



# LIBERATION

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**WORKERS AND OPPRESSED, UNITE!**

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## Brexit and the Crisis of British Imperialism

*Statement of the RCIT Britain, 08.01.2017*

The decision to leave the European Union has caused an immense crisis amongst the ruling class in Britain. Theresa May, who succeeded David Cameron as Prime Minister, is trying to negotiate Brexit amongst a deeply divided and split Tory party. She is desperate to hold her party together while she negotiates terms to leave Europe by activating Article 50.

A section of the ruling class wants to desperately stay in the EU to have access to the single market. Another section wants to get rid of the restrictions of Strasbourg and other European nations. The situation has been complicated by the legal challenge to Brexit which insists that any decision to leave the European Union must be discussed by Parliament.

*"The businesswoman at the centre of the legal challenge to ensure parliament is consulted before Theresa May triggers Brexit have said the landmark case was motivated by her fear that the UK faced a "treacherous future". In an interview with the Guardian, Gina Miller said she knew the ruling would leave her unpopular with many EU referendum voters, but believed that the UK had failed itself and the rest of Europe by voting to leave the bloc rather than reform it from within. "I was never binary remain or leave. I was very much of the sentiment, and still am, that it was about remain, reform and review," Miller said. "The UK actually has a very powerful place in Europe ... and we have not just let ourselves down but I think the whole of Europe down by not taking up that challenge." [1]*

Theresa May has argued that she can trigger Article 50 without the approval of Parliament. The court case found in favour of those who wanted Parliament to decide the terms of Brexit. The Government is challenging the decision and has gone to the Supreme Court, but May could find that decision going against her.

*"Theresa May is heading for an 11-0 defeat when the Supreme Court justices rule on whether Parliament must approve starting Brexit, a law professor has predicted. Professor Michael Zander QC said the High Court judges who ruled the Prime Minister could not act alone when triggering the Article 50 notice had given a "unanimous and very strong" decision". [2]*

### Another Referendum on Scottish Independence?

The Brexit referendum clearly showed that there were majorities to remain in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The leave vote was strongest in England and in Wales. Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of the Scottish National Party and the Government in Scotland, is opposed to Brexit. She has said that there is a possibility that there may be a second referendum for separation in Scotland. The SNP government is committed to remaining part of the European Union.

*"The First Minister has already said a new independence referendum is "highly likely" in order to protect Scotland's place in the EU. Speaking to the Sunday Herald, Sturgeon hailed*



"No to Racism! For Open Borders" (Banner of the Austrian Section of the RCIT at a pro-refugee demonstration in Vienna on 26 November 2016)

her invitation to the European Green Party event as a coming together of progressive parties seeking to protect Scotland's EU status. She said: "I'm delighted to be speaking at the EGP Council in Glasgow next week. With the challenges currently facing Europe, it's particularly significant that the Greens have chosen to hold this event in Scotland for the very first time. "Rarely has there been a more critical time for progressive parties to stand together and work together in common cause." "As the Tories conspire to drag the UK out of the EU and further to the right, Scotland can show unity and solidarity with those across Europe who share our commitment to protect those fundamental rights and freedoms which extend beyond borders." [3]

### The Labour Party is also divided

The Labour Party with the left reformist Jeremy Corbyn as leader is deeply split. Although Corbyn is nominally leader, the control of the party remains in the hands of the Blairites who as well as controlling the Parliamentary Labour party are in charge of the bureaucratic structures as well. Tony Blair, ex-Labour leader and indicted war criminal, has returned to lead the attack on Corbyn and his supporters in Momentum.

A motion brought forward by the SNP in Parliament to investigate Blair's role in Iraq was heavily defeated with over 150 Labour MP's joining the Tories to defeat any suggestion that Blair has anything to answer on Iraq.

*"The SNP had called for a parliamentary probe into Blair's public statements while prime minister in the moments leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and those given in private with then-US President George Bush. It comes after the publication of the Chilcot report into the Iraq War in July. The motion, headed by the SNP's Alex Salmond, was presented on Wednesday (30 November). It stated: "This House recognises that the Chilcot Inquiry provided substantial evidence of misleading information being presented by the then Prime Minister and others on the MPs have voted against a motion accusing Tony Blair of misleading parliament in the lead-up to the Iraq War and calling for a fresh investigation. The motion, spearheaded by the Scottish National Party (SNP), was overwhelmingly defeated by 439 votes to 70 after strong opposition from Labour and Conservative MPs". [4]*

The Blairites through the PLP have attempted two coups against Corbyn but have been roundly defeated. The issue of Brexit has given them the opportunity to remove Corbyn and his supporters. Corbyn has capitulated to the Blairites at every turn even inviting some of them into his shadow cabinet. Blair is now involved in setting up a new centre coalition of pro-Europeans including Tories and

Liberal democrats. His aim of course is to try and reverse Brexit.

*"Tony Blair has insisted that Labour can recover from its disastrous general election defeat only if it reoccupies the centre ground of British politics, proudly championing a pro-business agenda and bold new ideas to reform public services. As the party attempts to come to terms with a devastating result that saw the Conservatives returned to office for five more years with an unexpected Commons majority, the former prime minister and three-time election winner said Labour has to be "for ambition and aspiration as well as compassion and care". [5]*

The recent by election results in Richmond where the Brexiteer Zac Goldsmith stood as an independent was defeated by the Liberal democrat. This showed that Brexit is still very unpopular amongst the youth, the middle class and sections of the working class. It was a humiliating night for the Labour candidate who came third and lost his deposit. In the Sleaford by-election strong Brexit territory Labour came fourth behind UKIP and the Liberal democrats. The Blairites and their attacks on Corbin over Brexit shows that the party is deeply split and the right of the party want to overturn Brexit and run a second referendum.

### Revolutionary Perspective

The role of the main Centrists in Britain the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party remains confused and politically dangerous. They both advocated support for a Leave vote and allied themselves with the most reactionary and racist forces in Britain, although they argued that this was a progressive method. The RCIT in its statement pointed out that these so called 'Marxist' organizations were adapting to the most reactionary forces in British Politics.

We re-emphasise what the RCIT stated in its Open Letter in June last year after the referendum:

*"The results of the BREXIT referendum in Britain have ignited a political crisis not only in the UK itself but throughout the entire European continent. On the one hand, the referendum has obviously strengthened reactionary nationalism, as is reflected in the increasing numbers of hate-crimes against migrants in Britain as well as in the surge of the far right in other Western European countries. On the other hand, the vote to remove Britain from the EU has also created confusion, uncertainty and nervousness among the forces of monopoly capital both in Britain and in Europe in general. Shamefully, in the months leading up to last week's historic referendum, large sectors of*

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LIBERATION is a Bulletin published by the RCIT Britain. The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) has sections and activists in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and Austria.

the left in Britain had called either for the country to LEAVE or REMAIN in the EU. In both cases, the proponents of these diametrically opposed positions were guilty of adapting to one of two imperialist camps. Those who supported LEAVE unabashedly adapted to the reactionary "UK First" imperialist camp dominated by the most extreme right-wing forces like UKIP; those in the left who called for a REMAIN vote no less shamelessly adapted to the pro-EU imperialist camp of the big bourgeoisie and the leadership of the Labour Party. Again, we contend that both strategies were and remain nothing more than variants of social-imperialism.

From the moment that the Cameron government committed itself to holding the referendum on the future of British membership in the EU, the RCIT repeatedly stated the dire importance for revolutionaries to oppose both versions of social-imperialism and instead raise the banner of working class internationalism. This meant and continues to mean that revolutionaries must join forces in order to:

1) Unequivocally reject support for both the "UK First" and the "EU First" positions, by abstaining in any such referendums in imperialist countries belonging to the European Union.

2) Organize the working class to struggle against the austerity offensive in all countries – whether inside or outside the EU – and come together to fight against the bosses on an international level.

3) Battle for Open Borders for all refugees, in addition to equal rights for all migrants.

4) Unite the working class in all countries – both inside and outside the EU – in an unrelenting struggle against imperialist wars; specifically: Down with Britain's and the EU's military intervention in Syria, Iraq, Mali etc.!

5) Give the highest expression to our struggle for the interests of the international working class by calling for a United Socialist States of Europe.

Naturally, as Marxists, we combine such a focused program with a socialist perspective which aims to bring about the revolutionary overthrow of all capitalist regimes and the founding of workers' republics" [6]

The ruling class in Germany and France are worried that Brexit could lead to other European Countries taking the same route as Britain. The weaker countries of the

Euro Zone like Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy are in a terminal crisis brought on by the oncoming crash and the contradictions of capitalism. In Spain election results are inconclusive as they are in Ireland where the economies of those countries are driven more and more into crisis and an inability to govern.

The recent election of Donald trump shows that the contradictions between all the imperialist nations will heighten producing more conflicts throughout the world.

The RCIT in Britain calls for the maximum unity amongst revolutionaries and puts forward the following demands to resolve the crisis of leadership in the working class.

\* No to racism –fight to form councils of action in defence of migrants and against Islamophobia

\* Self-determination for the people of Scotland

\* For a Unified Ireland as a 32 county Workers Republic as part of a United Socialist States of Europe

\* For workers defence guards to defend communities against police provocation and fascist attacks

\* We call on all workers and oppressed to join the RCIT IN BRITAIN and help to build a World Party for Socialist Revolution.

#### Footnotes

1) <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/nov/03/gina-miller-the-woman-behind-the-article-50-legal-challenge>

2) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-legal-challenge-theresa-may-supreme-court-article-50-vote-defeat-unanimous-warning-a7445851.html>

3) [http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/14930648.Sturgeon\\_to\\_rally\\_European\\_allies\\_against\\_Brexit/?ref=rss](http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/14930648.Sturgeon_to_rally_European_allies_against_Brexit/?ref=rss)

4) <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/mps-overwhelmingly-reject-motion-accusing-tony-blair-misleading-them-over-iraq-war-1594265>

5) <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/may/09/tony-blair-labour-return-centre-ground-general-election-defeat>

6) <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/open-letter-on-brexit/>

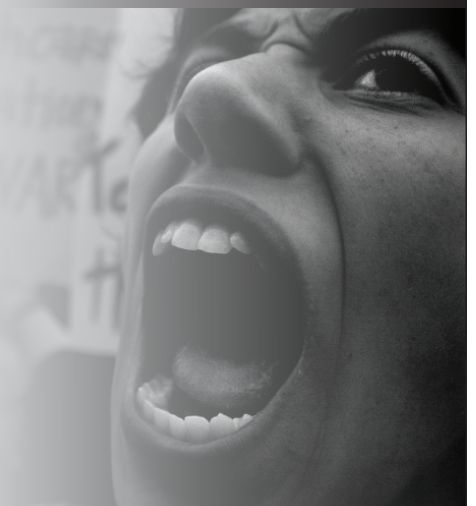
## Two Pamphlets on the EU and Brexit

\* **Marxism, European Union and Brexit**

\* **The British Left and the EU-Referendum**

Written by Michael Pröbsting  
(International Secretary of the RCIT)

Price for one pamphlet: 2 Pound (plus delivery charges)



# Urgent Call for Unity and a Joint Struggle on a Revolutionary Platform

## An Open Letter to All Authentic Revolutionaries for an International Conference on the 100th Anniversary of the October Revolution to Advance the Building of a Revolutionary World Party

*Issued by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 09.01.2017*

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters!

This is an urgent call to all authentic revolutionaries to unite so that we can advance the building of a leadership for the struggle against the reactionary offensive of the ruling class. The RCIT considers this task as the most important in the present period, demanding full dedication and seriousness of revolutionaries in countries around the world.

So let's talk about this task directly and without any diplomacy. To those who sympathize with the US's and Russia's so-called "war on terror" in the Middle East and Africa; to those who hail Assad's murderous conquest of Aleppo as a "victory"; to those who welcome the repression of the Egyptian military dictatorship against all opposition; to those who praise Tsipras and the SYRIZA leadership in Greece for their "realistic" government policy in implementing the EU-Memorandum – to those we suggest: do not continue to read our appeal, as it would only be a waste of your time!

But those among you who are determined to fight against the aggressions of *all* Great Powers in West and East; who are ready to defend the workers and oppressed against the imperialists and their local lackeys; who are ready to fight the bureaucracy inside the labor movement which is strangling the resistance of our class – to you we say: consider our proposal seriously and let us join forces *now* in building a *Revolutionary World Party* which will advance the struggle against capitalism and imperialism and for a world-wide socialist revolution!

2017 is the 100th Anniversary of the October Revolution, the most important event in modern history as the workers and peasants led by the Bolshevik Party conquered power for the first time. However, this anniversary also reminds us – in stark contrast to 1917 – of the total absence of such a Bolshevik Party today!

We urgently call all authentic revolutionaries to unite, because the chief problem of the present period is not the lack of struggle and resistance of the workers and oppressed. The capitalist system is in decay and its economic, political and military contradictions are accelerating, as the RCIT has outlined in its latest *World Perspective* document. The deep crisis of the imperialist system is constantly provoking mass struggles and revolutions. However, the key issue is rather the *total lack of revolutionary leadership* and, hence, the dominance of the workers and popular organizations by Stalinist, social democratic, Castro-Chavistas, petty-bourgeois populists or Islamist forces. However, these *misleaderships* are either utterly corrupt and always sell out the popular struggle in exchange for some posts and privileges; or they are honest and dedicated but combine individual heroism with a strategy which replaces the mass mobilization and

organization for revolution with a self-defeating elitist and militarist conception. While one can say that the latter is the more honest version, it is nevertheless also a dead-end strategy.

Consequently, the decay of capitalism goes hand in hand with the deep crisis of the traditional mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed. We must tell the workers and oppressed the truth: as long they are led by such non-revolutionary forces, their struggle is *doomed* to end in a cul-de-sac or even outright counter-revolution.

The conclusion from this is *not* arrogant lecturing of the masses and passive abstention from their struggles. Only sectarians and traitors can reach such conclusions. One can only act as a revolutionary if he or she is *actively participating in the class battles* which our brothers and sisters are waging again and again against the rulers. Such participation in popular struggles is also necessary, in fact even more urgent, if the leadership of the masses is non-revolutionary. It is crucial to challenge the wrong leaderships consistently, something which can only be done from *within* the mass struggle but *never* from outside.

Authentic revolutionaries must *combine* such active participation in the popular struggles with *relentless propaganda and agitation for revolutionary tactics and slogans*, with a *consistent political fight against the bureaucrats and misleaders* and with *tireless efforts to organize the most consciousness and militant workers and oppressed in a revolutionary party* (or a pre-party nucleus, as a first step).

Because the political, economic and military nature of capitalism is invariably international and by necessity functions globally, the organization of the working class and their struggles can also only be *international*. Every limited, purely national effort to build a revolutionary party is doomed to degenerate both politically and organizationally. Authentic Marxists must tirelessly work to build a *Revolutionary World Party* or they are *failing* in their fundamental mission!

True, a new *Revolutionary World Party* – standing in the tradition of the first four Internationals and based on the teachings of the great revolutionaries Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky – cannot be established in a single stroke. Such an International must be politically tested in the struggles of the workers and oppressed. However, the *organizing of a nucleus* – irrespective of its current size – to build such a world party *can* and *must* start immediately. Waiting for others to do this job is a passive and cynical attitude – only *intervening and acting collectively on a national as well as international scale* is worthy of a revolutionary!

We urgently call upon all authentic revolutionaries to *immediately start coming together* and discussing a concrete platform for the class struggle and for advancing the building of a *Revolutionary World Party*. As a concrete

first step in this direction, the RCIT proposes that, together with those interested, we jointly organize an *international conference in 2017* – the year of the 100th Anniversary of the October Revolution. Such a conference should lay the foundation for joint collective work towards the formation of a Revolutionary World Party.

Coming together for such a joint initiative for the international organizing of revolutionaries is only possible on the basis of agreement on the key political questions of the current world class struggle. As we already stated in our *World Perspective* document, the RCIT considers the following issues as such programmatic keystones in the present political phase:

a) *Recognition of the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – the US, EU, Japan, Russia and China.* It is only possible to understand the driving dynamic of the present period of capitalist crisis and to take a correct position if one recognizes the imperialist character not only of the US, EU and Japan but also of the new emerging powers, Russia and China. Only on such a basis is it possible to arrive at the only correct program on this issue – *revolutionary defeatism*, i.e., the perspective of consistent struggle against all imperialist powers. This means that revolutionaries refuse to lend support to any Great Power in inter-imperialist conflicts under the slogan “*The main enemy is at home!*”

b) *A consistent struggle against imperialism.* Revolutionaries stand for the *defeat* of imperialist states in any conflict with forces representing oppressed people and for the *military victory* of the latter without, at the same time, giving any *political support* to the non-revolutionary leadership of the oppressed (e.g., petty-bourgeois Islamists, nationalists). This is true both in domestic conflicts (e.g., against an oppressed nation like the Chechen people in Russia) as well as in wars abroad (e.g., Afghanistan, Syria, Mali, Somalia). Likewise, revolutionaries have to fight for *Open Borders* in the imperialist countries and for *full equality for national minorities and for migrants*. Furthermore, revolutionaries refuse to lend support to one imperialist camp against another in any given conflict (e.g., Brexit vs. EU; Clinton vs. Trump).

c) *Continuing support for the Arab Revolution.* The mass

popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and other countries have been the most important and progressive class struggle development so far since the beginning of the new historic period in 2008. True, given the lack of a revolutionary leadership, the masses have suffered a number of terrible defeats – like the coup d'état of General al-Sisi in Egypt in July 2013, or the ongoing slaughter of the Syrian people at the hands of Assad and his foreign backers. However, the revolutionary process is continuing, and this is reflected in the ongoing popular resistance in Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Morocco etc. Authentic revolutionary forces must give unconditional support to these popular struggles against dictatorships and reactionary forces, without giving any political support to their non-revolutionary leaderships (e.g. petty-bourgeois Islamists).

d) *Participation in all mass struggles against austerity programs and against reactionary attacks on democratic rights.* Revolutionaries oppose *all* forms of sectarianism which refuses participation in mass struggles under the pretext of their non-revolutionary leaderships. Instead they apply the united front tactic in the struggles of the workers and peasants led by reformist or populist forces against austerity program (e.g., trade unions, mass organizations of the peasants and the urban poor, but also political parties like MORENA in Mexico, SYRIZA in Greece before 2015, PODEMOS in Spain) or against anti-democratic coups and dictatorships (PT, CUT, MST in Brazil; Islamists in Egypt; rebels in Syria). Such an orientation must be combined with a consistent struggle against all forms of popular-frontism and petty-bourgeois populism, and for the breaking of workers and peasants away from these non-revolutionary leaderships and to advance the formation of an independent and revolutionary Workers' Party.

However, agreement on such a basis can only be the starting point for an intensive phase of common discussions and actions. It is important to develop a joint understanding of the Marxist theory and program which can also make controversial and even sharp discussions between the participating organizations necessary. Such a joint programmatic understanding has to be tested by implementing it in the practice via common activities.

## **OUT NOW! World Perspectives 2017**

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*Document of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 18 December 2016*

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Hence we call upon all organizations which honestly strive towards the creation of a new Revolutionary World Party to join forces on the basis of these programmatic keystones. Concretely, the RCIT proposes that revolutionaries constitute a *Joint Contact Committee* of all forces who agree in general with such an outlook. The task of such a committee would be to prepare politically and organizationally an *International Conference* in 2017. The goal of such a conference would be to discuss concrete steps to advance the formation of a Revolutionary World Party.

The RCIT contributes its fundamental documents for discussion among revolutionary militants – in particular its recently adopted programmatic *Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation*. However, we are equally ready to study and discuss documents from other organizations. We are convinced that authentic revolutionaries will be able to elaborate on the basis of such documents a joint platform for common work towards the building of a revolutionary world party.

We are aware that it is not always easy to create a joint international organization with forces coming from different traditions and experiences. Revolutionaries should not be frightened by the possibility of controversial discussions and the necessity to test out different position in the class struggle. However, a serious attitude to differences – i.e., an open frank discussion about them instead of diplomatically concealing them – is in the end the only honest and fruitful way to overcome them.

Likewise, it may well be the case that it is necessary to create, beforehand, interim stages in order to learn from each other and to systematically come closer. But it is indispensable that we start such a process together now!

Comrades, we can only honor the legacy of the socialist October Revolution in 1917 if we collectively act in the spirit and on the basis of the programmatic and organizational lessons of the Bolsheviks. Let us join forces

in tackling the historic mission of our generation with decisive determination: the creation of a Revolutionary World Party as the most important instrument of the working class in its struggle for liberation! Let us not lose time and waste energy; let us march forward – together - NOW!

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*

\* \* \* \* \*

**We encourage organizations and activists who share the general outlook of this *Open Letter* to contact us and to send us their ideas and criticism so that we can discuss concrete steps towards joint discussion and collaboration: [rcit@thecommunists.net](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net)**

The RCIT is an international revolutionary organization which unites sections and activists in 13 countries on the basis of a joint program and the organizational principles of democratic centralism (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel/Occupied Palestine, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and Austria).

For a more extensive overview of the RCIT's viewpoints we refer those who are interested to our website [www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net). We want to draw particular attention to our *Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation. The Tasks of the Liberation Struggle against Decaying Capitalism (adopted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the RCIT in October 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/>)* We are in a process of publishing this Manifesto in at least seven different languages in the coming weeks.

We also refer readers to the RCIT's latest World Perspective document: *World Perspectives 2017: The Struggle against the Reactionary Offensive in the Era of Trumpism. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries (adopted on 18 December 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2017/>)*



Contingent of the Austrian Section of the RCIT at a pro-refugee demonstration in Vienna on 26 November 2016

has also promised to try to avoid any compulsory redundancies over a five-year period. Britain's steel industry was thrown into uncertainty when Tata Steel announced it wanted to sell its troubled business there in spring. Global oversupply, a wave of cheap imports from countries such as China and a plunge in prices for the metal triggered a crisis last autumn, leading to plant closures and thousands of job losses. The Community, Unite and GMB unions said that they will ballot their members on the proposal in the new year". [3].

### Reactionary Role of the Labour Bureaucracy

The RCIT in Britain in its no 11 issue of LIBERATION pointed out the reactionary role of the labour bureaucracy in Britain:

*"The labour bureaucracy of UNITE; the biggest trade union with over 1.4 million members is a crucial agent for the ruling class in the workers movement. The labour bureaucracy constitutes the most reactionary and conservative element in the working class today. It is composed of sell-serving careerists whose role is to police the working class and make it safe for capitalism in order to exploit the most vulnerable and exploited sections in society". [4]*

Further on we explained why it is important to patiently explain the united front tactic to workers and show that it is only through the rank file organisation that they can challenge the power of the bureaucracy and liberate it from the control of the bureaucracy and ensure proper workers democracy not the sham democracy which means only the General Secretary and the executive council are up for re-election. All other positions are appointed.

Therefore it is crucial that revolutionaries help the workers vanguard to organize a struggle against the labour bureaucracy. In our "Theses on the Trade Unions" we explained:

*"Revolutionaries struggle for the expulsion of the labor bureaucracy and its agents from the ranks of the workers' movement. These forces are the biggest obstacle for the working class struggle in the ranks of the workers' movement. Naturally, this is a long-term task involves the application of the united front tactic (calls to the rank and file, but also the reformist leaders for joint actions, etc.). But communists should state clearly that the trade unions can only become an authentic instrument of the working class if they are liberated from the bureaucracy and brought under workers control. (...)*

[W]e derive the following set of strategies for revolutionary communists:

i) Building a rank-and-file movement in opposition to the bureaucracy, one which can fight both for more democratic rights and a militant union policy, and which has the goal of liberating the union from the bureaucracy.

ii) Fighting to change the composition of the unions. This involves driving back the influence of the 'aristocratic type' of the upper layer and transforming the unions into an instrument dominated by the 'mass type' of the working class, which means the lower and middle strata – i.e. the huge majority – of the proletariat. "The unionization of the lower strata of the working class (especially the migrants, women, precarious workers, etc.) is an indispensable task. These layers must not, therefore, play the role of the infantry in the union, but should play a central role and should also proportionally be represented in the trade union bodies according to their share among the employees.

iii) Striving to utilize every class struggle to build action

committees which organize the militant workers (including the unorganized workers) independent of the bureaucracy. "In every battle and in preparation for this the Bolsheviks-Communists are therefore keen to establish rank and file committees outside the bureaucratic control. They will often bring together the most active and most militant elements in Action Committees." [5]

### Support for Rank and File Candidates

Most of the centrist organizations in Britain have nothing to say on this election in Unite. Most of them supported McCluskey in the last election for General Secretary, with the principled exception of the Socialist Workers Party who to their credit supported Jerry Hicks, the rank and file candidate.

If a rank and file candidate decides to stand we would support them as part of our united front tactic.

We therefore propose the following demands.

\* *Vote for IAN ALLINSON, the rank and file candidate for the position of General Secretary of Unite. Establish rank and file committees whose aim should be to remove and expel the bureaucracy and elect genuine rank and file militants in positions of leadership like the forthcoming election for the General Secretary in Unite.*

\* *For an indefinite general strike to bring down this government. Build action committees independent of the bureaucracy. Elect workers defense guards to protect workers who go on strike.*

\* *For a genuine communist fraction. Support the RCIT Britain in building a revolutionary party as part of a new World Party of Socialist Revolution!*

### Footnotes

- 1) <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-confirms-the-timetable-for-the-general-secretary-election-in-2017/>
- 2) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/09/ineos-unite-union-grangemouth-oil-refinery>
- 3) <http://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/deal-to-safeguard-port-talbot-steelworks-agreed-say-unions/ar-AA1gKFR?OCID=ansmsnnews11>
- 4) <https://rcit.wordpress.com/liberationno11>
- 5) RCIT-Theses on Revolutionary Trade Union Policy, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-trade-union/>



# For Critically Support for the Rank and File Candidate Ian Allinson in the Election for General Secretary of UNITE!

By Joseph Adams, RCIT Britain, 09.01.2017

**L**en McCluskey, the General Secretary of Unite, announced on 7<sup>th</sup> December that he is resigning as General Secretary and seeking re-election in 2017. It was also decided that the executive council would organise the Executive Council elections and the General Secretary election at the same time.

*“Unite confirms the timetable for the general secretary election in 2017*

*06 December 2016*

*The Executive Council of Unite the Union has today (Tuesday 6 December) agreed that the timetable for the election of the union’s General Secretary will be brought forward to the first months of 2017. This will ensure that the ballot for Executive Council (EC) members and the ballot for General Secretary are conducted simultaneously, minimizing the enormous costs caused to the union by the legal requirement to conduct the ballot by post and not by modern voting methods, thereby saving the union in the region of £1 million. Following a period of candidate nominations, the ballot for both elections will commence on 27 March 2017, concluding on 28 April 2017. General Secretary Len McCluskey immediately tendered his resignation to the Unite EC, announcing his intention to stand as a candidate. The EC also agreed that Assistant General Secretary Gail Cartmail, should become acting General Secretary for the election period. Len McCluskey said: “I intend to be a candidate in the upcoming general secretary election and to submit my record to the vote of Unite members. “Unite’s Executive Council has agreed that my resignation will take effect from 28 April, when the elections for general secretary and the Executive Council itself end. I will remain general secretary until then – after that it is in the hands of the membership.” [1]*

The election which is going to be brought forward will mean that if McCluskey is elected he will be in his 70’s when his term of office ends. McCluskey is part of the labour bureaucracy and during his term of office he has

presided over austerity attacks both by the Cameron and May governments.

## Treacherous McCluskey Leadership

His response at every turn has been to betray dispute after dispute and at all costs prevent strike action. The Grangemouth Oil Refinery dispute is an example of where the Unite Leadership capitulated to the INEOS management and agreed to the sacking of the convenor and agreed a no strike deal.

*“This was a rout. One of the best organised workplaces in the country, Grangemouth, suffered one of the worst defeats of the trade union movement in years. Barely a shot was fired. The union was stunned; this wasn’t the dispute they thought it was. Lured into a limited battle over the witch-hunting of a union organiser, the real stakes were quickly revealed when the boss locked workers out of the plant and threatened to close it down. The union’s retreat was humiliating. They conceded everything: pay freezes, an end to final salary pensions, the end of full-time union convenors on site, and no strikes for three years. Employers across the country will look enviously on what Jim Ratcliffe, the billionaire boss of INEOS, has achieved. Why did they lose so badly? After all, this was not the first time that Ratcliffe had gone after the final-salary pension’s scheme. He was comprehensively defeated in 2008. His battle with tanker drivers in March this year met with no greater success.” However, it seems that in March Ratcliffe began planning for a new confrontation, and stockpiling oil reserves to see out any strike. The basis for an offensive was provided by the Falkirk controversy in which Unite officials were supposedly involved in rigging Labour’s selection procedures. It was a candyfloss controversy: mouth-watering, but fuzzy and insubstantial. However, the Labour leadership used it to launch a wide-ranging attack on the union link, forcing the Unite leadership onto the back foot”. [2]*

In December 2016 the Tata steel management presented a deal to the unions at Port Talbot. Both the Unite leadership under McCluskey and Community under Roy Richaus are recommending acceptance although it means that the final salary scheme will go and there will not be a satisfactory Pension scheme in place. The workers are going to be balloted on whether they will accept the deal or not. It is just another example of McCluskey’s leadership. All that has been organised is meetings with the government and one march in Port Talbot when Tata threatened to close all of its plants.

*“A deal to safeguard production at Britain’s biggest steelworks in Port Talbot has been secured with Tata Steel, according to trade unions, including commitments on jobs and £1bn of investment in its wider UK business over the next decade. As part of the rescue package Tata is proposing to close the £15bn British Steel pension scheme, which has become a serious financial burden on the company. In return, the Indian group has committed to keep Port Talbot’s twin blast furnaces running for a minimum of five years and to reinvest in the older of the two. It*

