



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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ONE WORLD - ONE STRUGGLE - ONE REVOLUTION



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Defeat Trump's War Drive in Korea!

* May Day Statement

* Persecution of Homosexuals in Chechnya

* Palestinian Hunger Strike

* US Imperialist Offensive in Raqqa

* Assad's Chemical Weapons Massacre

* L51 as Market Marxists

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Revolutionary Communism is the monthly English-language journal published by the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT). The RCIT has sections and activists in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and Austria.

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Revolutionary Statement for May Day 2017

In a World of Crisis, Wars and Revolutions, the creation of a new World Party of Socialist Revolution is more urgent than ever!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters on all continents! The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) sends its May Day greetings to all fighters for the liberation of the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world. There can be no doubt that we are living in historical times. The course of human history is changing at an accelerating pace. We are living in the midst of this vortex so that, in a very few years, the world will be very different from what it is today. Therefore, our most urgent task and responsibility as revolutionaries are to intervene in these events with a correct program and orientation. Only then will it be possible to create an organization that will unite all the fighting vanguards; one which will make a revolutionary imprint on the struggles of the coming epic.

As we have elaborated in greater detail in our *World Perspectives 2017* document, the reason for the dramatic developments in world politics today is the rapid acceleration of all the contradictions of global capitalism. The capitalist world economy is characterized by extraordinarily deep contradictions which, in the near future, will manifest themselves in yet another global economic crash even worse than the one of 2008. Only recently, a new study revealed that, in 2016, the global level of debt continued to grow rapidly and now stands

at 325% of the world's gross domestic product, which translates to an astounding \$215 trillion!

In this historic period of capitalist decay, the bourgeoisie, which has reacted for over 40 years to decreasing profits by attacking workers' wages, which in turn only exacerbates their inability to sufficiently consume capitalist production, has resorted to a vain panacea – unleashing the behemoth of unbridled credit; thus the world's ever expanding black hole of debt. Furthermore, the resulting weakened tax revenues of capitalist states (only worsened by the tax deductions which the rich have been legislating for themselves for decades) has entirely undermined the funding of what was once called the "welfare state," meaning that the those who are paying the ever-rising cost of the crisis of casino capitalism are, once again, the workers and oppressed who today receive only a small fraction of the public services and benefits they once thought themselves entitled to. This is the destructive dynamic which has and is continuing to cause the laboring masses on all continents to get poorer, while the rich elite shamelessly accumulate the world's wealth.

On the backdrop of this capitalist decay, we are also witness to growing divisions inside the bourgeoisie of important national states (e.g. in the U.S.) as well as inside regional blocks (UK's Brexit from the EU).



May Day demonstration 2016 organized by the Austrian section of the RCIT

Furthermore we see the increasingly rapid acceleration of rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers: the US, EU, Japan, Russia and China. The growing tensions between Russia and the US in Syria, as well as the conflict between the US and China in East Asia – to take only the most recent and most visible examples – are clear testimonies to this exacerbated rivalry. There can be no doubt that military provocations and proxy wars between the Great Powers and, ultimately, a third World War are inevitable if the international working class will not succeed in overthrowing the ruling classes in time.

Similarly, we see an acceleration of imperialist aggressions, wars and occupations against the oppressed peoples of the South. The endless carpet bombing of the Syrian and the Iraqi peoples both by Russia as well as the US and their allies (like France, Britain and others) has caused – according to their own accounts – the death of more than 100,000 people in 2014-16. In Afghanistan, the US is continuing its occupation with the puppet regime in Kabul. Likewise, the US is stepping up its attacks in Somalia as are the French – with the help of their European allies – in Mali. Other examples for this reactionary offensive include the Saudi aggression – supported by the Western imperialists – against Yemen and US war mongering against North Korea. And there is, of course, the never ending brutal oppression of the Palestinian people by the apartheid state of Israel, as well as that of the Chechens by Russia, the Uyghurs by China, the Kashmiri by India, the Balochi by the Pakistan and the Kurds by Turkey.

Another manifestation of the imperialist oppression is the accelerating racism against migrants in the imperialist metropolises (e.g., Trump's wall and Muslim ban, Islamophobia in Europe, pogroms against black migrants in South Africa) as well as against ethnic minorities like the blacks in the US, Britain or Brazil, and religious minorities like the Muslims in India.

All these phenomena derive from the reactionary offensive cited above of the ruling class against the global working class and oppressed, which is, as we have indicated, driven by capitalism's rapidly spreading decay. But, if you were just to follow the business analyses of the corporate media, you would never know the source of the global malaise. Instead, this corrupt fourth estate of the bourgeois regimes merrily continues to frame the fatal dysfunction of capitalism as something which will eventually pass, so long as the governments in charge continue to adhere to the austerity programs, vigorously marketed to the public by politicians and media, while the masses are stupefied into inertia by idiotic programming and, on less quiet days, are further distracted by the whipping up of chauvinism, xenophobia and, in particular, Islamophobia. As state budgets for social programs dry up and disappear, money abounds for the expansion of the machinery of the police-surveillance state being prepared and strengthened to eventually put down future explosions sparked by the seething anger and desperation of the masses, whether black, brown, or foreign. The growth of right-wing parties (e.g., Le Pen, Wilders, Strache) is advanced by the same insular fear so perpetrated by the capitalist media. And in its most politically degraded form, this fear is used to justify coup d'états (like in Brazil, Egypt, and Thailand) and put an end to the last pretenses of bourgeois democracy.

However, the working class and the oppressed are not

rolling over on their backs and placidly accepting these reactionary offensives, but are, in ever larger numbers, beginning to fight back against them. Examples of determined resistance by popular masses are witnessed in the ongoing liberation struggle of the heroic Syrian people against Assad's tyranny; in the Yemeni resistance to the aggression of Saudi Arabia; in the mass protests against the Gasolinazo in Mexico; in the general strikes against the coupist government of Temer in Brazil; in the powerful general strikes in Argentina and French Guyana, the burning of Paraguay's National Congress, the huge mobilizations in Chile and Perú; in the courageous popular women's movement against violence in Latin America; in the struggle of black workers and youth in South Africa; in the popular resistance against the AMISOM occupation troops in Somalia; in the mass protests against corruption in South Korea that brought down the right-wing President Park Geun-hye; in the innumerable strikes of workers in China; in the militant movement of poor women in India; in the Black Lives Matter movement and the anti-Trump movement in the US; in the mass protests in solidarity with Theo in France; and in the demonstrations in defense of refugees in Spain.

The liberation wars, strikes and mass demonstrations in numerous countries around the world are a sign that the working class and the oppressed are awakening and ready to fight back against dictatorships and austerity. It is crucial to take these struggles to a higher plane by creating mass action committees in all workplaces and neighborhoods, by the unifying and radicalizing the trade unions and by creating popular militias. Such steps will fulfill the prerequisites for overthrowing the ruling class and creating a workers' and poor peasants' government.

However, currently all these struggles are seriously hampered by the devastating crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class movement. Currently, the workers and oppressed struggles are controlled by various official leaderships – treacherous labor bureaucrats, leaders of Social Democratic parties, heads of Stalinist parties or Castro-Chavismo parties, their centrist fellow travelers, parties representing petit-bourgeois nationalism, and parties based on Islamism. These current leaderships consciously or unconsciously mislead the workers and oppressed. In major class struggles they often openly support the counterrevolution or take a cowardly neutral position (e.g., on Assad, General al-Sisi, the coup d'état in Brazil, the Euromaidan regime in the Ukraine, the state of emergency in France, the imperialist wars in the Middle East, the ANC regime in South Africa, Russian and Chinese imperialism, etc.).

Hence, the most burning task of revolutionaries is to join forces, internationally, in order to advance the struggle to build a new World Party of Socialist Revolution as a clear and unequivocal alternative to reformism, centrism and petty-bourgeois-populism.

Revolutionaries should combine fighting for a revolutionary program with making this program concrete as a series of strategies and tactics for the current major class struggles. Only organizations which correctly understand the Marxist program for the present period, and clearly perceive the current world situation and the tasks for the class struggle derived from it, can serve as instruments for the creation of new revolutionary parties

and a new World Party of Socialist Revolution.

Some, otherwise sympathetic readers, may argue with us that the authentic revolutionary forces are so small that it won't be possible to build a strong world revolutionary party anytime soon. To this we reply that we are fully aware of the weaknesses and difficulties of the path ahead. However, there is no alternative to building such a new party by learning the lessons from past struggles, revolutions and counter-revolutions. We have witnessed enough mass uprisings that were defeated and demoralized because of the lack of an authentic revolutionary party. If we sacrifice the serious struggle for such a vanguard party but only look for quick results, we will continue the terrible chain of defeats of the past years and decades. No, our class has already paid a much too high prize for the lack of a revolutionary party. It is highly urgent to change the course and to build a new world party based on a serious revolutionary foundation. Otherwise, the working class will continue to suffer defeat after defeat for years and years!

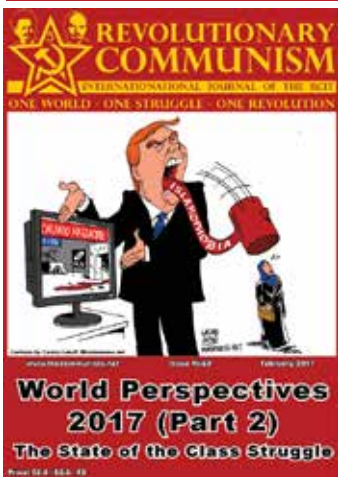
We therefore want to draw the attention of all serious fighters for the liberation of the working class and the oppressed to our recently published *Urgent Call* in which we summarized the most important conclusions to advance the unification of authentic revolutionaries:

In our opinion, revolutionaries all over the world should immediately start collaborating in laying the foundations for a principled unification, so that we drive forward the process of creating a new World Party with stronger forces.

The starting point for the creation of such a party has to be agreement on the most important issues of the global class struggle. 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) *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,



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

World Perspectives 2017: The Struggle against the Reactionary Offensive in the Era of Trumpism

Introduction * I . A New Political Phase Has Opened: The Reactionary Offensive of the Ruling Class in the Era of Trumpism * II. Some Theoretical Question about the New Political Phase * III. The Great Power Rivalry and Its Consequences for World Politics * IV. The Middle East and the State of the Arab Revolution * V. Class Struggle in the US after Trump's Victory * VI . The Reactionary Offensive of the Ruling Class and the Resistance in Latin America * VII. Imperialist Interference and the Struggle for Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa * VIII. Europe in the Era of Chauvinism, Militarization and Brexit * IX. Russia: Victorious Outcome of NATO's Cold War * X. China: Strengthened as a Great Power but Before a Serious Recession * XI. The Class Struggle in Asia * XII. Perspectives for Building of the Revolutionary World Party Today * Footnotes

Published as two special issues of RevCom with altogether 56 pages, A4 Format

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, 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.

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* in order to politically prepare and organize an *International Conference* which will discuss concrete steps to advance the formation of a Revolutionary World Party. The RCIT is committed to serious discussions and the closest possible collaboration with all forces who share such an outlook.

We urge all comrades, brothers and sisters, to study this document and to contact the RCIT so that we can jointly discuss steps towards closer collaboration in our mutual effort to build the most important instrument of the working class in its struggle for liberation: a new *World Party of Socialist Revolution!* Let us march forward!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency has sections and activists in 14 countries: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Brazil, México, Venezuela, Israel/Occupied Palestine, Yemen, Tunisia, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Aotearoa / New Zealand, Germany, Britain and Austria.

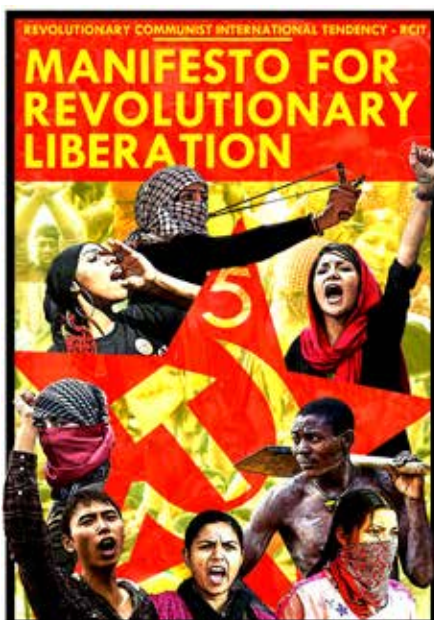
www.thecommunists.net, rcit@thecommunists.net

In order to get a fuller view of the RCIT's analysis of the world situation and its programmatic response we refer readers to the following documents:

World Perspectives 2017: The Struggle against the Reactionary Offensive in the Era of Trumpism, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2017/>

Urgent Call for Unity and a Joint Struggle on a Revolutionary Platform, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/urgent-call-revolutionary-unity-1/>

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/>



NEW RCIT PROGRAM!

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

Adopted at the 1st World Congress of the RCIT in October 2016

Introduction * I. Decaying Capitalism * II. Today's Worldwide Historic Revolutionary Period * III. The Reactionary Offensive of the Ruling Class * IV. A Program for Socialist Revolution to Halt Humanity's Collapse into Barbarism * V. The Crisis of Leadership and the Construction of a Revolutionary World Party * VI. Work in Mass Organizations and the United Front Tactic * VII. The Semi-Colonial South * VIII. The Emerging Imperialist Great Powers of the East: China and Russia * IX. The Old Imperialist Great Powers: The EU, North America and Japan * X. Conclusion

A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A5 Format

North Korea: Stop the War Mongering of US Imperialism!

Down with the imperialist sanctions against North Korea!

No political support for the Stalinist Kim Regime!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 4 April 2017

1. The Trump Administration is threatening North Korea with more sanctions and war. According to media reports, "Trump's national security aides have completed a review of U.S. options to try to curb North Korea's nuclear and missile programs that includes economic and military measures". (Reuters, 2 April 2017). It is currently deploying the THAAD missile defense system in South Korea which will increase the U.S. potential to attack North Korea.

2. The official justification of these threats is that North Korea is continuing to develop its nuclear and missile programs. What hypocrisy! According to the 2016 issue of the SIPRI Yearbook, the U.S. is – together with Russia – the world's biggest nuclear power with a war head inventory of 7,000. North Korea possesses, at maximum, 10 war heads! Furthermore, it is the U.S. and not North Korea which is regularly waging wars in other countries – most recently in Syria and Iraq. Finally, while North Korea is no threat to the US, tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers and modern weapon system are stationed on the Korean Peninsula.

3. The RCIT sharply denounces once again the further threats and provocations of US imperialism. It is an attempt to pressurize and subjugate North Korea. Worse, it could present the pretext of an US-led imperialist war against North Korea. The international worker's movement must oppose the sanctions and mobilize against such a possible war. In case of a military conflict the RCIT calls for the defeat of the imperialist forces and their allies and for the defense of North Korea.

4. The same tactic would apply in any confrontation between North Korea and South Korea. In such a conflict the RCIT would stand on the side of North Korea and for the defeat of its Southern neighbor which is a close ally of the US and a small imperialist power.

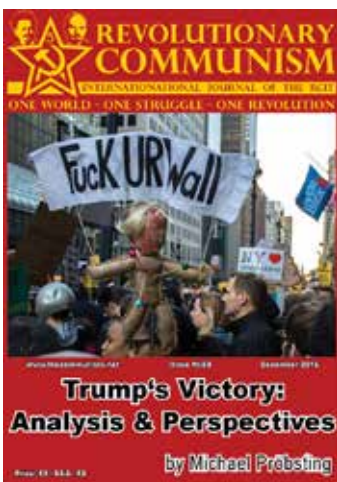
5. One element of this conflict is the accelerating rivalry between the U.S. and China – the old and the emerging imperialist powers. While the RCIT does not

support any of the two powers in a confrontation, the present conflict is between the U.S. and North Korea where the inter-imperialist rivalry is a secondary factor. The primary element is the conflict between the biggest imperialist power and a small Stalinist country.

6. In fact, U.S. imperialism has already stationed troops on the Korean Peninsula since the end of World War II. It waged a war against North Korea in 1950-53 and tries to intimidate the country with a massive military build-up in South Korea. According to reports, the then U.S. Administration was close to wage war with North Korea in 1994 and was prepared to go for it despite calculating "the potential of a million dead in South Korea [which] was judged a viable if unfortunate cost." (One can assume that such considerations would have been different if the potential casualties would not have been Koreans but American!) The war was avoided "by most accounts in the last hours of Washington's decision-making process." (STRATFOR: North Korea: A Problem Without a Solution, January 10, 2017)

7. While the US policy of aggression against North Korea has been going on for more than half a century, the present situation is particularly explosively. The reasons for this are, first, the deep crisis of the Trump Administration which is utterly incompetent and at loggerheads internally. It is furthermore despised both by most the American people as well as large sections of the ruling class itself. Secondly, the South Korean ruling class itself is also facing a major domestic crisis with President Park Geun-hye just being ousted and arrested. Hence the ruling classes, particularly of the U.S., have a major interest in an external political crisis or even war to deflect public attention from its domestic crisis.

8. We have not the slightest political sympathy for the bureaucratic dictatorship of Kim Jong-Un in North Korea. It is a degenerated workers state, i.e. a country where a counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy rules over the working class based on a planned economy. We support the working class' struggle for a political



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

The Meaning, Consequences and Lessons of Trump's Victory

By Michael Pröbsting, November 2016

Introduction * I. The Election Outcome * II. Where is the Trump Administration Heading? * III. Global Consequences: The Beginning of a New Era * IV. Lessons and Perspectives for the Struggle * V. Summary Theses * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 40 pages, A4 Format

revolution against the Stalinist dictatorship.

9. But the U.S. aggression has nothing to do with democratic efforts as its decades-long alliances with the Gulf monarchies, its accommodation to the Assad tyranny waging a genocidal war against its own population or its past support for the military dictatorships in South Korea have sufficiently demonstrated. The Trump Administration is accelerating its aggression against North Korea exclusively to deflect public attention from its deep crisis and to continue the U.S. position as the world's hegemonic predator. Therefore a defeat of U.S. imperialism is desirable not only for North Korea but also for the whole international working class and all oppressed people!

* Down with the imperialist sanctions against North Korea! Stop the deployment of the THAAD missile defense system in South Korea!

* In any military conflict between the U.S. or South Korea on one side and North Korea on the other side: defeat the imperialist forces and their allies and defend North Korea!

* For demonstrations, strikes, sabotage etc. to stop the US military aggression!

* Down with the Stalinist dictatorship! For the political revolution!

* For the revolutionary unification of the Korean peninsula! For a Korean Workers and Peasant Republic!

International Secretariat of the RCIT

See also our past statements on the imperialist aggression against North Korea:

RCIT: New Imperialist Threats in East Asia: Hands off North Korea! 12.3.2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/defend-north-korea/>

RCIT: No War against North Korea! Call for Protests on the Day when a War starts! 6.4.2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-against-north-korea/>

For our analysis of the Trump Administration and

the crisis of US imperialism we refer readers to various documents:

RCIT: 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, 18 December 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2017/>

Michael Pröbsting: The Meaning, Consequences and Lessons of Trump's Victory. On the Lessons of the US Presidential Election Outcome and the Perspectives for the Domestic and International Class Struggle, 24.November 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/meaning-of-trump/>

For our analysis of the emergence of South Korea as a small imperialist power we refer readers to various document:

Michael Pröbsting: Capitalist Development in South Korea and Taiwan (1997), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/capitalism-in-south-korea-taiwan/>

For our analysis of China as an emerging imperialist country we refer readers to various documents:

Michael Pröbsting: China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power, in: *Revolutionary Communism* (English-language Journal of the RCIT) No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4;>

Michael Pröbsting: Russia and China as Great Imperialist Powers. A Summary of the RCIT's Analysis, 28 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 22, [http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-china-and-russia/;](http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-china-and-russia/)

Michael Pröbsting: The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. Again on China as an imperialist Power. Reply to a Polemic from CSR (Venezuela) and PCO (Argentina), December 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 32, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-csr-pco-on-china/>

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Stop Persecution of Homosexuals in Chechnya!

Down with anti-gay chauvinism, lynching's and Russian imperialism! For a free, red Chechnya!

By Johannes Moraga, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14 April 2017

Homosexuality in Chechnya

The Kadyrov-regime, who is no more than a tame dog of Putin whose purpose is to sell the Russian occupation of Chechnya to the heroic Chechen masses, cracked down on the rights of homosexuals.

Homosexuality which was first made illegal in Chechnya by the Russian conquest in 1800 was legalized after the formation of the Soviet Union and its expansion to Chechnya's soil. It was later criminalized by Stalin.

The Stalin regime oppressed the whole working class and the poor peasants as well as all national minorities. It was also a vicious enemy of the Chechen people who suffered mass killings and deportation in 1944. This dictatorship was also an enemy of genuine revolutionary communism and as a result it killed several hundreds of thousands of honest revolutionaries – real Trotskyists or supposed ones – as well as of Trotsky himself.

Trotsky and his supporters in the Fourth International always fought for the consistent national liberation of the peoples of the Caucasus and of Central Asia. He stood for revolutionary internationalism and for the equality of all peoples and against Russian chauvinism.

The crackdown

Putin's dog Kadyrov has already encouraged the lynching of LGBT people "You cannot arrest or repress people who just don't exist in the republic," his spokesman said. "If such people existed in Chechnya, law enforcement would not have to worry about them since their own relatives would have sent them to where they could never return." (1)

Now Kadyrov's soldiers are now starting to systematically round up gay men and put them in what LGBT-activists in Russia call a concentration camp. More than 100 men ranging from 16 years to 50 years (2) have disappeared all over Chechnya, some of them might have been killed. There are numerous report about those men being tortured with electro-shocks and beatings to name other members of the gay community. (3)

Authentic revolutionaries fight against all types of oppression, because they are linked together and cannot be ended separately. This is true for the oppression of homosexuals as well as for the national oppression of the Chechen people as well as of the religious discrimination of Muslims in Russia and Europe and the exploitation of the workers and poor.

How to fight?

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) unconditionally defends the persecuted gay Chechens. Likewise, we fully support the liberation struggle of the Chechen people! (4) We have always stood with the Chechen people against Russian aggression. (5)

Kadyrov's soldiers, who are dogs that keep the Chechen wolf on the ground, help Russian imperialism by trying to draw attention away from the real issue – the Russian occupation and the economic misery of the Chechen workers and farmers! (6)

A fellow working-college once told me, and that is what we need to tell all those supposed proud "Chechen" soldiers of Kadyrov: "A real man doesn't beat those who are weak, he fights those who are powerful!"

Putin's imperialist Russia – and with its puppet regime of Kadyrov – is in a crisis. They need to throw sand in the eyes of the workers and poor so that they cannot see the real enemy, which are the rich and powerful. They want to direct the popular anger against the most vulnerable groups which are the homosexuals in Chechnya and the homosexuals and the Muslims in Russia!

We need to oppose this chauvinist plague, by showing the masses of the people that only solidarity, especially with the poorest and most oppressed people, will liberate all of us! The liberation of Chechnya will not be successful if it is not led by the workers and the poor peasants, it will not be successful as long as it doesn't break with patriarchal prejudices and "honor killings" (which are in fact lynching's of the most oppressed sectors of our class) and puts women, young people and homosexuals as equals in the liberation struggle. This doesn't mean a break with Chechen culture and tradition because the best elements of it will prevail and be mixed with the best ideas of humanism and socialism!

Down with the persecution of LGBT-people!

Down with Russian imperialism and its dog Kadyrov!

Support the liberation struggle of the Chechen people! For a free and red Chechnya!

(1) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/chechnya-gay-men-concentration-camps-torture-detain-nazi-ramzan-kadyrov-chechen-russia-region-a7677901.html>

(2) http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/deadly-anti-lgbt-crisis-unfolding-chechnya-1616551?utm_campaign=/deadly-anti-lgbt-crisis-unfolding-chechnya-1616551

(3) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4397118/Chechnya-opens-concentration-camp-homosexuals.html>

(4) <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/chechnya-solidarity-feb-2017/>

(5) <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/freedom-for-chechnya/>; See also Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice, chapter III. ii) 1994 until Today: The Uprising of the Chechen People against the Russian Occupation, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/rcit-party-building-iii/>

(6) <https://www.ft.com/content/8233d33c-ecd0-11e4-a81a-00144feab7de>

Free All Palestinian Political Prisoners!

Support the Demands of the Palestinian Freedom Fighters in Israeli Prisons!

Statement of the Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine), 21.4.2017

According to Palestinian activists, more than 1500 Palestinian political prisoners out of 65,000 political prisoners, began an open end hunger strike on April 17th (Israel claims that 1100 prisoners went on strike).

The hunger strike was led by Marwan Barghouti, a prominent political figure of Fatah movement. Polls have shown that Barghouti is the most popular choice to succeed Abbas, the Palestinian president. Barghouti was arrested in 2002 during the second Intifada and convicted in a political show-trial, on multiple counts of murder. Israel charged him with directing suicide bombings against its citizens and he was sentenced to five life terms.

The political prisoners demand: proper health treatment for sick prisoners, an end to the denial and cutbacks on family visits, and an end to administrative detention and solitary confinement. In addition, they demand the installment of a public pay phone.

In a moving letter published in the *New York Times*, Barghouti wrote: *"Israel has established a dual legal regime, a form of judicial apartheid, that provides virtual impunity for Israelis who commit crimes against Palestinians, while criminalizing Palestinian presence and resistance."* (1)

Since 2006, following the capture of Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier, by Hamas, the political prisoners have been held under even harsher conditions. As Barghouti described in the same letter:

"Israel has built nearly all of its prisons inside Israel rather than in the occupied territory. In doing so, it has unlawfully and forcibly transferred Palestinian civilians into captivity, and has used this situation to restrict family visits and to inflict suffering on prisoners through long transports under cruel conditions. It turned basic rights that should be guaranteed under international law — including some painfully secured through previous hunger strikes — into privileges its prison service decides to grant us or deprive us of. Palestinian prisoners and detainees have suffered from torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, and medical negligence. Some have been killed while in detention. According to the latest count from the Palestinian Prisoners Club, about 200 Palestinian prisoners have died since 1967."

Because of such actions Palestinian prisoners and their families also remain a primary target of Israel's policy of imposing collective punishments. (2)

Israel's Cynical Justification

Israel justifies the treatment of the Palestinians political prisoner on two grounds. The first one is that Hamas is cruel toward Israeli captives - dead or alive. For example, it complains that: *"Hamas has rejected an Israeli offer to free 18 Palestinians and hand over 19 bodies seized during the 2014 war in Gaza in exchange for the bodies of two IDF soldiers who died in the 50-day conflict, and two other Israelis that crossed the border to Gaza. One of them is mentally ill. Israel's chief negotiator Lior Lotan said."* (3) He added that Hamas demanded to free other prisoners as well for this exchange.

What he did not tell us is that Israel has arrested even Hamas members of parliament. A parliament that has not been convened for over 10 years as part of Israeli pressure tactics on Hamas.

In an interview with Al-Monitor, a senior Hamas official in Gaza who is involved in the prisoner issue said that: *"the details published to date are "disinformation." For about a year, he said, all contacts on the issue have been deadlocked, because of one condition that Hamas considers essential to any deal. We are steadfast in our demand for the release of the 54 Shalit deal detainees. Without that, there is nothing to talk about and no way to proceed,"* the official declared. The detainees were released as part of the 2011 exchange for the IDF soldier Gilad Shalit but rearrested after the abduction and murder of three Israeli teens in the Etzion settlement bloc in 2014. (4)

Secondly, that the Palestinian political prisoners are "terrorists with blood on their hands". However, the Zionists are the last ones who can claim that the Palestinians have blood on their hands. In addition to the ethnic cleansing of 1948 resulted in the removal between 750,000-900,000 Palestinians and the over 30 massacres carried out by the Zionist armed forces, since the formation of Israel at least 10,000 civilians Palestinians were killed by Israel. Since 1967 around 800,000 Palestinians have been in prisons.

According to the BBC between July 8th and August 27th, 2014, more than 2,100 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip, along with 66 Israeli soldiers and seven Israeli civilians. The UN says the vast majority of Palestinian casualties are civilians. But figures from previous operations over the past six years in the densely populated Gaza Strip show it is not the first time civilians have paid a heavy price. The UN says at least 2,104 Palestinian died, including 1,462 civilians, of whom 495 were children and 253 women.

However, according to the Israeli government, Israel killed 1000 terrorists. Thus, for Israel unarmed children and women are in fact terrorists. (5)

Israel tries to suppress the Hunger Strike

The kind of judicial apartheid that Barghouti wrote about was demonstrated in the trial of sergeant Azaria who received 18 months for the cold blooded murder of an injured Palestinian.

Many thousands of Palestinians demonstrated in the West Bank and Gaza in support of the strike. 11 were injured by the Israeli army shootings.

"At a rally marking the annual Palestinian "Prisoner's Day" in the West Bank, Abbas sent his support to the hunger-strikers and said Israel was being "stubborn" for refusing to "accept the just humanitarian demands of the prisoners."

According to the Ynet news website, Abbas made no mention of the strike's initiator and leader Marwan Barghouti. Some Palestinian officials have attributed Barghouti's call for the strike to an attempt to send a message to the Fatah leadership and Abbas, who excluded Barghouti's people

from a recent Central Committee meeting and didn't give Barghouti the position of deputy chair to the PA. (6)

This may explain why the supporters of Abbas in the prisons have not joined the strike so far.

While for the Zionists Barghouti and the other Palestinian political prisoners are dangerous criminals, for the Palestinians and all who oppose the systematic repression of the Palestinians by Israel, the so called "security prisoners" and "terrorists" are freedom fighters against national oppression.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine fully supports the hunger strike. We oppose the Israeli government that is trying to smash the hunger strike by various methods including the isolation of Barghouti for two "offenses". The first one for going on hunger strike and the second one for expressing his views in the *New York Times*.

Israeli Minister of Public Security, Gilad Erdan, has threatened to deny prisoners on hunger strike access to standard hospitals in an attempt to thwart the strike and block popular solidarity in Palestine '48. Instead, he has ordered the creation of a "field hospital" in the Negev desert prison, planning for the transfer of hunger strikers, and potentially threatening hunger strikers with forced feeding.

At the same time Fadwa Barghouthi, Palestinian lawyer and the wife of Marwan Barghouthi, urged solidarity for the prisoners' demands and their hunger strike. A number of Palestinian organizations and institutions have organized events for *Palestinian Prisoners' Day* and the coming weeks. (7)

The Palestinian political prisoners are freedom fighters, not different from the black political prisoners in South Af-

rica during the Apartheid regime. Not different from the known Black Panther prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal.

An Analogy: The Heroic Uprising in the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw

77 years ago, during World War II another group of freedom fighters stood up against oppression. At that time it was a group of Jews. They were also considered by the (German) state authorities to be criminals "with blood on their hands". Israel is not Nazi Germany, but it is an oppressive state, as it was recognized by Marek Edelman (1919-2009) a leader of this Jewish group.

World War II was the continuation of the World War I. The root cause of these wars was the contradiction between a world economy and the existence of imperialist powers struggling to control the world economy. Germany that had developed industry was in need of colonies but these colonies were controlled by the so called "democratic states", Great Britain, France and USA.

The only major power that was not an imperialist state was Stalinist Russia where the counter revolutionary bureaucracy removed the working class from the political power by a political counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin.

In the 1932 elections the Nazis won 33 percent of the votes, more than any single party. The Social Democrats (SPD) and the German Communist party together had more votes but they were unable to form a united front. In January 1933 Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany.

Between 1933 and 1939 the interest of the ruling classes in the western states was to turn Hitler against the Soviet Union and for this reason, for example, the 1936 Olym-

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South

Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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

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*



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

pic Games were held in Berlin. For this reason the policy of the “non intervention” during the Spanish civil war helped Franco that was supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

At the same time, in countries like Britain, to volunteer to fight against Franco was considered a crime. In Palestine the Communist party organized 300 Jews and Arabs to the International Brigades. The Zionists not only opposed them but were busy in stealing Arab lands in what was known as the Tower and Stockade operation during the 1936–39 Arab revolt.

All the enemies of the working class revolutionary wave, which Spain was the last part of, united to prevent and smash the revolution. A similar event has been taking place in Syria in the last six years.

Around 100 million people died in WWII, most victims were civilians, among them millions of Jews. Shortly after Nazi Germany’s invasion of Poland, in September 1939, more than 400,000 Jews in Warsaw were confined to a small part of the city. This ghetto was sealed off by brick walls, barbed wire and armed guards, and anyone caught leaving the Ghetto was shot on sight. The Nazis controlled the amount of food that was brought into the ghetto. It is similar to the Ghetto in Gaza.

In 1942 the Nazis began the “Final solution”- the systematic killing of the Jews. Heinrich Himmler the head of the Nazi paramilitary corps, the SS, ordered that Jews be sent to extermination camps. In September 1942 some 265,000 Jews had been deported from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Between 55,000 to 60,000 Jews remained in the Warsaw ghetto, and small groups formed underground self-defense units. The larger one was the Jewish Combat Organization, or ZOB, which managed to smuggle in a limited supply of weapons from anti-Nazi Poles. It was a united

front of Anti Zionist and left wing Zionists. There was another military anti-Nazi smaller organization the ZZB was formed by the right wing Revisionists.

The ZOB received their weapons from the Communist underground while the ZZB received their weapons from the Nationalist Polish Home Army. The Zionists in Palestine did not provide even one bullet. They kept their weapons and ammunition for the Arabs.

A few Jewish fighters survived, one of them was Marek Edelman who was one of the leaders of the ZOB. After the war he remained in Poland. In August 2002, he intervened in Israel’s show trial of the now jailed Palestinian resistance leader, Marwan Barghouti. He wrote a letter of solidarity to the Palestinian movement, and though he criticized the suicide bombers, its tone infuriated the Israeli government and its press. Edelman had always resented Israel’s claim on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising as a symbol of Jewish liberation. Now he said this belonged to the Palestinians.

He addressed his letter to the Palestinian ZOB, “*commanders of the Palestinian military, paramilitary and partisan operations – to all the soldiers of the Palestinian fighting organizations*”. The old Jewish anti-Nazi ghetto fighter had placed his immense moral authority at the disposal of the only side he deemed worthy of it. (8)

Footnotes:

- (1) <https://goo.gl/dTKPzJ>
- (2) *ibid*
- (3) <https://goo.gl/WXCF6j>
- (4) <https://goo.gl/qQeqIh>
- (5) <https://goo.gl/PLCZTn>
- (6) <https://goo.gl/sF9Stj>
- (7) <https://goo.gl/RBtmQT>
- (8) <https://goo.gl/idsDoz>

Books 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.

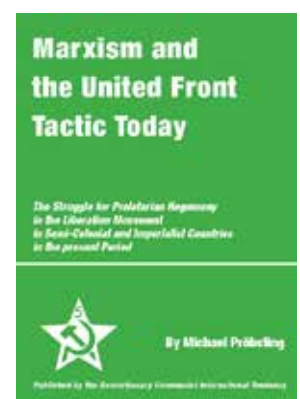
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

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.



Syria: Was the Chemical Attack a “False Flag” Operation?

Let’s make Syria the graveyard for Assad, Putin and Trump! Victory to the Revolution!

By Johannes Moraga, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14 April 2017

There is tremendous confusion within the international movement of the workers and oppressed about the current situation in Syria. A big part of the “radical” left – mostly the Stalinists and their followers – openly and more or less uncritically backs the Assad dictatorship. This goes hand in hand with their pro-imperialist adaptation towards Putin’s Russia as an alleged counterweight against US imperialism (or, more generally, western imperialism). This position has created a situation whereby many Syrian revolutionaries are hostile towards revolutionary communism, because they (wrongly but understandably) associate it with Stalinism, oppression and pro-Assad counterrevolution. This confusion about the Syrian revolution also affects a number of more orthodox Marxist groups who do not support the Syrian masses in their struggle against Assad, but who instead take an abstentionist position on Syria (1).

Since the first days of the Syrian revolution, the Assad regime and its international friends have told lie after lie about the Syrian rebels. For example, all of them were trained and equipped by the CIA and are under direct control of the US. We don’t deny that the US tried to buy some influence among the rebels, but their support for the Syrian revolution was mostly rhetorical; the handful of rebels they were able to train and equip were not loyal agents but deserted to the ranks of various Islamist groups (who despise the US, and which the Americans have listed as “terrorist organizations.” (2) In addition, the US has and still bombs a number of Islamist rebels and has even killed the leadership of *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* (3).

For a week now, the pro-Assad camp has been hysterically screaming about Trump’s missile strike on one of the airbases of the Syrian Army, an act which should be opposed by all revolutionaries – just like any other imperialist intervention. (4)

However, it is important to bear in mind that this missile strike killed only a small number of ordinary soldiers and didn’t even destroy the runway of the airfield. A day after the missile strike, Assad’s terrorist air force could continue to use this air base for targeting civilians and carpet bombing districts of the workers and poor in Aleppo, Hama, or Idlib. The air strikes of the US, which were directed not only against IS/Daesh but also against a number of other rebel groups, mainly *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* but also *Ahrar al-Sham*, killed far more soldiers, including a number of senior officers. (5)

The chemical attack: a “false flag” operation?

Following the US missile strike against the Syrian air base, the pro-Assad camp has been claiming that the chemical gas massacre at Khan Shaykhun which became the alleged pretext for Trump’s attack was in fact caused by one of two scenarios:

(1) The chemical gas which resulted in the civilian deaths in Khan Shaykhun was actually produced by the rebels

and was released after being hit by bombing of the Syrian Air Force (which is also what Russia has claimed);

(2) Or, the chemical gas sent to the rebels by the US (or Turkey), with the intention that the rebels use it against their own people in a “false flag operation” thereby providing the US with justification for attacking Syria.

Sadly, the (justified) mistrust of the western capitalist media by a number of leftists is so developed that they are willing to believe any crazy conspiracy theory so long as it was presented to them by Moscow or Assad. But let’s be more serious and closely examine the two scenarios.

At the time of the deadly gas attack, the town of Khan Shaykhun was held by *Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham* (HTS) (6) which is a united front of various petty-bourgeois Islamist organizations (*Jabhat Fateh al-Sham*, *Harakat Nur al-Din al-Zanki*, *Liwa al-Haqq*, *Ansar al-Din* and *Jaysh al-Sunnah*). (7) Only in mid-February was Khan Shaykhun captured by these forces from *Liwa al-Aqsa* (a group closely aligned with IS/Daesh) following heavy fighting and the town remains quite close to the front (less than 15 km). This being so, why should HTS, which has never used chemical weapons against Assad’s army of terror, select this town, which is still relatively vulnerable to enemy attack and only just recently captured, as a site to start producing sarin gas, a process which is extremely complicated?!

IS/Daesh, which has in fact used mustard gas shells (8), a much less effective weapon but one easier to produce, certainly has no ethical problems about producing sarin gas. However, it does face a technical problem. Nevertheless, Daesh/IS is much better quipped, controls a much larger area, has many more experts (including former Baathist officers of the Iraqi army who *have* used chemical weapons to slaughter civilians), and therefore is much more capable of producing chemical weapons than HTS. In addition, HTS, which may have up to 40,000 fighters, is not a homogenous organization like IS/Daesh, but much more of a united front of several Islamist militias, one that was very complicated for *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* to create. How exactly are these different militias, linked as they are to the poor masses, supposed to have agreed to use chemical gas against their own population? This is an extremely unlikely scenario!

Furthermore, sarin gas is stored as two separate components (9), one of which is highly flammable. So if an air strike against the HTS rebels was responsible for inadvertently releasing the deadly gas, as proponents (like Russia) of the first theory cited above propose, it is far more likely that the initial explosions would have destroyed a necessary component for producing the gas, and that any resulting byproduct would not have been particularly potent against the civilian population.

Beyond these technical problems, we have to ask the pro-Assad supporters exactly how they explain the following conundrum: If – as they claim – it is always the rebels who are responsible for all chemical weapon attacks, why don’t the latter ever use this powerful weapon against the Assad

forces, instead of against their own people?! Which fighting force on earth doesn't use a powerful weapon at its disposal against its enemy, but only against its own supporters?! Such logic demonstrates, once again, how absurd is the blame heaped by the Assad regime on the rebels for perpetrating chemical weapon attacks!

Let's now deal with the second theory cited above. Is it plausible that Turkey delivered chemical weapons to Syrian rebels in an attempt to provide the US with a pretext for bombing Assad? Well, Turkey does consider *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham*, which contributes more than 50% of the HTS, to be a "terrorist organization." (10) If Turkey were to participate in staging a "false flag operation," how and why would they do this with a group that they obviously don't trust? Why didn't they instead use the FSA or one of their "Turkmen brigades"? Furthermore, why would they decide to stage such an operation in the extreme south of the province of Idlib, less than 15 km from the Assadist troops, and not in the north, far closer to their own military lines? Why would they make the effort to transport sarin gas to the south of Idlib, where it would have to pass a number of rebel checkpoints of different brigades and militias? Recall, these various forces hate and distrust one another so much that on numerous occasions they have fought among themselves and they couldn't even agree on how to collaborate when Aleppo, the capital of the revolution, was being besieged by Russia and the butcher Assad, only to fall into the hands of the latter? Such a notion is simply unfathomable!

Trump's missile strike

Realizing the absurdity of the two above theories, the pro-Assad camp now decides to play their so-called "Trump card"! They scream at us: "Just look, who this attack helps? It certainly doesn't help Assad, but it does help the US and their CIA-backed-rebels!" If the US did in fact launch a "false flag operation," like they have done in the past (just take, for example, the *Gulf of Tonkin* incident which purportedly gave the Americans the pretext to start bombing North Vietnam and commence its large scale intervention of South Vietnam), we would assume that there is an actual plan that they want to implement following such a "false flag operation." However, after launching 59 tomahawk cruise missiles (which together cost \$70 million), of which only 23 hit the targeted Syrian airbase, and killing only 7 or 9 Syrian soldiers (11) while destroying 9 planes, only to be followed up with absolutely nothing; this is no plan which required a complicated false flag operation involving huge risks to being exposed! Rather, this is just a slap on Assad's fingers warning him not to use chemical weapons again.

But why should the US even care if Assad uses chemical weapons? Of course, as revolutionaries we know that US imperialism never cares about the death of non-combatant civilians or chemical weapons, per se. They certainly didn't care when Saddam Hussein used such weapons against Kurds at Helebce or against the Iranian masses in the 1980-1988 war!

The real issue in Syria is that the US and EU imperialism don't want Assad because he is the servant of Russian imperialism, and that the use of such chemical weapons only strengthens the conviction of the Syrian masses not to

end the war to topple the regime. However, the goal of the US (and European) imperialists is to liquidate the revolution and pacify the country by dividing it into different spheres of interest controlled by the different imperialist Great Powers and their local lackeys.

Assad, on the other hand, wants to go forward with his "military solution" of the conflict. That means he wants to seize as much territory as possible, while at the same time also driving out – in fact ethnically cleansing – as many of the rebellious Syrian masses as possible. To achieve this goal Assad is determined to terrorize the mostly Sunni population of Syria, which is loyal to the revolution, and cause them to flee from his army even before it captures particular a town or city. Assad and Russian imperialism want to displace as many people as possible and drive them into neighboring Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan, because just as was the case with the Palestinian refugees, they plan not to let them return to their country after the war.

For an international solidarity campaign!

What the Syrian Revolution indeed needs is international support – but not by the Western imperialist Great Powers and their local allies (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) who are amenable to making a deal with Assad, and who only want to subordinate the Syrian masses and carve up the country!

Rather, what is needed is an international solidarity campaign of the workers and oppressed masses of the region, but also of Russia, Iran and Europe as well as the US! We need to organize practical help for the revolutionary masses in Syria and sabotage the war machine of Assad, Russian imperialism, the Iranian dictatorship, as well as of the EU and the US.

Victory to the Syrian Revolution – Let's make it the graveyard for Assad, Putin and Trump!

Footnotes

(1) See on this, e.g., Michael Pröbsting: Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified? An essay on the organs of popular power in the liberated area of Syria, on the character of the different sectors of the Syrian rebels, and on the failure of those leftists who deserted the Syrian Revolution <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>

(2) <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/201759.htm>

(3) <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/News/2017/1/3/Rare-US-strike-kills-Syrias-Fatah-al-Sham-leadership>

(4) See on this, e.g., RCIT: Syria: No to Trump's Missiles Strike! Drive all Great Powers out of Syria! Victory to the Syrian Revolution! 7 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/us-air-strike-in-syria/>

(5) http://edition.cnn.com/2014/11/06/world/meast/syria-crisis/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

(6) <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/jund-al-aqsa-completely-besieged-rival-rebel-factions-around-two-towns-idlib/>

(7) <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/01/al-qaeda-and-allies-announce-new-entity-in-syria.php>

(8) <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-chemicalweapons-idUSKCN0VO1IC>

(9) https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/middleeast/sarin-nerve-agent.html?_r=0

(10) <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/01/26/Turkey-identifies-ISIS-Jabhat-Fateh-al-Sham-as-terrorist-organizations-.html>

(11) <http://www.syriaahr.com/en/?p=64621>

Syria: No to Trump's Missiles Strike!

Drive all Great Powers out of Syria! Victory to the Syrian Revolution!

Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 7 April 2017

1. Last night, the US President Donald Trump ordered 59 Tomahawk missiles to be fired against the Shayrat airfield in Homs province which is under the control of the Assad forces. According to reports, up to 7 Syrian soldiers and civilians have been killed, 20 war planes were destroyed and the air field was damaged.

2. This is an evident foreign policy maneuver by an administration which is desperately trying to distract attention from its highly unstable and increasingly discredited political situation. This attack is an attempt to signal to the world that *"the US is doing something"* in face of the barbarous chemical weapons attack by Assad on 4 April. The symbolic character of this attack is further demonstrated by the fact that the White House informed Russia (and hence Assad) of the attack in advance. According to an official statement by Pentagon Spokesman Captain Jeff Davis, *"Russian forces were notified in advance of the strike using the established deconfliction line. U.S. military planners took precautions to minimize risk to Russian or Syrian personnel located at the airfield."*

3. Furthermore, leading figures in the Pentagon have already made clear that this attack is not the beginning of a military offensive by the US but rather a one-off event. The US is rapping Assad over the knuckles to get his agreement for a settlement of the Syrian civil war in the interest of the great powers.

4. More importantly, leading representatives of the US Administration have made clear that it will not change its strategy in Syria. This strategy is characterized by a desire to liquidate the Syrian Revolution and to destroy all forces who oppose a settlement of the civil war in the interest of the Great Powers.

5. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) unconditionally opposes the US air strike as we oppose the hundreds of Russian air strikes which have already killed thousands of people. The Syrian Revolution has nothing to gain if a big mass murderer is symbolically "punishing" the mass murderer of a small country.

6. Likewise, the RCIT reject the demand for a UN no-flight zone. This would only put the air control of Syria in the hands of the imperialist Great Powers. However, these powers have proven in the past that they are hostile to the Syrian Revolution!

7. Any great power interference in Syria – be it by Russia or the US – must be condemned as it can only do harm to the Syrian people. No one has forgotten that Russia itself claimed in December 2016 to have launched 71,000 airstrikes which were supposed to have eliminated 35,000 "terrorists" (in fact mostly civilians and rebels; <https://southfront.org/russian-warplanes-eliminate-35000-terrorists-in-syria/>). Likewise, US General Nagata announced on 5 April 2017 that the US-led coalition killed "probably close to 70,000" people in Iraq and Syria (<https://isis.liveuamap.com/en/2017/5-april-number-of-isis-fighters-killed-by-coalition-in-iraq>) Putting the fate of the Syrian people in the hands of these imperialist mass murderers can only have disastrous consequences for the Syrian people! We

therefore condemn the support given to the US attack by the *Syrian National Coalition* and FSA leadership.

8. We can expect various hysterical statements by the pro-Assadist "left" condemning the US air strike. Socialists and honest democrats will have only contempt for these Stalinists and Castro-Chavistas who are social-imperialist supporters of Russia and China! These people have not raised a single protest when Russia was killing tens of thousands of people in Syria. Neither do they express opposition when US imperialism kills 70,000 people in Syria and Iraq. However, they are outraged if the US bomb one of Assad's air field. These people are not anti-imperialists but supporters of the reactionary Assad dictatorship as well as of imperialist Russia under the cloak of "anti-imperialism"!

9. The RCIT has stated in numerous documents that we are living in a period of historic crisis of capitalism in which the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – US, EU, Japan, Russia and China – inevitable accelerates. Therefore, one cannot exclude the possibility that this inter-imperialist rivalry could push the Great Powers – against their current intentions – into a qualitatively more serious conflict over Syria. Theoretically this could lead to a situation where both sides in the Syrian civil war become proxies for one of the imperialist camps. However, such a theoretical possibility does not correspond to the reality of the Syrian Revolution today. Revolutionaries deduce their tactics from the concrete reality of the present class struggle and not from theoretical possibilities of the future.

10. We repeat that the only way forward for the Syrian Revolution is to create popular councils and militias which are under the control of the workers and poor peasants and to fight for a workers and peasant republic. We call for an international movement of the working class in solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. While the RCIT sharply opposes US attacks, we highlight the hypocrisy of US rhetoric of human rights when they refuse any support for the Syrian liberation struggle by the refusal to send weapons to the Syrian rebels so that they can defend themselves against Assad's murderous air force and modern tanks.

** Stop the US and Russia's intervention in Syria! Drive all Great Powers out of Syria!*

** Down with the Assad regime! Victory to the Syrian Revolution!*

** The international worker's movement must support the liberation struggle of the Syrian people!*

International Secretariat of the RCIT

Down with the Assad Tyranny! Victory to the Syrian Revolution! For a Workers and Peasants Republic!

Draft Platform of Syrian Revolutionaries in Political Solidarity with the RCIT, April 2017

We call all revolutionaries to unite on the following platform and to fight for these goals together with our international comrades of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT):

* *Smash the Assad tyranny! Victory to the Syrian Revolution! Continue the Support for the popular struggle against the dictatorship!*

* *No trust in and no collaboration with any imperialist Great Power (like Russia, US, EU, China) nor with the governments of any of the regional powers (like Iran, Turkey, Saudi-Arabia)! Fight against all imperialist interventions!*

* *Down with all dictatorships and reactionary regimes in the Middle East! Solidarity with the popular resistance fighting for freedom!*

* *No to sectarianism! We want a society which respects the opinion of everyone on religion as his or her personal issue!*

* *Down with the counter-revolutionary Daesh!*

* *For multi-religious and multi-national unity in the struggle against the Assad dictatorship! For full national self-determination for all national and ethnic minorities!*

* *No trust in the official rebel leaderships – neither the pro-Western FSA nor the various types of Islamists! However, despite our sharp criticism of these leaderships we unconditionally support the ongoing struggle against the Assad regime led by these forces!*

* *For the formation of popular councils and popular militias!*

* *For a Workers and Peasants Republic in Syria! Spread the revolution to the whole Arab world and the Middle East!*

* *The international workers movement must rally to support the Syrian Revolution! For a workers aid campaign for the Syrian people – as it was done in solidarity with the Bosnian people in 1992-95!*

* *The international workers movement must organize a campaign to boycott the regime of Bashar al-Assad and his capitalist business friends! For workers actions against the imperialist forces attacking the Syrian people!*

* *Open the Borders for the Syrian Refugees! Down with racism and Islamophobia in Europe!*

* *Most of all: For the building of a revolutionary party in Syria as part of a new revolutionary International!*

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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

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

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

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

25 years.

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

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

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

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



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

Report: Rally against Assad's Genocidal Attack on Idlib (Syria)

After the Call to "Ignite the Fronts" in Syria – Let us organize international solidarity!

Report (with pictures and video) on a rally in Vienna on the 05th April 2017 by the Austrian Section of the RCIT, 7.04.2017

Assad, once again, butchered the Syrian people. While in 2013 he told the world to destroy every chemical weapons he had, today the revolutionaries still have to suffer horrible massacres by the regime. From the very beginning of the Syrian Revolution we stood on the side of the fighting forces against the dictatorship. Given the urgent need of victory for the revolutionaries, our international tendency - the RCIT - has called upon all sincere progressive activists to answer our call to protest against the massacre in Idlib! (1)

The Austrian section of the RCIT joined a rally of the Syrian community in Vienna on 5 April. It was a spontaneous reaction of outcry against the counter-revolutionary attacks of Assad and Russia as well as the hypocrisy of the West. The spirited atmosphere with about 150 people participating showed that the activists for the Syrian Revolution are still ready to continue the struggle. Comrade Michael Pröbsting, the International Secretary of the RCIT, delivered a speech which was cheered by the crowd:

"Two days ago the American ambassador told before the UN literally: 'The removal of Assad is no priority for us.' The truth is: the Great Powers – Russia, USA and Europe – work together, for Assad and against the Syrian Revolution!" emphasized comrade Michael. He stressed, that after the call to "ignite the fronts" in Syria, the resistance movements now needs international solidarity more than ever. In Europe, we need to organize movements to support the Syrian Revolution and to end the reactionary policy of the Great Powers.

After this massacre, we need to unite more than ever against the Assad regime and the reactionary Great Powers! The workers and peasants can only win when they independently organize themselves to overthrow Assad! Victory to the Syrian Revolution!

(1) Out on the Streets to Protest against the Chemical Weapons Massacre by the Assad Regime! 5th April 2017 www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/cw-massacre-in-idlib/

View pictures of the rally below

A video of the speech of Michael Pröbsting can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRu-Ubdz7MQ>

The Austrian state TV published a brief report about the rally which can be viewed here: <http://tvthek.orf.at/profile/ZIB-Magazin/5521881/ZIB-Magazin/13925250/Verursacher-des-Giftgasangriffs-unklar/14023284> (Minute 1:50-2:21)

Another video report about the rally has been published by the Syrian-Palestinian journalist Ahmed Morad on his Facebook page "Be With Me A Reporter": <https://www.facebook.com/BWMAR/videos/1303271016416360/>

Reports and excerpts of an interview with Michael Pröbsting have been published by several Turkish media outlets: <http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/idlibdeki-katliam-viyanada-protesto-edildi-2639121/>; <http://www.aksam.com.tr/dunya/idlibdeki-katliam-viyanada-protesto-edildi/haber-611909/>; <http://www.yenihaberden.com/avusturyada-idlib-protestosu-281093h.htm>;



Rally in Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution in Vienna on 6.4.2017

Press Conference on Assad's Chemical Weapons Attack and the US Air Strike

Report (with video) on a press conference of the Syrian Community and the Austrian Section of the RCIT on 7.4.2017 in Vienna

Today the group "Free Syrians in Austria" and the Austrian Section of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) held a press conference in Vienna. The "Free Syrians in Austria" were represented by Dr. Haysam Hamoui and Mag. Badran Farwati while Michael Pröbsting spoke as the International Secretary of the RCIT. The moderator of the conference was Marek Hangler, spokesperson of the Austrian section of the RCIT. The press conference was well attended by several representatives of Austrian, Syrian, Egyptian and Chechen media outlets.

All speakers denounced Assad's genocidal war against the Syrian people. They also stressed the necessity to continue the struggle for the overthrow of the Assad regime.

Michael Pröbsting emphasized the support by the RCIT for the Syrian Revolution since its beginning in 2011.

Faced with the endless terror by Assad's and Russia's air force the representatives of the "Free Syrians in Austria" stated their demand for a UN no-flight zone. While they are aware that Trump ordered the air strike not out of sympathy for the Syrian people but rather by geo-strategic calculations, they expressed satisfaction that Assad suffered a military strike.

In opposite to this view, Michael Pröbsting stated that the RCIT unconditionally opposes the US air strike – as we oppose the hundreds of Russian air strikes which have already killed thousands of people. Likewise, we reject any demand for a UN no-flight zone. Michael Pröbsting said that all Great Powers interference in Syria – be it by Russia or the US – must be condemned as it can do only harm to the Syrian people. The RCIT calls for an international movement of the working class in solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. If any state wants to support the liberation struggle of the Syrian people it should send modern weapons to the Syrian rebels so that they can defend themselves against Assad's murderous air force and modern tanks.

A video of the complete conference has been published by the Syrian-Palestinian journalist Ahmed Morad on his Facebook page "Be With Me A Reporter". It can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/BWMAR/videos/1305124079564387/>

Another report has been published here: <http://o-ton.at/component/mfoton/5968?view=content>



Top: Michael Pröbsting (l.) and Johannes Moraga (r.), both spokespersons of the RCIT, give interviews to the media at a rally for the Syrian Revolution
Below: Marek Hangler (l.) spokesperson of the RCIT Austria, Badran Farwati (m.) and Haysam Hamoui (r.) at a press conference

Out on the Streets to Protest against the Chemical Weapons Massacre by the Assad Regime!

Call by the International Secretariat of the RCIT, 5 April 2017

The tyrannical Assad regime has committed another massacre against the Syrian people. Yesterday, the Syrian Air Force barbarically attacked Khan Sheikhoun – a town in the liberated province of Idlib – with chemical weapons. According to the *Union of Medical Care Organizations* this attack has caused the death of at least 100 people, among them numerous women and children, with more than 300 wounded.

This obscene tragedy demonstrates once more the barbaric character of Assad's genocidal war against the Syrian people! And it also shows once more the desperate need for the international workers movement to rally in support for the ongoing liberation struggle of the Syrian people. What a scandalous cynicism that many so-called "socialists" – in reality Stalinists and Castro-Chavistas – continue to support the mass murderer Assad and his master Putin in the name of "anti-imperialism"! What a shame that many other socialists fail to defend the Syrian Revolution but take a neutral, abstentionist position in this war between freedom and tyranny!

The governments of the US and the EU, once more, cynically shed some tears about the Syrian victims. But everyone knows that the Western imperialist leaders are accomplices of the regime in Damascus and its imperialist backers in Moscow. It is only two days ago that Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the UN, publicly stated that replacing Assad is "no priority for the US". In fact the imperialist Great Powers – Russia, the US and the EU – are secretly negotiating on an agreement to liquidate the Syrian Revolution and to carve up the country in different spheres of influences.

In reaction to the horrible massacre the Syrian rebels have called the fighters to "ignite the fronts". They are right so and they have our unconditional support in their efforts to destroy the barbaric war machinery of Assad, Iran, Hezbollah and the Russian imperialists!

However we must not let the heroic Syrian people and their fighters alone in their struggle for freedom! It is high time to mobilize a strong international solidarity movement to aid the Syrian people and their struggle for freedom. Such a campaign should also fight for open borders for Syrian refugees!

Finally, given the terrible lack of a revolutionary leadership, it is particularly urgent to build a revolutionary party in Syria and internationally. We call all those who want to support the Syrian Revolution to unite today on basis of several fundamental principles without which it is impossible to find a correct orientation. Such a platform should contain the following slogans:

** Smash the Assad tyranny! Victory to the Syrian Revolution! Continue the Support for the popular struggle against the dictatorship!*

** No trust in and no collaboration with any imperialist Great Power (like Russia, US, EU, China) nor with the governments of any of the regional powers (like Iran, Turkey, Saudi-Arabia)! Fight against all imperialist interventions!*

** Down with all dictatorships and reactionary regimes in the Middle East! Solidarity with the popular resistance fighting for freedom!*

** No to sectarianism! We want a society which respects the opinion of everyone on religion as his or her personal issue!*

** Down with the counter-revolutionary Daesh!*

** For multi-religious and multi-national unity in the struggle against the Assad dictatorship! For full national self-determination for all national and ethnic minorities!*

** No trust in the official rebel leaderships – neither the pro-Western FSA nor the various types of Islamists! However, despite our sharp criticism of these leaderships we unconditionally support the ongoing struggle against the Assad regime led by these forces!*

** For the formation of popular councils and popular militias!*

** For a Workers and Peasants Republic in Syria! Spread the revolution to the whole Arab world and the Middle East!*

** The international workers movement must rally to support the Syrian Revolution!*

** The international workers movement must organize a campaign to boycott the regime of Bashar al-Assad and his capitalist business friends! For workers actions against the imperialist forces attacking the Syrian people!*

** Open the Borders for the Syrian Refugees! Down with racism and Islamophobia in Europe!*

** Most of all: For the building of a revolutionary party in Syria as part of a new revolutionary International!*

Comunismo Revolucionario

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Raqqa: Defeat the US Imperialist Offensive!

An assessment of the US/SDF/YPG war against Daesh

By Yossi Schwartz, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, April 2017

These days the Kurdish-led *Syrian Democratic Forces* (SDF), backed by U.S. Coalition airstrikes, advance on Ar-Raqqa. They occupied the Ahmad Assad Silos located some 40km east of Raqqa city after clashing with the Islamic State organization.

The Ahmad Assad Silos are located outside of the Syrian Kurdish autonomy, known as Rojava. What should be the attitude of the supporters of the Syrian revolution to these events?

To answer this question it is necessary to examine all of the parties involved in the battle from the perspective of the international working class. (1)

The Kurds

The Kurds are an oppressed nation. As such, they have the right to self-determination, namely to set up their own state. Around 30 million Kurds live in the mountainous region of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Armenia. They are the fourth largest ethnic group in the region. They speak Kurdish, an Indo-European language, and are predominantly Sunni Muslims. Kurds have a distinct culture, traditional dress, and holidays, including Nowruz, the spring-time New Year festival that is also celebrated by Iranians and others who use the Persian calendar.

Syria's roughly 2 million Kurds live in several non-contiguous regions. Around 30% of the Syrian Kurdish population lives in the highlands northwest of Aleppo, known as Kurd Dagh (Mountain of the Kurds). The Ain al-Arab (Kobani) region, where the Euphrates enters Syrian territory, is home to roughly 10%, while 40% live in the northeastern half of the Jazeera Governorate. The rest are settled in urban neighborhoods around the country, such as the Hayy al-Akrad (Quarter of the Kurds) suburb of Damascus.

For the oppressed to win a right, it is necessary not only to fight for this right but to know how to win it. Clearly, the Kurds by themselves alone, like the Palestinians, cannot achieve their right to self determination. The struggle for a free Kurdistan, which means carving a new state out of lands currently controlled by Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran, cannot be won short of a revolution that is part of the Arab revolution.

Thus, the formation of a free Kurdistan requires the support of the Arab workers and poor peasantry. The Arab masses will not support such a formation unless they will consider the Kurds as brothers and sisters - not as a tool in the hands of the imperialists.

Needless to say, the enemies of the Arab revolution - the imperialists and their local servants - will do everything in their power to prevent a free Kurdistan for the same reason they have been fighting and destroying the region to prevent a successful Arab revolution.

Therefore, the interest of the Kurdish masses is to join forces with the Arab revolution and to fight for its victory. However, the Kurdish bourgeois and petit bourgeois time and again have joined the imperialists and the regional

powers: Turkey and Iran, instead of joining forces with the revolutionary struggle.

The Kurdish region has seen many invaders and conquerors: Ancient Persians, Alexander the Great, Muslim Arabs in the 7th Century, Seljuk Turks in the 11th Century, the Mongols in the 13th Century, the Ottoman Turks from the north in the 16th Century and most recently, the United States in its 2003 invasion of Iraq and the Russian and American imperialists in their current intervention in Syria.

In 1916, the British and French imperialists made a secret pact named the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the former territories of the Ottoman Middle East between themselves. The result of this agreement was the creation of five states: Lebanon and Syria under French control, while Palestine, Jordan and Iraq under British control.

The Treaty of Sevres provided for a referendum to decide the issue of the Kurdistan homeland. The Kurds were promised by the British an independent state if they wish for it. This treaty, however, was ignored and replaced by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne that gave the Anatolian peninsula to the new Turkish Republic, including the Kurdistan homeland in Turkey. Following the Treaty of Lausanne the Kurdish territory was partitioned between Turkey, the French mandate of Syria, the British mandate of Iraq, and Persia.

The Kurdish parties in Iraq and their contradictory role

Following the 1968 Baath coup in Iraq, the regime in Baghdad and Barzani the leader of the *Kurdish Democratic Party* (KDP) in Iraq, agreed in 1970 on an autonomy plan to be implemented within four years. A group in the Barzani camp, describing themselves as Marxist-Leninist (i.e. Stalinists), formed the *Kurdistan Toilers' League* (KTL, or Komala).

Baghdad stalled on the promised autonomy, making Barzani increasingly receptive to US, Israeli and Iranian (at that time of the Shah) offers of support should the KDP take up arms again against Baghdad. Relying on the imperialists once again has led to a disaster. In 1974, Baghdad unilaterally decreed a Kurdish autonomous region on its terms and launched a military offensive against the KDP. Iran of the Shah and Washington ended their support for the KDP in March 1975, following an agreement between Baghdad and Tehran. Thousands of *peshmerga*, Kurdish armed forces, surrendered to Iraqi forces, while 100,000 to 200,000 *peshmerga* and their families and supporters fled, mostly to Iran.

The KTL and other lower middle class leftists joined Jalal Talabani, a leading Barzani critic within the KDP political bureau, and they formed the petit bourgeois *Patriotic Union of Kurdistan* (PUK) in June 1975.

In Syria, Assad the father, sponsored the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) of Turkey in the early 1980s. After relocating to Damascus, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, publicly

condemned the fight for Kurdish national rights in Syria and echoed the Assad regime's claim that most Syrian Kurds are not native to Syria. (2)

During the 1980s war between Iraq and Iran the Kurdish parties in Iraq collaborated against Saddam Hussein. The KDP was supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 1986 the Iraqi regime reacted by a genocidal campaign, known as *Al-Anfal*, aimed at crushing the Kurdish fighters and kill Kurdish civilians. An estimated 50,000–200,000 Kurds were killed.

In 1991 the US led coalition attacked Iraq. This was an imperialist war in which the defeat of US-led coalition was in the best interest of the international working class. The role of overthrowing the oppressive regime belongs to the working class and the Iraqi masses, not to the imperialists that helped Saddam Hussein take power in 1979.

In 1991 a revolutionary wave known as the *Sha'aban Intifada* began against the regime. The Kurdish parties led by Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani used the war and demanded an autonomy from Saddam Hussein. The peshmerga military forces (Kurdish for "those who face death") took control of Irbil and Sulaymaniyah and clashed with Saddam's army.

Defending the Kurds against the regime was the correct position to take as long as the *peshmerga* did not subordinate itself to the US led coalition. Under the protection of the US-led coalition the Iraqi KDP and PUK gained a status of unrecognized autonomy within one of the Iraqi no-fly zones, established by the coalition.

In the 1992 elections, that were held in the Kurdish autonomy, the KDP led by Barzani won 50.8% of the votes and the PUK led by Jalal Talabani won 49.2%. This led in 1994 to a civil war between the two parties. Some fighters of the PKK fled from Turkey to Iraq.

On March 1995, Turkey sent some 35,000 troops into northern Iraq in an attempt to wipe out the PKK. Iran opposed it while the US supported Turkey. The KDP also sided with Turkey, while the PUK joined Iran in denouncing Turkey.

Iran with the help of the PUK entered Northern Iraq which weakened the KDP. The KDP then made a deal with Saddam Hussein that permitted Barzani to retake Irbil from Talabani in August 1996. However, the PUK, with Iranian support, had regained all of its lost territories by the end of October 1996.

In 1998 the two parties signed the so called *Washington Accords*, but in reality, each party controlled part of the Kurdish Regional Government, KRG. In the 1990s civil war two to five thousand Kurds were killed. (3)

The peshmerga served the US-led coalition that ousted Saddam Hussein from power in 2003. They also helped capture Saddam Hussein as well as Al-Qaeda member Hassan Ghul, who provided the necessary intelligence which led to the assassination of Osama bin Laden. (4)

While it was necessary to overthrow the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein by a socialist revolution, joining forces with the imperialists against Iraq was a betrayal of the Iraqi people. The occupation of Iraq by the US-led coalition brought only more misery to the Iraqi masses. (5)

The PYD/YPG and the Syrian Revolution

After the Arab revolution began in Syria, for some years, the Syrian Kurdish petit bourgeoisie tried to play a neutral role between Assad's regime and the Syrian revolution. They acted to get control of as much territory as possible and benefited from the ongoing civil war.

The *Democratic Union Party* (PYD), affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), managed to become the dominant actor due to the influx of experienced PKK fighters that trained the Syrian Kurds. While Assad and the Syrian opposition fought over the rest of Syria, the PYD managed to consolidate its control over three Kurdish enclaves in northern Syria. The Kurdish region of Syria, a.k.a Rojava, is composed of three cantons: Afrin in the West, Kobane in the center, and Cizre in the East.

At the same time, the PYD has given up the demand for a Kurdish state. During 2012, a deal brokered by Iraqi Kurdistan's President Masoud Barzani, was struck between Turkey and the PYD. The PYD promised not to fight against Turkey, and not to help the PKK. With the transformation to a separate Syrian Kurdish rather than a national Kurdish organization, the PYD developed its own political and military chain of command, separated from its PKK roots.

Giving up the struggle for a nation state began already with the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan who abandoned the goal of an independent and united Kurdistan and proposed a Turkish "democratic republic". The honeymoon between Turkey and the PYD did not last for too many years. Turkey and the PYD relations broke down when



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

Turkish-PKK talks collapsed in July 2015, as Turkey and the PKK entered into conflict following two years of negotiations. This led to the current hostility between Ankara and the PYD.

The PYD's military wing – the *People's Protection Units* (YPG) – tends to support the American imperialists, however, some of them support the Russian imperialists: *"America's most effective ally on the ground in Syria is defecting to its chief adversary in the war against the Islamic State group, risking the very foundation of the U.S.-led effort to defeat the extremist network. At least some elements of the YPG, the militant arm of the main Kurdish political body in Syria, are now operating with the Russian military in support of the regime of Bashar Assad and his Iranian backers". Sen. John McCain, said: 'I'm confident it's not all the Kurds, but there is a segment that has aligned with the Russians because they want to win, and they see the Russians succeeding where we have failed,' McCain told a group of reporters last week. 'Now we are faced with a dilemma ... because they think that's the best way of winning.'"* (6)

The close relations of the YPG with the US imperialists create some tension between the US and Turkey. *"Ankara's threats to attack the nearby town of Manbij, held by U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces, prompted Washington to deploy new troops in the area to prevent Turkish advances. Turkey's Syrian allies have been fighting the Kurds around the town, reportedly with Turkish cover, raising the possibility of frictions with the Americans. At the same time, Turkish forces shelling Kurds hit Syrian government forces, whose patron Moscow reportedly has advisers in the area."* (7)

As long as the YPG fought to defend Kurdish territories it was correct to side with the YPG, but once the PYD has begun to participate in the imperialist plan of isolation and occupation of the Islamic State capital of Raqqa, as it is doing now, the PYD has subordinated itself to the imperialist war against the Syrian revolution. In such a conflict where the YPG acts in the service of American imperialism working class revolutionaries want to see the defeat of the imperialists and their servants even by a reactionary organization like ISIL.

ISIL is a rotten reactionary force, but the worst enemies of the Arab revolution are the imperialists and in any war

between the forces of ISIL and the imperialists backing the regimes in Syria and Iraq, the interest of the international working class is the defeat of the imperialists and the local forces they control. (8)

The reason is simple: the defeat of imperialism in a war is inspiring the oppressed masses to struggle against imperialism, while the victory of an imperialist force against nationalists or religious organization fighting imperialism is leading to demoralization of the masses. Additionally, when the imperialists win they put in power a brutal dictator who serves them better and oppresses the masses even more. (9)

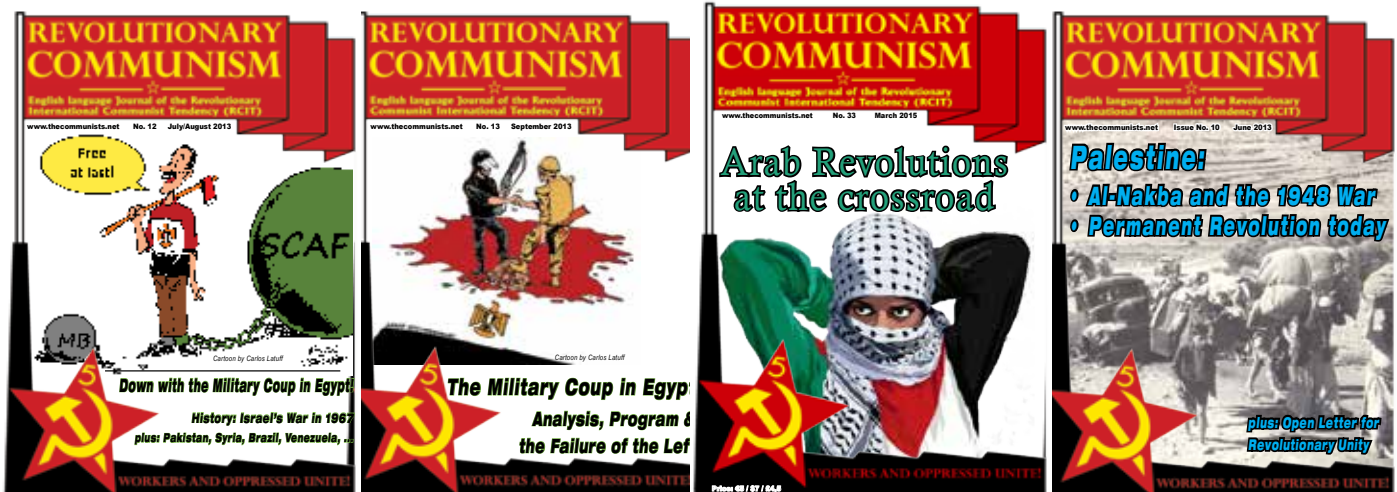
The Liberal Anarchist Nature of Rojava

In the last few years, many groups on the left have been praising the democratic nature of the Kurdish autonomy of Rojava (in Kurdish, 'the West') where the PYD movement is trying to implement 'libertarian municipalism', based on the ideas of American anarchist Murray Bookchin. The ideas of Bookchin were transmitted via the incarnation of Öcalan, the historic leader of the PKK, from a Stalinist of sort into a strange liberal anarchist. The anarcho-communist website LIBCOM has the following to say about this transformation:

"This Renaissance is supposed to be realized in three intertwined projects: democratic republic, democratic autonomy and democratic confederalism. The 'democratic republic' entails a reform of the Turkish state. Similar to the kind of statements Öcalan was making in the years before his arrest, the call is for Turkey to recognize the existence of minorities, especially the Kurds, among its population and to dissociate citizenship from the Turkish ethnicity. This theme is prominent in Öcalan's defenses for the court.

"Democratic autonomy is a concept borrowed from Murray Bookchin (1921 – 2006), a US libertarian socialist and theoretician. After a brief period as a Stalinist in his teenage years, Bookchin joined the Trotskyist movement in the late thirties and became a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Like many Trotskyists, Bookchin had expected the Second World War to end with a wave of social revolutions, led by the working class, in which Trotskyists would play important roles. When this did

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not happen, and the Trotskyist movement remained small and isolated, Bookchin started to reconsider his ideas. Bookchin gave up on Marxism, which in his eyes had made a fundamental mistake in seeing the working class as the revolutionary subject, but remained anti-capitalist.

"It was clear for him that capitalism was a destructive system that had to be abolished. Its weak point, Bookchin reasoned, was not the contradiction capital-labor, but the contradiction capital-ecology. Capital, endlessly accumulating, destroys the environment. The struggle to save the eco-system takes on an anti-capitalist character and can unite everybody who see their lives threatened by the deterioration of the natural environment and who rebel against their alienation from it.

"To construct an ecologically sustainable society, Bookchin suggested, cities would need to be de-centralized and scaled back to allow people to use renewable energy, grow food locally and cut expenditures of energy on transport. These smaller cities would be governed by assemblies of their populations who would democratically make decisions. Bookchin is often called an anarchist but he did not reject participation in elections and the existing political structures the way many anarchists do. Instead, he favored the combination of social movements and cooperatives that would pre-figure the future, society with participation in local city-councils to gain vested, legal political power." (10)

The Institute of Development Studies explains Bookchin's socioeconomic model: "Direct democratic participation entails the social administration of production and need determination as its corollary. Social administration of production requires a localized, decentralized economy, scaled down to 'human dimensions' (Bookchin 1982: 344), with various libertarian municipalities cooperating if they decide to do so.

"While decentralization enhances direct democratic participation it does not necessarily exclude the possibility of forms of local social hierarchy, and Bookchin is well aware of this. In any case, democratic processes might generate hierarchies as well. That is why he proposes a confederation of libertarian municipalities, in the final analysis, in the belief that a municipality that generated domination would be checked by others, besides internal democratic checks and balances (Biehl and Bookchin 1998: 108)." (11)

A close look at this so called direct democracy reveals not a very appealing regime:

"However, it is unhappily not enough to repeat the term democracy for the latter to function without hindrance. Because for the moment we are talking about a democracy without elections. If pluralism is lauded at the level of the different ethnic groups, its political dimension is rather absent. That the social contract designates the YPG as the armed forces of Rojava reflects the fact that the PYD is not inclined to share the control of the territories it leads. The imposition of the ideology of Öcalan is also visible at the level of education. All primary school teachers are obliged to undergo a training based on the texts of Öcalan and, in the canton of Jazira for examples, primary school books features the speeches of Öcalan and writings on the lives of PKK martyrs. But apart from these examples of imposition of an official ideology from a very young age (strangely resembling the experience of Kemalism) the authoritarian practices with respect to the other Kurdish parties and ethnic groups not accepting the domination of the PYD have been denounced many times." (12)

Anyone who is familiar with the Bolshevik revolution can recognize the similarity with Machno's regime that was based on the peasantry. A close look at the economy of Rojava reveals that it is mostly agricultural with very little industry. Under the Baath regime of the Assad clan, Rojava had to provide wheat for the whole of Syria and had to export oil in order to make foreign currency for Syria, nothing else.

70% of the budget is used for weapons, ammunition, logistics, and so on. Then the families of fallen fighters need to be supported if they no longer have an income. They are given land and they are accepted into cooperatives. There are also cooperatives being opened in craft and trade specifically for them. Finally, because of the embargo, petrol and wheat cannot be exported and the prices for commodities like vegetables and textiles are climbing.

The 1,500 oil wells of Rojava used to produce 400 barrels a day, which were refined in Homs. Now, only a tenth of this is being refined with primitive methods. There is an industrial area only in Heseke. There, they want to create 3,000 workplaces within two years. Apart from that, there is almost nothing.

During the war, Afrîn developed into a veritable center for textile production, since many firms moved there from war-torn Aleppo. Today, its 400 workshops count 17,000

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employees. They supply the whole of Syria. In the Kobanî and Cizîrê cantons there are only tailor shops, many of them cooperatives for women.

In Hesekekê, a thread-making workshop (with 270 employees) will be opened again on 1st May [2016]. There is also a cotton mill. Agriculture is recovering after the fighting. Building materials are being privately produced, especially bricks. The only brick-making cooperative is in Dirbêsiyê. The biggest brick factory is in Hesekekê. It is private and is being supported by the administration, which supplies fuel. (13)

Centrism is glorifying the PYD/YPG

Those on the middle class left that claim to be Marxists tend to tail the YPG. While at the beginning of the Arab Spring, many left wing groups supported the revolution, most of them have given up on the Syrian revolution long ago in particular when the Islamists have taken the leadership in the civil war imposed by Assad. These days, many of these middle class leftists would like to see the defeat of ISIL by the imperialists and in collaboration with the YPG.

The right wing centrists – like e.g. the *International Marxist Tendency* (IMT) led by Alan Woods, in its internet site “*In Defense of Marxism*” – advocates what they know best and it is to subordinate the working class and the poor peasants to the PYD and its military wing, the YPG, that have been serving the American imperialists. They spread illusions in the leadership of the PYD by glorifying the PYD-led Rojava enclave and by failing to raise any criticism to the PYD leadership’s subordination to US imperialism. Quiet the opposite the IMT hopes the PYD could spread the revolution! They wrote:

“The Kurdish movement developed its own popular democratic organs of rule which were distinctly non-sectarian. Rojava, as the area is known, became a de facto independent entity and its forces, fighting for their homeland and on a democratic platform, became very effective. The US army, unable to commit its own ground troops, saw in the movement an alternative anti-Assad and anti-ISIL, as well as non-Iranian force”[...] “The Kurdish movement cannot trust US imperialism in securing its interests. As the negotiations carry on, the US is merely positioning itself to sell out the movement they see as a threat to Iran itself[...] The Kurds can have no trust in the reactionary rulers of the US, Iran or any other nation. They can only trust in their own forces and those of the working masses of the region. The only way forward for the Kurdish movement is to widen its struggle by waging a revolutionary class-based war, with the aim first of all of uniting the Kurdish areas in Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran. This would have to be accompanied by an appeal to the working masses of these countries to rise against their own ruling classes which are wreaking havoc in the region”. (14)

In the real world the PYD has betrayed the people by joining the imperialist war against the Syrian revolution. To expect the PYD to lead an independent revolutionary struggle is to believe that a donkey can bark.

The PYD has been leading the Kurds to a disaster. Once ISIL will be defeated the Kurds will be thrown to the dogs and not for the first time in history. For the Kurdish masses the only way forward is to replace this misleadership with the best fighters committed to the socialist revolution. Only such a leadership will be able to appeal to the workers and the oppressed in Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran for a

united struggle against the imperialists and their servants.

Socialist Alternative and the *Committee for a Workers International* (CWI) have a very similar position to the IMT: Praising the PYD and supports them against ISIL even when the YPG are used as troops for the imperialists.

They wrote: *“The PYD (Democratic Union Party) have established a Kurdish enclave in the North of the country (Rojava), and have rightly been praised for their heroism and their successes in imposing military defeats on ISIL. There is no doubt that this determination on the battlefield is largely fuelled by their hopes of building a different type of society in Rojava, based on people’s solidarity, gender equality, and on the rights of the Kurds to determine their own future after decades of oppression” [...] The latest developments, unfortunately, tend to give substance to the early warnings made by the CWI about the YPG troops being increasingly used as foot soldiers for the war goals of US imperialism.”* (15)

And in another article, the CWI states: *“Despite the many fault-lines in the PYD’s political methods (such as a top-down administration and a short-term military strategy based on problematic deals with imperialist forces) the Kurds living there were granted rights suppressed for decades by Assad’s rule, which helped reinvigorate the Kurdish people’s struggle against oppression within Turkey and in the broader region.”* (16)

But if the YPG fighters are used now as foot soldiers for the war goals of US imperialism why to side with them against ISIL? As to the “non-sectarian” nature of the PYD, reports from *Amnesty International* give us a different account:

“Amid the bevy of armed groups fighting in Syria, none has received the sort of fawning heaped on the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) and its political arm, the Democratic Union Party (PYD). Their prowess against the Islamic State, embrace of secularism and non-Muslims and emphasis on gender equality have made them the darlings of the international media and top allies of the United States. So it may come as a shock that the London-based human rights watchdog Amnesty International is accusing the autonomous administration that runs the areas of northern Syria under Kurdish control known as Rojava of committing war crimes. In a 38-page report, “We Had Nowhere Else to Go’: Forced Displacement and Demolition in Northern Syria,” Amnesty International catalogues allegations of forced evictions of Arabs and Turkmens and the destruction of their homes and property. “In some cases, entire villages have been demolished, apparently in retaliation for the perceived support of their Arab or Turkmen residents for the group that calls itself the Islamic State,” Amnesty International noted. Villagers said they were ordered to leave at gunpoint, their livestock shot at. The watchdog used satellite imagery and video footage to verify the claims.” (17)

The British *Socialist Workers Party* (SWP) interviewed Ghayath Naisse, a member of the *Syrian Revolutionary Left Current*. In this interview he denies that the revolution was turned to a religious sectarian war and insists that the revolution is still alive. However, on the Kurdish PYD he said: *“Alongside this we have the Kurdish forces—the PYD and its People’s Protection Units – that already have decades of guerilla experience in Turkey and in the mountains. It was the only Kurdish party with its own military power. With the withdrawal of the regime from some areas of northern Syria in 2012, these forces—linked to the PKK—seized them immediately and consolidated their military presence. This took place from July 2012, and it was followed by a dynamic of self-administration*

and the creation and development of the Women's Protection Units. Last year they allied with some battalions of the Free Syrian Army to form the Democratic Syria Force, a Kurdish-Arab or Arab-Kurdish force in the north of Syria. We are in a close fraternal dialogue with part of this grouping, in particular, a democratic nationalist alliance including Assyrians, Turkmen and Arabs, with a presence to the north and the west of Aleppo." (18)

What he "forgot" to mention is the fact that this force the Democratic Syria Force, is fighting as part of the imperialist war in Northern Syria and it helps Assad's regime.

We saw the de facto alliance between YPG forces and Assad already in the siege of Aleppo: "As thousands of civilians flee eastern Aleppo following the simultaneous advance of Syrian 's government and Kurdish-led forces, rebel groups have alleged close coordination between the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, and the Syrian army in its move to retake the city.

The Kurdish forces and rebels have clashed several times in Aleppo during the civil war around the strategically important Sheikh Maqsoud area which is controlled by the Kurds. But in recent days, as the Syrian government forces press their advance on the east, Kurdish fighters have taken over areas abandoned by rebel forces, and allowed civilians trapped during months of siege to cross over to their territory." "What we see is the regime and the YPG collaborating in Aleppo. They may not be fighting directly together, but they are working together," said Aleppo-based journalist Zohair al-Shimale.

"The Kurdish forces came in from Sheikh Maqsoud and the regime moved in from Haydariyya. They met in the middle. [The Kurds] helped the regime advance." [...] Photos showing the Syrian national flag and the yellow YPG flag raised on top of buildings in Bustan al-Basha were circulated heavily across social media, suggesting that the Kurdish-led forces and Syrian army were in fact fighting together." (19)

However, the worst on the left however are some anarchists mostly Americans that are joining the YPG these days. (20) They are on the same side of US imperialism.

Conclusion

The heroic story of the Syrian people fighting against Assad's regime shows that the masses will come out to fight oppression and exploitation and that the enemies of the revolution will do everything to smash the revolution. The imperialists will use the actions of reactionary organizations like ISIL to justify their attacks on the masses.

The middle class left cannot fight on a working class revolutionary theory, program, strategy or tactics. The theory that explains the situation in Syria and the failure so far of the Arab Revolution is Trotsky's theory and strategy of the Permanent Revolution. The tasks of the democratic revolution in countries that have not gone through the democratic revolution are falling on the shoulders of the working class that once in power will continue with the socialist tasks. The most important task is to build the working class revolutionary party.

* * * * *

Footnotes

- (1) For the RCIT's analysis of the Arab Revolution in general and the Syrian Revolution in particular we refer readers to our numerous articles and documents on the Africa and Middle East section of our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/world-wide/africa-and-middle-east/>. In particular we refer readers to the following documents: RCIT: 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, 18 December 2016, Chapter IV. The Middle East and the State of the Arab Revolution, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2017/part-4/>; RCIT: World Perspectives 2016: Advancing Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contradictions Mark the Opening of a New Political Phase. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, 23 January 2016, Chapter IV.2. Counterrevolutionary Offensive: The Retreat of the Arab Revolution Continues Despite Heroic Popular Struggles, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/part6/>; RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Arab World: An Acid Test for Revolutionaries, 31 May 2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-arab-revolution/>
- (2) <https://goo.gl/kVUWAM>
- (3) <https://goo.gl/5kBqnl>
- (4) <https://goo.gl/U01atc>
- (5) Manish Rai: Kurdish Peshmerga Can Be A Game Changer In Iraq And Syria, Khaama Press, (6 October 2014), <http://www.khaama.com/kurdish-peshmerga-can-be-a-game-changer-in-iraq-and-syria-6802>
- (6) US NEWS How the U.S. Lost the Kurds March 1, 2016, <https://goo.gl/e76kSr>
- (7) Sarah El Deeb: Turkey, Kurds, Russia, U.S. forces make up a confusing, violent pageant in Syria Chicago Tribune March 11, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-turkey-kurds-raqqa-20170311-story.html>
- (8) For the RCIT's analysis of Daesh see RCIT: The Revolutionary Struggle against Daesh and the Imperialist Aggression in the Middle East, 28.02.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/resolution-daesh/>; Yossi Schwartz: Why Revolutionary Marxists Oppose Daesh/ISIL, 15.12.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/marxists-vs-daesh/>
- (9) See on this also: RCIT: Defeat the Imperialist Invasion in Syria – Victory to the Revolution! Down with the American and Russian interventions! No to the imperialist plan to divide Syria! Down with the butcher Assad and his imperialist allies! 13.03.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/imperialist-invasion-in-syria/>
- (10) <https://goo.gl/DPtgVJ>
- (11) <https://goo.gl/cF2rU7>
- (12) <https://goo.gl/vF3fVR>
- (13) <https://goo.gl/45qRqo>
- (14) Hamid Alizadeh: Syria: The battle of Aleppo a turning point in world relations, 12 January 2017, <https://www.marxist.com/syria-the-battle-of-aleppo-a-turning-point-in-world-relations.htm>
- (15) <https://goo.gl/XSVMjO>
- (16) <http://www.socialistworld.net/print/7874>
- (17) <https://goo.gl/FKqHRR>
- (18) <http://isj.org.uk/interview-lessons-of-the-syrian-revolution/>
- (19) <https://goo.gl/bA0tki>; see also <http://eaworldview.com/2016/07/syria-daily-kurdish-militia-help-regime-tighten-siege-of-aleppo/>
- (20) <https://goo.gl/2r9B3x>

The Market Marxists

Two remarkable documents from the ex-Trotskyist L5I

A comment from Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 25 April 2017

The “League for the Fifth International” (L5I) has recently published two quite remarkable documents. (1) One is a statement of its Swedish section addressing the truck attack in Stockholm. The second is a statement of its British comrades on the upcoming new elections in June this year. (2)

The similarity of the perspectives in these two articles is no coincidence. Rather, they reflect the tremendous right-wing shift of this organization in past years.

The statement by the Swedish section is a kind of 1914 *bonsai* war cry. As readers undoubtedly known, four people died on 7 April 2017 in a rundown attack in Stockholm by an alleged supporter of Daesh. As we always do in similar cases, the RCIT condemns such reactionary attacks against innocent civilians. However, we also consistently point out that the imperialist war offensive in the Middle East and Africa, as well as the racist oppression of migrants, and, in particular, of Muslims in Europe are the main cause for such tragic events. (3)

Contrary to such a principled Marxist approach, and faced with the Islamophobic outcry of the bourgeois media, the Swedish L5I group completely capitulated. Adapting to the hysterical offensive of imperialist “public opinion,” the L5I section denounced the attack, claiming that it confirmed the “*fascist character of Islamism*” and decried the entire phenomena of Islamism as a “*fascist movement of a religious character*”! In this way, the L5I is merely parroting the same reactionary nonsense preached by Islamophobic liberal, Stalinist and social democratic parties. These latter forces have proved themselves to be social-imperialist lapdogs of the ruling classes of all the Great Powers. By denouncing Islamism as “*fascist barbarity*,” they provide justification for and in essence condone the bloody colonial wars of the West in the Middle East and Africa, alongside the brutal oppression of the Chechens by Russia and the Uyghurs by China, and the general oppression of migrants in Europe.

But the Swedish section of the L5I goes even further. In its article it criticizes the left and workers’ movement for not fighting forcefully enough *against* the Islamists! They demand: “*Instead of giving the Islamists spaces of their own, the left needs to mobilise actively against them, something that should have been done a long time ago.*”

So in a period when thousands of Muslims in Europe are put on trial and thrown into jail; when racists and fascists slander Islam as the main danger to Europe; when Muslim women are increasingly forbidden to wear religious head covering; at a time in which the main task in Europe is to defend Muslims against this oppression (including the defense of democratic rights of Islamists), and in which the left and the workers’ movement so pathetically fail to undertake this responsibility; in such a period the L5I calls ... “*to mobilise actively*” against the Islamists!

In the past, when the LFI was still a revolutionary organization and we were still part of it, we categorically rejected any such characterization of Islamism as a whole as “*fascist*.” In a congress resolution, we stated: “*The Islamist*

spectrum is a wide one, ranging from those that are conservative-bourgeois parties seeking to maintain the influence of the ulema and the landlords alongside the capitalists and strictly constitutional in their methods, through petty-bourgeois populist currents opposed to imperialism using militant tactics of armed struggle or guerilla warfare, to the jihadi terrorist groups and even fascist and semi-fascist organizations.” (4)

While we certainly criticize Islamism – as we do Castro-Chavismo, Stalinism, etc. – we also recognize its contradictory and heterogeneous nature. There are various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents within the Islamist camp, some of which stand in the forefront of just liberation struggles (often national and anti-dictatorial resistance movements); and at the same time there are currents which play an openly reactionary role, like the bourgeois theocratic regimes in Saudi Arabia or Turkey, for example, and even counter-revolutionary forces like Daesh. Since those days, after our complete break with that movement and our founding of the RCIT, we have defended and further developed our earlier analysis. (5)

But after the majority of the L5I leadership expelled us, the founding cadres of the RCIT in April 2011, the L5I has undergone a dramatic shift to the right. (6) The result is its continuous withdrawal from any consistent confrontation with ideological pressures exerted by imperialism. Consequently, a few dead in Stockholm are sufficient for the Swedish L5I group to entirely capitulate to the hysterical imperialist media, for them to gird their loins for battle, and give full vent to a sort of 1914 *bonsai* call for war against Islamism!

The British supporters of the L5I have similarly adapted rapidly to reformism. In their official statement on the upcoming snap elections to be held in June, they elaborated a short program which they ask the Labour Party to fight for. This program aptly reflects the retreat of this group from revolutionary Marxism. In this statement one can only search in vain for any call to support the resistance struggles against the imperialist Great Powers in the Middle East and Africa. Nowhere to be found in this statement is a call for Labour to finally expel Tony Blair’s right wing from the party. Nor does one even come across a slogan calling for a workers’ government.

But the most remarkably noteworthy item in this statement focuses elsewhere: The British L5I group reiterates more explicitly than ever its radical shift to the right last year on the issue of the European Union. As we have elaborated elsewhere, in its revolutionary past, the LFI defended the position that revolutionary Marxists must neither support an imperialist nation state (like Britain, Germany, or Austria) nor the imperialist EU. (This, of course, has also been the unequivocal position of the RCIT.) It follows, that, consistent with our traditional Marxist position, we always would and do call in referenda about EU membership neither to vote for nor against joining (or leaving) the EU, but rather always for adopting an independent class position: principled abstention with a blank ballot, but preferably one bearing an appropriate slogan (e.g., “*For*

the United Socialist States of Europe!)"

Last year, towards the Brexit referendum, the L5I broke with this decades-long tradition and now supports membership in the EU as a step towards "progress of the productive forces" and the socialist unification of Europe. Here, we do not want to repeat our criticism of this obtuse, groveling flip-flop before European social democracy and, by extension, EU imperialism. Instead, we refer readers to our publications on this issue. (7)

Here, we only wish to emphasize the thoroughly consistent culmination of the L5I's right-wing shift in the latest statement of their British supporters. After it already proclaimed last year that the EU represents "bourgeois democratic progress," *Red Flag*, in its current statement, calls not only to fight against Brexit but also explicitly supports the imperialist single market of the EU! Thus, the L5I supporters literally call for the Labour Party to "commit to membership of the single market" and, elsewhere, to "defend the single market"! One can hardly demonstrate more concisely the social-imperialist flip-flop of the ex-Trotskyist L5I!

The "defense of the single market" – this is the goal of avowed liberals and social democrats. While this slogan is admittedly consistent with the L5I's internal logic, the very fact that such so-called "Trotskyists" can take up this cause, only further reflects the group's complete ideological disorientation; the loss of their revolutionary compass!

The fact that neither the Swedish nor the British statement has been publicly repudiated by the international organization shows how small and irrelevant (if existent at all) is the number of authentic Marxists still inside the L5I. Clearly, the L5I has degenerated into ordinary Market Marxists!

Footnotes:

(1) The L5I's most internationally renowned section is its British group, formerly known as *Workers Power*, which dissolved into the Labour Party two years ago and publishes a magazine entitled *Red Flag*.

(2) L5I Sweden: Condemn the terror attacks in Stockholm: fight terrorism and imperialism, 2017-04-08, <https://www.arbetarmakt.com/2017/04/stockholm-terror/>; Britain: Labour must turn Left to spike May's plans, 19/04/2017, <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/britain-labour-must-turn-left-spike-may%E2%80%99s-plans>

(3) See e.g., RCIT: Terror in Paris is the Result of Imperialist Terror in the Middle East! 14.11.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/terror-in-paris/>

(4) Michael Pröbsting and Simon Hardy: Theses on Islamism, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-islamism/>

(5) See e.g., Yossi Schwartz: The Marxist View of Religion in General and Islam in Particular, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/marxism-and-islam/>; ISL: Islam, Islamism and the Struggle for Revolution, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/islam-and-revolution/>; RCIT: The Revolutionary Struggle against Daesh and the Imperialist Aggression in the Middle East, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/resolution-dae-sh/>; RCIT: France after the Attacks in Paris: Defend the Muslim People against Imperialist Wars, Chauvinist Hatemongering, and State Repression! 9.1.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/statement-paris-attacks/>

(6) The RCIT has dealt with the centrist degeneration of the L5I in various documents. See e.g., 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-brexit/>; Michael Pröbsting: 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, 16.09.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-brexit-article/>; Manfred Meier: Nachbeben des Brexit - Zur Rechtswende von GAM/L5I: das „JA“ zum Verbleib in der EU, August 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/home/deutsch/gam-brexit/>; Michael Pröbsting: The British Left and the EU-Referendum: The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism. An analysis of the left's failure to fight for an independent, internationalist and socialist stance both against British as well as European imperialism (chapter III.3.), August 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/british-left-and-eu-referendum/>; RCIT: Where is the LFI drifting? A Letter from the RCIT to the LFI comrades, 11.5.2012, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/centrist-degeneration-of-lfi/>; On the history of the RCIT and the L5I see our book by Michael Pröbsting: Revolutionärer Parteaufbau in Theorie und Praxis. Rück- und Ausblick nach 25 Jahren organisierten Kampfes für den Bolschewismus, Dezember 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/home/deutsch/rcit-revolutionare-partei/>

(7) See the previous footnote for the three documents by the RCIT in which we deal critically with this change of position.

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