europe; in: LCW Vol. 21, p.340

(13) See Michael Pröbsting: Die Frage der Vereinigung Europas im Lichte der marxistischen Theorie. Zur Frage eines supranationalen Staatsapparates des EU-Imperialismus und der marxistischen Staatstheorie. Die Diskussion zur Lösung der Vereinigten Sozialistischen Staaten von Europa bei Lenin und Trotzki und ihre Anwendung unter den heutigen Bedingungen des Klassenkampfes, in: Unter der Fahne der Revolution Nr. 2/3 (2008), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/marxismus-und-eu/>

(14) See Michael Pröbsting: Die Frage der Vereinigung Europas im Lichte der marxistischen Theorie, p. 17 (our translation)

(15) Karl Kautsky: Der Imperialismus, in: Die Neue Zeit 32-II., 1914, 21, p. 921, in: English: Karl Kautsky: Selected Political Writings (edited and translated by Patrick Goode), The Macmillan Press, Hong Kong 1983, p. 88, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1914/09/ultra-imp.htm>

(16) See Michael Pröbsting: Die Frage der Vereinigung Europas im Lichte der marxistischen Theorie

(17) V. I. Lenin: On the Slogan for a United States of Europe; in: LCW Vol. 21, pp. 341-342

(18) Michael Pröbsting: Americanise or bust' – Contradictions and challenges of the imperialist project of European unification (2004), in: Fifth International Vol.1, No.2, p. 8, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-imperialism-americanise-or-bust/>

(19) Ibid, p. 17

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 Bolshevnik- 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 Bolshevnik 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

1956: The Hungarian Revolution

Note by the Editor: The following article has been published by the predecessor organization of the RCIT (the League for a Revolutionary Communist International; later renamed into League for the Fifth International) in 2006. The founding cadres of the RCIT have been expelled from the LFI in 2011 when they protested against the centrist degeneration of this organization.

* * * * *

In mid-October 1956 students in Szeged marched for the right to form their own organisation independent of party control. They also struck against the compulsory learning of Russian. The students of Budapest's Technological University followed with a demonstration on the 23 October in solidarity with Poland.

The 23 October demonstration was the spark that lit the Hungarian revolution. The government asked the leaders of the Petofi circle, a discussion circle led by members of the Communist Party's youth organisation that had been banned just a few months earlier, to lead the demonstration.

Balazs Nagy (later known as the Trotskyist Michel Vargas) said: "At this time, and subsequently also, the Petofi circle curbed rather than encouraged the movement, considering that the hastening of events could lead to a catastrophe."

From 1953 the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party was split between Matyas Rakosi, the leader since the Stalinists came to power after the war, and Imre Nagy who wanted to pursue a policy called the New Course, which called for greater spending on consumer goods and would allow farmers to leave the collective farms. This struggle was given added impetus by the death of head of the Soviet Union Stalin and his denunciation by his successor Krushchev in February 1956.

Throughout Eastern Europe, the Stalinists had expropriated capitalism after the war but created regimes that had no workers' democracy and were instead ruled by Stalinist bureaucracies. Under Stalinism workers had been denied democratic rights including the right to strike or to form their own organisations, and faced repression for criticising the regimes. In the factories, members of the party militia and trade unions policed workers, and suppressed any fightback against exploitation.

Krushchev's speech gave the green light to the opposition in Eastern Europe to take to the streets. In June and July 1956, there were a series of strikes in Poland and Budapest. On 28 July the workers of Poznan, Poland, demonstrated but were brutally fired upon by the internal security forces which killed 54 and wounded at least 300.

In Hungary it erupted again with the student demonstrations of October. "Now or never - Most vagy Soha - became one of the slogans of the uprising. The students presented 16 demands, including "New leadership, new direction, require new leaders!", "We shall not stop halfway - we will destroy Stalinism", and "Worker-peasant power!". The masses also called for Imre Nagy, who had been expelled from the central committee at the beginning of the year, to be reinstated.

The 23 October demonstration moved to the radio station where the crowds wanted their demands broadcasted. There the AVH (secret political police) opened fire on the demonstrators who returned fire from arms provided by fraternising Hungarian troops.

Now Nagy appeared, after refusing to attend the demonstration. His speech to the crowd showed how alien his bureaucratic outlook was from that of the students and workers. He said: "It is by negotiation in the bosom of the party and by the discussion of problems that we will travel the road that leads toward the settlement of our conflicts. We want to safeguard constitutional order and discipline. The government will not delay in arriving at its decision."

Faced with a massive demonstration, active fraternisation between workers and soldiers, including Soviet soldiers, and armed clashes with the AVH, the Stalinists called on Soviet troops to restore order in Budapest and declared martial law. They also called on Nagy to head a new government.

Meanwhile groups of workers were already doing battle with Soviet tanks on the streets of Budapest. Throughout the length and breadth of Hungary, the workers responded to the Soviet intervention with strike action. By 26 October, virtually all work had stopped. Moreover these days saw the formation of workers' councils in every factory and mine and also the link up of those councils into the regional revolutionary committees in major industrial centres, such as Gyor and Miskolc.

The revolutionary committees of Gyor and Miskolc also controlled local radio stations and broadcasted messages of solidarity to the Soviet troops.

Miskolc declared: "Our people did not revolt against you, but for the achievement of legal demands. Our interests are identical. We and you are all fighting together for a better socialist life."

Gyor workers committee addressed Soviet soldiers with: "*Soviet soldiers! We the workers from the railroad factory in Gyor inform you that in our democratic state, workers are the guardians of the socialist achievements. That means with all their might, they are speaking out against returning factories and banks to the capitalists. At the same time we are against any Rakosite Stalinist restoration.*"

These statements were typical of the workers: on the one hand wanting to preserve socialism against the capitalists but also fighting for democratic and political rights against a military clampdown.

In most areas the workers' councils busied themselves with local or factory problems involved in maintaining the general strike and giving critical support to Nagy. The leaders of the movement saw their committees as alternative local government but ceded central political power to Nagy and his reformist faction in the Communist Party.

While the working class base of the party and certain elements of its apparatus went over to the insurrection, its leading circles sought desperately to diffuse the crisis and re-establish bureaucratic rule - behind Soviet tanks.

The repression of the uprising

At the end of October, under the pressure of the masses the Stalinists appointed Imre Nagy as Prime Minister. The country had been brought to a standstill by a general strike. The masses had driven out the hated secret police, the ÁVH, and were demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

The Soviet troops had been brought in swiftly from western Hungary to crush the uprising, evoking a non-existent clause of the Warsaw Treaty, but the soldiers quickly began fraternising with the locals. They had been in the country for some time and knew far more about the situation than the troops of the second intervention that were rushed in from Rumania. Many Soviet soldiers deserted to the Hungarians.

Each day the papers printed reports from the provinces that showed that the revolt was nationwide. Revolutionary councils were formed in the principle towns: Debrecen, Győr, Magyaróvár, Tatabánya, Miskolc, and Veszprém. Power was in the workers hands, as well as the railways, which refused to transport Soviet troops and supplies.

The Stalinists frantically tried to regain control as the Soviet intervention was falling apart. Then Nagy played the role he was brought in to play – to calm the situation, to call an end to the fighting, and to disarm the working class. He announced that the next election would be under the multi-party system; he called on the Soviet troops to withdraw from the capital and promised to begin negotiations for a complete withdrawal from the country. He recognised the organs set up by the revolution and asked for their support.

On 31 October, the fighting ended and the Soviet troops began to leave Budapest. The insurgents were releasing political prisoners – up to 5,500 were freed. Budapest began to look more like normal – the buses started running and work was beginning again in the large factories.

Although some budding revolutionary organisations, many formed from ex-members of the Communist Party, warned that the freedom fighters should not to lay down their arms until the demands of the revolution had been fully implemented, after a decade of severe state repression, their organisations were weak and they did not have the influence needed to lead the struggle.

The masses also believed that Nagy could resolve the issue of state power and so the workers' councils refused to challenge him and the Stalinists for political power. The committees saw themselves as potential alternative local government but ceded central political power to Nagy.

At this point the effective power in Hungary was divided between the Nagy government and the armed people themselves, as represented and led by their national committees. It was dual power. But without a political party with a revolutionary programme that laid out in concrete terms the need for revolution, to struggle for power with the Nagy government, to call for "All Power to the Workers Councils", to smash the stranglehold of the Stalinist bureaucrats and re-order society, the revolution would stall and eventually fail.

Nagy of course had no intention to resolve the question of power in the hands of the workers. "My friends, the revolution has been victorious," he told a mass demonstration in front of the parliament on 31 October. He

demobilised the people and lulled them into the belief that the struggle was over. Yet, at that moment, Nagy was in secret negotiations with Russian officers and their troops were already on their way back on the eve of 1 November.

Hungary was important for geo-political reasons, it was an important buffer for the Russians from the West, it was industrialised and had natural resources. But above all, if they lost control of Hungary then revolutionary movements would spring up across all Soviet Republics, as was seen in Poland earlier in the year. It was necessary to repress the Hungarian uprising before the unravelling began.

On 2 November, the Soviet media launched an all-out attack against Nagy and the "clique of counter-revolutionaries who had come to power in Hungary". On 4 November, after the Hungarian delegation had been arrested, the Soviet army launched a surprise attack on Budapest at dawn. Armed resistance was hastily organised but it was powerless to stop the Soviet forces.

Janos Kádár, the first secretary of the central committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (the re-named Stalinist party) announced that a new government had been formed which has appealed for the Soviet Union for military assistance: "The Hungarian Government of Revolutionary Workers and Peasants requests the assistance of the Soviet Army Command in helping our nation smash the forces of reaction and restore law and order to the country in the interest of our people, the working class and the peasantry." Nagy sought political asylum in the Yugoslav embassy.

Despite a general strike and fierce street fighting against superior Soviet armoured units, the Soviet's military intervention was effectively over by 10-11 November. Young workers accounted for 80 to 90 per cent of the wounded, while students represented 3 – 5 per cent. Nearly 20,000 Hungarians were killed and there was aerial bombardment of the major proletarian strongholds.

The workers tried to prolong the revolution by forming the Central Workers' Council on 14 November, but it was too late – Stalinists had regained control and the repression began again. Thousands of people were sent to prison and Soviet forced labour camps. Some 2,00 people were executed.

The events of October and November 1956 in Hungary showed the workers' and students' will to fight when they took up arms against two Soviet military interventions. They toppled a hated Stalinist government and smashed the secret police, the ÁVH. They created workers and revolutionary councils that became the real power in every factory and most localities.

The workers organisations and the government were in a struggle for power and a dual power situation developed. The Hungarian revolution showed that without a revolutionary programme -and a political party to fight for it – the spontaneity of the masses could not develop a strategy to take power and the uprising was crushed.

The tragedy of the Hungarian revolution was that the workers were unable to create a revolutionary leadership and programme of action that could establish a government and take power to defend the political revolution and extend it to the rest of Eastern Europe and the USSR.

Books of the RCIT

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 new book. It's 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.

In *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* Michael Pröbsting analyses the character of the Cuban Revolution 1959-61, its bureaucratic degeneration, and the recent march of the Castro leadership towards capitalism.

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.

Price: 8 Euro / 12 US-Dollars /
7 British Pound
(plus delivery charges) ■



Look for details of the books at www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net

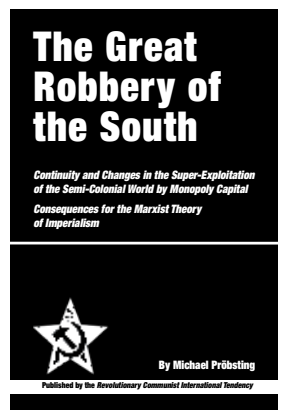
Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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



The Author: Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 35 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.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries!
For a 5th Workers International to be founded on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

