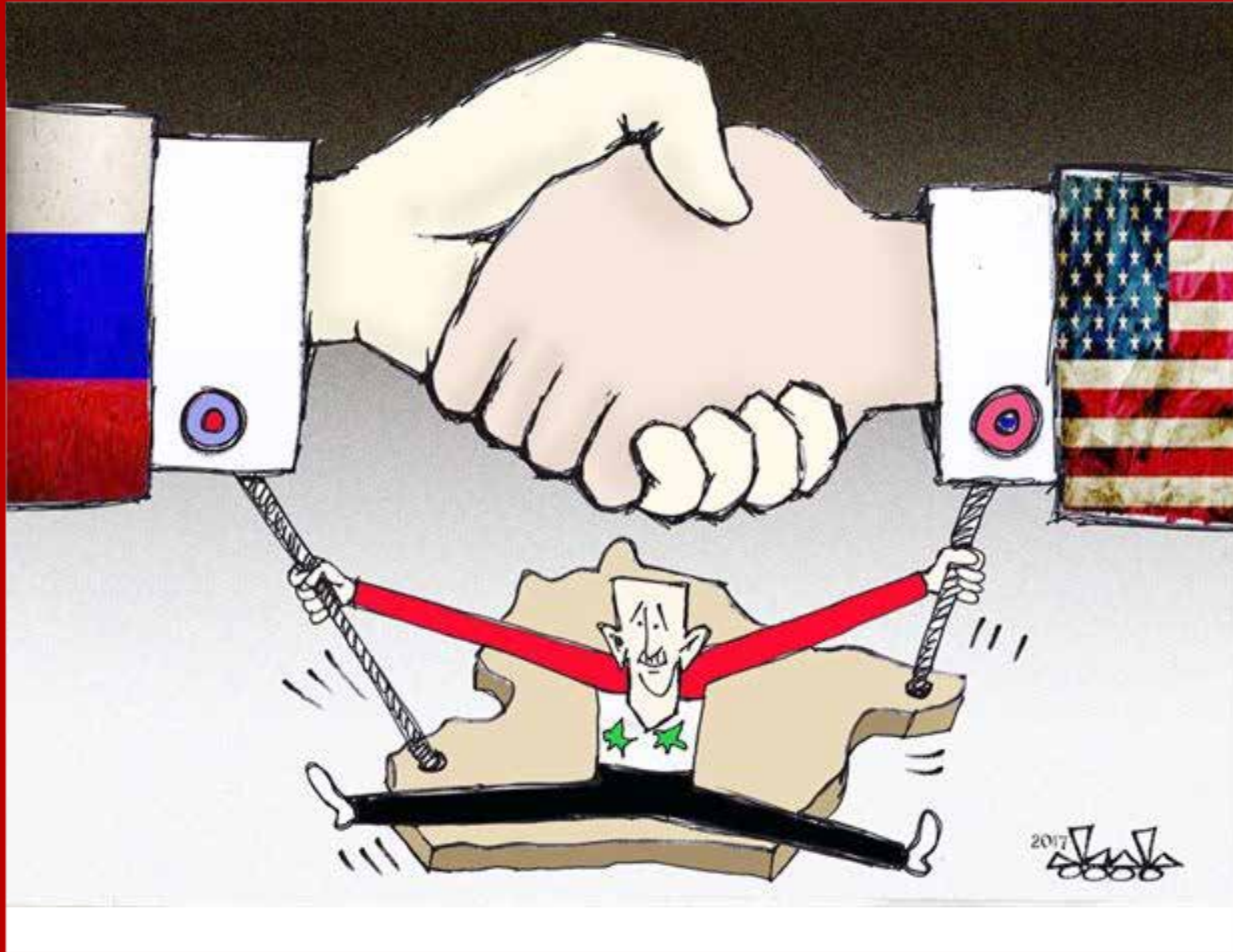




# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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## Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“

A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism

by Michael Pröbsting

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## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No. 6, May 2018

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# Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“

## The bleeding Syrian Revolution and the recent Escalation of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry between the US and Russia – A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 21 April 2018

### Introduction

Karl Marx, whose 200th birthday we have just commemorated, emphasized in the second thesis of his famous *Theses on Feuerbach* that the truth of theory must be sought in practice, i.e. in the objective reality.

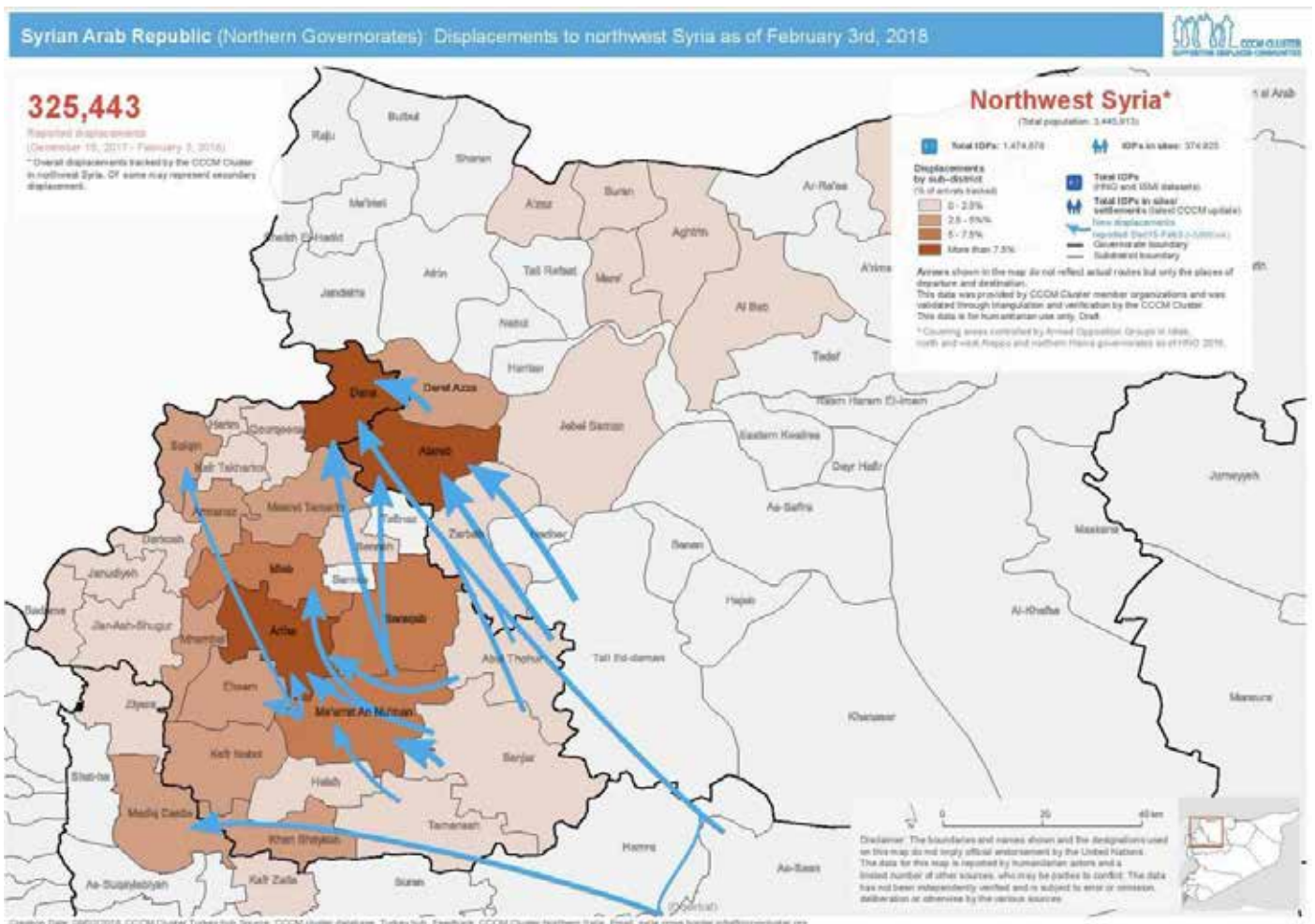
*“The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth — i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.”*<sup>1</sup>

And indeed, Marxists have always insisted that historical events are the decisive test for the analysis and strategies of revolutionaries. The Syrian Revolution, the imperialist aggression against the Syrian people and the rivalry between the Great Powers in recent years constitute, beyond

any doubt, such a decisive test for the theories and programs of all forces claiming to defend the banner of Marxism.

The most recent developments in Syria are an excellent example for this basic truth.<sup>2</sup> We have seen, once more, the barbaric nature of Assad’s war of annihilation against his own people and the just war of the liberation forces – despite the fact that they are led mostly by petty-bourgeois Islamist forces – which are defending the people.

Furthermore, the recent events demonstrated again the massive acceleration of the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers. For the first time since the high point of the Cold War between Western imperialism and the USSR several decades ago, politicians and media are discussing, to quote the title of a BBC report: *“Trump, Syria, North Korea: Are we heading for a third world war?”*<sup>3</sup>



## The liberation struggle of the Syrian people against Assad retains its just character

We consider the recent developments in Syria as a powerful confirmation of the RCIT's analysis of the main lines of development of the world situation. <sup>4</sup> Briefly summarizing our view, we insist that, contrary to the cynics and defeatists of the so-called "left", the resistance struggle of the Syrian people against Assad's war of oppression has not lost its just character. <sup>5</sup>

The recent events are a tragedy. Up to 150,000 people were forced to flee the enclave in Al-Ghouta after the Assadist forces, with the help of the Russian air force, finally succeeded in crushing the rebel defenders. In the north of Syria – in Idlib, North Hama and Western Aleppo – about 2.5 million people are still living in liberated territories. However, it is only a question of time until their enemies will try to conquer and subjugate this area. The Assadist and Russian air forces have already started to systematically bomb these areas. (See Map 1)

The RCIT has always insisted that the Syrian Revolution – as well as the whole Arab Revolution – began in 2011 as a spontaneous popular uprising against the dictatorship. <sup>7</sup> As a result of the regime's terrorist response the uprising soon transformed into a civil war. Despite all the setbacks and defeats this legitimate liberation struggle is going on albeit the regime as well as various Great Powers and regional powers are doing everything possible to liquidate it.

In consequence, the RCIT continues to side with the liberation struggle of the Syrian people against the Assad regime and its Iranian and Russian masters. We defended Ghouta and we continue to defend Idlib against the reactionary barbarians.

The fact that the Syrian Revolution is in mortal danger and close to annihilation by the Assad regime as well as the reactionary powers behind the so-called "*Astana process*" (Russia, Iran, Turkey) is no reason to desert the liberation struggle but rather to intensify our solidarity.

This is the very concrete and very practical abyss which separates revolutionaries from the treacherous Stalinists and centrists who either openly side with the reactionary Assad regime and Russian imperialism or who take a neutral, abstentionist position.

### Against All Imperialist Aggressors!

As Marxists and anti-imperialists we have always opposed all forms of aggressions of Great Powers. <sup>8</sup> We have confirmed this approach again in our above mentioned statements on the latest US missiles attack against Syria.

Hence we denounce the imperialist war-mongering of the Trump Administration and oppose its missiles strike. Likewise we call for the expulsion of all US troops and military bases from Syria.

Furthermore, contrary to the Stalinists, we do not only oppose US strikes when they are directed against Assad. We also condemn them when they are directed against Islamist rebels or against Daesh.

However, again contrary to the pro-Russian "left", we do not only oppose the imperialist aggression of Trump but also that of Putin! It is a sickening hypocrisy of these Muscovite social-imperialists, that they are only alarmed when

the US fires some missiles against some empty houses but don't raise their voice when Russia bombs and kills Syrians every day!

The RCIT therefore calls not only for the expulsion of the US forces but also for the expulsion of the Russian troops, air force and military bases.

We combine this opposition to *all* imperialist powers – the U.S. as well as Russia – with support for the military resistance of the forces which are fighting against these aggressors.

Finally, we do not only oppose the foreign occupation of imperialist powers but also those of regional powers. Iran is a particularly important state intervening in Syria as a key ally of the Assad regime. It controls militias with up to 125,000 troops. Together with the Lebanese Hezbollah militia they constitute a major force without which Assad would have already lost the war.

Turkey is another important foreign power intervening in the north of Syria. On one hand it attempts to suppress the Kurdish people's desire for national self-determination, on the other hand it works to expand its sphere of influence and – as an ally of Russian imperialism – to liquidate the liberation struggle. The RCIT opposes the incursion of all foreign powers and calls for the expulsion of Iranian and Turkish troops from Syria. <sup>9</sup>

### Old and new Great Powers

The latest events also confirmed the RCIT's analysis of the decline of absolute hegemony of US imperialism and the rise of the new imperialist powers China and Russia. Again, at this point we will only briefly summarize our view as we have elaborated it in detail in a number of books, pamphlets and essays. <sup>10</sup>

Understanding the decline of US (and Western) imperialism and the corresponding rise of new imperialist powers – China and Russia – is, in our firm opinion, fundamental to arrive at a correct assessment of the basic trends of the world situation since the beginning of the new historic period which opened in 2008.

As we have demonstrated repeatedly, this development can be observed on various levels of the world economy and politics. When we look at the basis of capitalist value production – global industrial production – we see that the US's share decreased from 25.1% (2000) to 17.7% (2015), Western Europe's share also declined from 12.1% to 9.2%, while China's share grew from 6.5% (2000) to 23.6% (2015). (See Figure 1) Likewise, while the U.S.'s share in world trade declined from 15.1 (2001) to 11.4% (2016), China's share rose in this period from 4.0% to 11.5%. (See Figure 2)

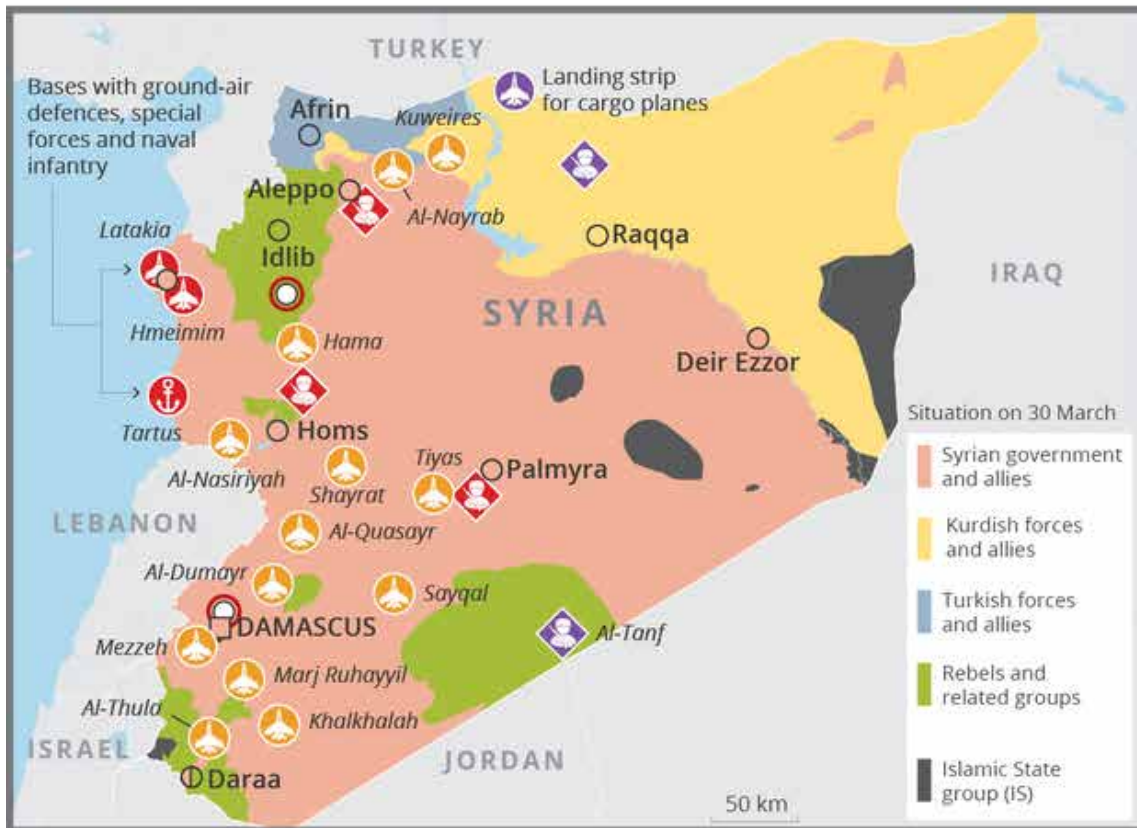
A similar development can be observed when we analyze the national composition of the leading capitalist monopolies. Comparing the *Forbes Global 2000* list – a list the world's 2000 largest corporations – of the year 2003 with the year 2017, we see that while the US remains the strongest power, its share has declined substantially from 776 corporations (38.8%) to 565 (28.2%). A similar development took place in other old imperialist countries like Japan, Britain, France and Germany. On the other hand, China, hardly represented at all in the list for 2003 (0.6%), has now 263 corporations on this list and has become the second ranking power (13.1%) by 2017. (See Table 1)

The same dynamic, as we have demonstrated in our stud-

Map 1. Syria: Areas of Control and Foreign Military Bases (April 2018) <sup>6</sup>

### Conflict in Syria: Where the armed forces are

Syria	Russia	USA	Britain	France
Main airbases	Naval installations	Naval vessels	Troops/advisors (only in Syria)	Site of chemical attack



Source: AFP, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Stars and Stripes

Troops and ship positions given are approximate and as of 12 April 2018

ies, can be observed when we look at the changes in the national composition of the global list of billionaires or the dynamics of capital export.

These fundamental economic changes resulted inevitable in political upheavals. China's rising role as a global power is a crucial result of this and finds its expression, among others, in the well-known *Belt and Road Initiative* or the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership for Asia*.<sup>14</sup>

While Russia is economically weaker than China – it has e.g. only 27 monopolies in the Forbes 2000 List mentioned above, half as many as Germany or France – it nevertheless has become a Great Power. This has been caused by several factors like e.g. the massive process of monopolization in Russia's economy or its traditional access to the Eurasian "hinterland". Another important factor is Russia's huge military-industrial complex making it the second largest military power behind the U.S. and ahead of all other imperialist states. (See Table 2 and 3) In addition, Russia rise as a Global Power has to be seen in the context of China's rise which substantially undermined the U.S.'s hegemony and, as a result, opened more space for Moscow.<sup>15</sup>

The recent developments in Syria demonstrate that Russia has become an imperialist power able to expand its sphere of influence even in the Middle East – the traditional sphere of influence of U.S. imperialism. This can be observed not only in Syria itself which has become now more or less a Russian-occupied country (with Iran as an important junior partner).<sup>18</sup> Russia's political rise is also visible in its growing influence in Turkey, Egypt, Libya, and Qatar as well as the fact that Saudi Arabia – a staunch U.S. ally – is increasingly cooperating with Russia at least on the economic field.<sup>19</sup>

The decline of the U.S. and the rise of China and Russia are one of the most important features of the world situation in the past decade. Marxists emphasize that it is impossible to understand the dynamics of the global economic, political and military developments and to develop an appropriate revolutionary strategy without recognizing the nature of China and Russia as new imperialist powers.

### **The Ex-Stalinist turned social democrats: God save the United Nations**

After summarizing our analysis of the Syrian Revolution and the acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry, let us turn now to various left-wing forces and what they say about the recent events. We start with the ex-Stalinist parties in Europe like the French CP, the German LINKE or Greece's SYRIZA. These former "communists" have transformed themselves into left (or not so left) social democrats and unite in the *Party of the European Left* (PEL).

As we have pointed out on several occasions these parties have nothing in common with socialism but are rather ordinary reformists which serve European imperialism.<sup>20</sup> To give just two examples: The French CP was part of Jospin government in 1997-2002 which participated in the imperialist wars against Serbia in 1999 and against Afghanistan in 2001. In the last years, the PCF joined the chauvinist "Union Nationale" after the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, failed to oppose France's participation in the imperialist war in Iraq and later supported the declaration of the authoritarian state of emergency.<sup>21</sup> The SYRIZA gov-

ernment in Greece is known for implementing the drastic neoliberal reforms imposed by the European Union.<sup>22</sup>

Faced with the latest events, the PEL leadership didn't fare any better. Its statement expresses horror about a looming military confrontation between the U.S. and Russia and spreads petty-bourgeois pacifist banalities ("*Bombs do not create peace.*").<sup>23</sup> It fails to mention, even with a single word, that the Assad regime has waged a war of oppression against its own people since seven years resulting in the killing of, according to different estimations, between 500,000 and one million people. This is hardly surprising as leading figures of PEL, like e.g. Sarah Wagenknecht, a leader of the German LINKE, considers the Assad regime as a "lesser evil" compared to the "jihadist rebels".

At the same time, the reformist PEL leadership puts all its hopes in institutions of the imperialist Great Powers. First and foremost, they appeal, in true Stalinist fashion, to the United Nations: "*The United Nations has to be in the driver seat for investigating the current allegations and for finding a political solution for the ongoing and disastrous war in Syria.*"

Furthermore, the statement does not utter a single word calling for mass protests and international solidarity action against the imperialist bombing or against the mass slaughter of the Syrian people. Instead, it appeals to the governments of the imperialist EU to improve the situation: "*The European Heads of State and the European Union must exert pressure on US President Trump not to endanger Syria even further and not to risk a global escalation.*" This is as realistic as asking the lion to help the wounded gazelle.

Such appeals to the imperialist European governments are completely reactionary. As executive organs of several of the oldest and most powerful capitalist ruling classes, they can only act in the service of imperialism. This basic truth of Marxism becomes very evident if we look at the events of the last days. France's President Emmanuel Macron is indeed working very hard to enhance Europe's influence in global politics. In fact, he is transforming the war-mongering spirit of Trump into French language, as he stated very explicitly in his first major foreign policy speech after his inauguration: "*France is no longer in a situation, as it was in the mid-1970s, where it could say: 'I'm a medium power, protected and supported by major powers that share the same values.' France must become a great power again. That's a necessity.*"<sup>24</sup>

Calling on the European imperialist governments to intervene in global politics only serves to spread illusions and to raise their political credibility. Socialists in Europe must always oppose "their" imperialist governments and mobilize against their reactionary and chauvinist plans. Instead, the PEL fails to offer any fundamental opposition against their ruling class which is not surprising at all as they are part of the European governments (Greece) or aspire to become such again as soon as possible.

Figure 1. Global Industrial Production, US, Western Europe and China 1970-2015 (in Current Prices) <sup>11</sup>

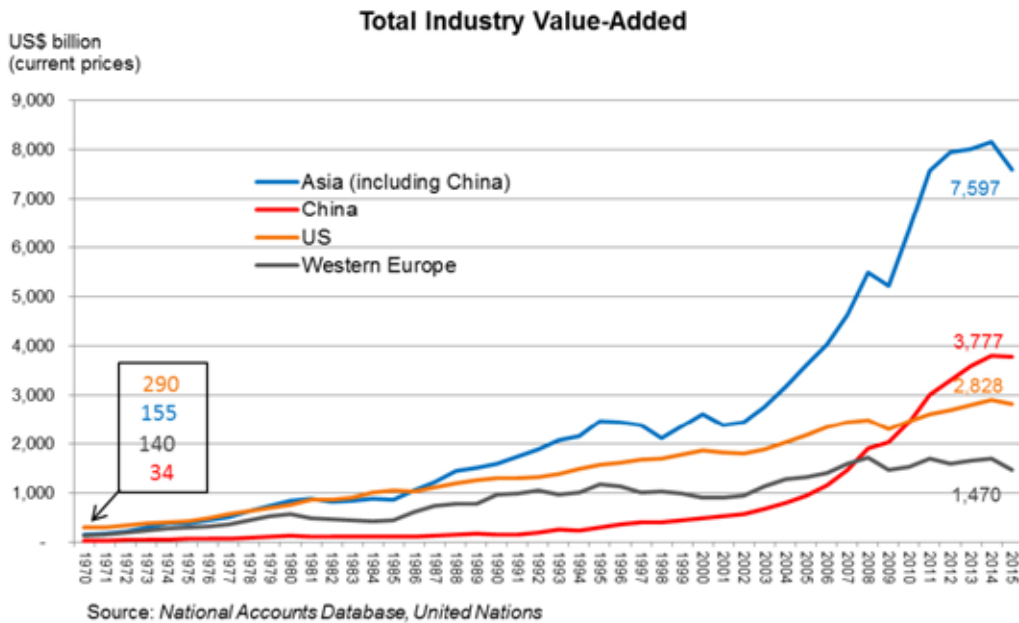


Figure 2. Share of the US and China in World Trade, 2001-2016 <sup>12</sup>

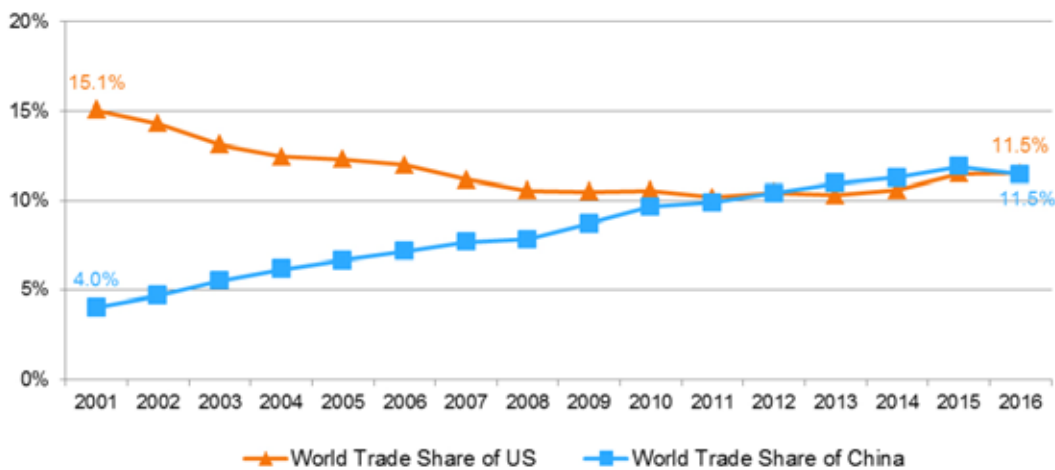


Table 1. National Composition of the World’s 2000 Largest Corporations, 2003 and 2017 (Forbes Global 2000 List) <sup>13</sup>

	2003		2017	
	Number	Share	Number	Share
USA	776	38.8%	565	28.2%
China	13	0.6%	263	13.1%
Japan	331	16.5%	229	11.4%
United Kingdom	132	6.6%	91	4.5%
France	67	3.3%	59	2.9%
Canada	50	2.5%	58	2.9%
Germany	64	3.2%	51	2.5%
South Korea	55	2.7%	64	3.2%
India	20	1.0%	58	2.9%

## The Stalinists (and some caricatures in Trotskyist camouflage): Social-Imperialist Servants of Assad and Putin

The Stalinists of the old days, i.e. before the collapse of the USSR in 1989-91, used to look for collaboration with a “democratic”, “antifascist”, “patriotic” faction of the imperialist bourgeoisie against a “reactionary” faction. This was the theoretical justification for joining popular front government with imperialist parties (e.g. in France in 1936, 1945, 1981 or 1997; in Italy in 1945, 1996, 2004).<sup>25</sup> And it was also the theoretical justification for supporting one camp of imperialist states against the other (e.g. in WWII support for the US and UK against Germany and Italy). In the case of the Maoist and post-Maoist China this theory was even used to justify the ultra-reactionary collaboration with U.S. and European imperialism against the supposed “social-imperialist” USSR.<sup>26</sup> (In fact, the Stalinist states were not capitalist or even imperialist states but rather degenerated workers states in which a bureaucratic caste dictatorially ruled over the working class and peasantry on the basis of a post-capitalist planned economy.<sup>27</sup>) As a result, to mention a bizarre anecdote, members of Maoist groups in Western Europe were instructed in the 1970s to join the imperialist army in order to defend the “fatherland” against the “social-imperialist threat from the East”!

In short, the Stalinist parties justified their collaboration with one camp of the bourgeoisie against the other respectively with one camp of imperialist states against the other by arguing that this would help defending the “socialist” states (USSR, China, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, etc.). As a result, they were pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist pseudo-socialists in the service of the rul-

ing Stalinist bureaucracy of degenerated workers states.

However, this is different to the present situation since today no “socialist” state, i.e. degenerated workers states, exists any more. Now, these Stalinists serve a faction of the ruling class respectively one camp of the imperialist states directly and not indirectly via the conservative bureaucracy of a degenerated workers state.

This becomes again evident when we look to the two international Stalinist statements about the latest events in Syria. Both statements are signed by dozens of Stalinist parties (most of them from Europe but also from other countries). One of them has been initiated by the Greek KKE<sup>28</sup> (it is signed by European and Russian parties only) and the other by the Portuguese PCP (it is also signed by Stalinist parties on other continents). While there are some slight differences of emphasizes, they contain basically the same political line.

They both limit their condemnation exclusively to the actions of U.S. imperialism:

*“The signatory Parties express their vehement condemnation of the imperialist military aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic carried out by the USA, United Kingdom and France”*<sup>29</sup>

*“The communist and workers’ parties of Europe condemn the escalation of the imperialist aggressiveness and the sharpening of the situation in Syria and the broader region after the statement of D. Trump, President of the USA, on April 11th about bombarding Syria under the pretext of the use of chemical weapons, something that the USA have repeatedly done in the past.”*<sup>30</sup>

Likewise they express, in more or less explicit terms, their support for the Assad regime against the popular uprising:

*“The signatory Parties call for solidarity with the Syrian people*

# 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.

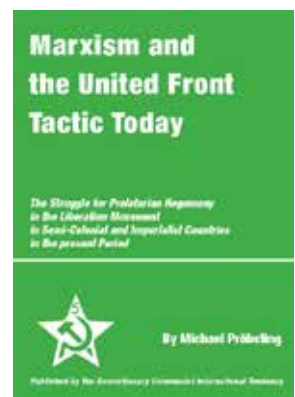
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

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.





who have, for seven years, been confronting the aggression by US imperialism and its allies – whether directly or by the proxy action of terrorist groups –, resisting and fighting to defend the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of their country, and their right to decide about their destiny, free from any interference.”

“The communist and workers’ parties express their internationalist solidarity to the people of Syria and the other peoples of the region, they call upon the working class, the people’s forces to reinforce the struggle against the imperialist interventions and wars, of the NATO, the USA and the EU.”

In another, earlier, statement the Greek KKE also stated explicitly its condemnation for the Arab Revolution and the Syrian uprising in particular: “It should be noted that the KKE from the very first moment, in 2011, denounced the intervention that has very serious consequences for the people of Syria and also for the people of the wider region. When bourgeois and opportunist parties celebrated the so-called “Arab Spring”, our party exposed the organized efforts to fund and arm the so-called Syrian opposition by the imperialist powers.”<sup>31</sup>

These statements are nothing but a pro-Russian social imperialist manifestation. In opposite to the RCIT’s joint statement with the Russian comrades of the MGKP, the Stalinists denounce *only* the US and its allies. And this despite the fact that the situation in Syria is characterized by the fact that the U.S. bombing against the Assad regime is minimal while the Russian air force bombs the Syrian people since years on a daily basis. Furthermore, in a situation when the conflict between the US and Russia is accelerating, denouncing only one camp is equal with implicitly siding with the other camp.

This reminds us to the Stalinist policy in 1939-41 when the “Communist” International denounced one-sidedly Brit-

ish and French imperialism for its colonial policy and for its aggressive foreign policy but spared Nazi Germany.<sup>32</sup>

The pro-Russian social-imperialist position of these Stalinist statements becomes also evident if we look to the list of signatory parties. For example, both statements have been signed by the *Communist Party of the Russian Federation* (KPRF) led by Gennady Zyuganov. This party, the biggest opposition party in the country, is an undisguised Great Russian chauvinist bourgeois populist party which stands with Russian imperialism unconditionally. It has supported Putin’s war in Syria since the beginning. It sided with Putin when he started the second war against Chechnya as well as the military intervention in the Ukraine in 2014.<sup>33</sup> It supports the anti-migrant policy of the Putin regime, opposes “homosexual propaganda” and praises the role of the Orthodox Church.<sup>34</sup> It is such a chauvinist, social-imperialist party that even a number of Stalinists feel embarrassed about it.

The pro-Assad character of the Stalinist statements becomes also obvious by the following fact. The Stalinists publish sharp denunciations of U.S. imperialism *only* when Washington is threatening the Assad regime. So when the U.S. military bombs a few air ports or empty houses, the Stalinists scream alarm – despite the fact that this time they didn’t kill a single person. But when the US air force bombs Raqqa and kills thousands of Syrians (or Mosul, to name another recent example), the Stalinists utter not a single word of indignation. This demonstrates that even their opposition to US imperialism is extremely selective. They don’t mind if the biggest imperialist power in the world bombs Islamists and Syrian civilians. It is not imperialist aggression as such which they oppose. They only oppose attacks against their admired dictator in Da-

**Table 2. World Nuclear Forces, 2016**<sup>16</sup>

<i>Exporter</i>	<i>Global Share (%)</i>
1 USA	33
2 Russia	23
3 China	6.2
4 France	6.0
5 Germany	5.6
6 UK	4.6
7 Spain	2.8
8 Italy	2.7
9 Ukraine	2.6
10 Israel	2.3

**Table 3. The World’s 10 Top Exporters of Weapons, 2016**<sup>17</sup>

<i>Country</i>	<i>Deployed Warheads</i>	<i>Other Warheads</i>	<i>Total Inventory</i>
USA	1,800	5,000	6,800
Russia	1,950	5,050	7,000
UK	120	95	215
France	280	20	300
China	–	270	270

mascus – even if it is only about the destruction of some houses and runways!

It is therefore only logical that the PCP-initiated statement is signed, among others, by the Syrian CP, i.e. the party which is part of the regime-controlled alliance controlling the “parliament” since decades.

In short, the so-called “anti-imperialism” of the Stalinists represents nothing but opposition to one imperialist camp (the Western power) and support for the rivaling camp – the Eastern imperialist powers China and Russia as well as their allied local dictatorships like Assad.

Finally, let us mention, in passing, that there are also some pseudo-Marxist groups who arrive to the same conclusions like the Stalinists. Examples for this are the WWP and the PSL in the U.S as well as some “Trotskyists” – let us better say caricatures of Trotskyism. Such Stalinophile sects like Jan Norden’s IG/LFI (a grouplet of the ill-named “Spartacist School”) or the British grouplet *Socialist Fight* have come up with statements of support for Russia and Assad against the US and against the popular uprising of the Syrian people. They both deny staunchly the imperialist character of Russia and China, in fact, the Spartacist groups all claim that China is not even capitalist but rather still a “deformed workers state”! Surely, the numerous Chinese billionaires would not stop laughing in case they would come across such proclamations!<sup>35</sup>

As a result, they call – instead of an “anti-imperialist united front” as they pretend – for a *social-imperialist united front* with Russia against the US:

*“We do not call for Russians out, as this would be objectively aiding the U.S./NATO imperialists and the jihadist groups they support (as well as those they oppose, i.e., the I.S.). If the U.S.*

*and its NATO allies directly attack Russian forces in Syria, we are for defense of the those forces against imperialism.”*<sup>36</sup>

And the SF titles its statement: *“Defend Syria and Russia: Imperialism out of the Middle East”*<sup>37</sup>

Obviously, the objective reality – characterized by inter-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers and ongoing liberation struggles of oppressed people – is a closed book for them. Lacking any theoretical compass, they are forced to stumble in the camp of Russian imperialism with a far more pathetic consistency than most Stalinists do. What an example for the Marxist truth that, as Lenin liked to say, *„men must not be judged by their words, however, but by their deeds.”*<sup>38</sup> This kind of “Trotskyists” imagines that they can conceal their pro-Russian social-imperialist politics with some Trotskyist phrases. But neither will the sinner enter heaven just because he said some hurried prayers nor will the camouflaged semi-Stalinists join the camp of working class internationalism just because they recite some memorized quotes from Trotsky’s books.

It doesn’t need much explanation that there is a gulf of blood between these Stalinists and the revolutionary Marxists. The Stalinists and their centrist imitators subscribe to “anti-imperialism” for fools. On the surface the Marxists seem to agree with the Stalinists in opposing the U.S. missiles strikes against Syria. But the truth is that one can oppose the US foreign policy in Syria for very different reasons. One can oppose it from a revolutionary internationalist and anti-imperialist point of stance. But one can also oppose it from a petty-bourgeois pacifist, liberal-humanist, or from a pro-Russian social-imperialist, pro-Assad, or even from a fascist point of view.<sup>39</sup>

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018 - A World Pregnant With Wars And Popular Uprisings

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – WORLD PERSPECTIVES 2018: A WORLD PREGNANT WITH WARS AND POPULAR UPRISINGS. The book’s subtitle is: *Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries.*

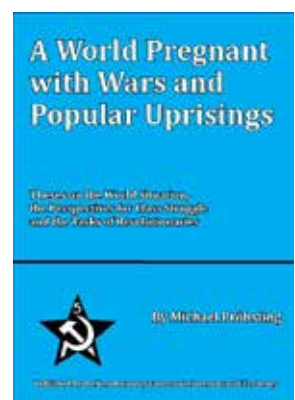
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists’ analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic period. Without such an understanding it is impossible for socialists, indeed for all liberation fighters, to possess the necessary political compass on which they can base their program, strategy and tactics.

Since several years does the RCIT publish annual studies on the world situation in which it analysis its most important developments and changes. This book updates the Marxist analysis of the state of the world economy, of the relations between the Great Powers, of the struggle between the classes and the tactics of revolutionaries. We also deal in depth with new issues respectively extend our theoretical analysis on several questions. In particular we have deepened in this book,

among others, our understanding of the nature respectively the transitional character of the present world political phase, of the nature of different types of wars and the tactical conclusions arriving from this, of the complex nature of the conflicts in the Middle East, of the capitalist restoration in North Korea and, finally, we have elaborated a new proposal for an international platform for the unification of revolutionary forces in the present phase.

The book contains a preface, introduction and seven eight chapters plus an appendix (118 pages) and includes 23 figures , 9 tables and 2 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>



## The Morenoite LIT, UIT and FLTI: the heart on the right place but not their brains

Let us now turn to others, to those who don't slander the liberation struggle of Syrian people as a "CIA-directed conspiracy" against the "forces of progress" a la Assad the butcher but who continue to support it. Here we have in mind the two, larger, Trotskyite organizations in the centrist tradition of Nahuel Moreno which are both based mainly in Latin America: the "International Workers League - Fourth International" (LIT-CI) and the "International Workers Unity - Fourth International" (UIT-CI).<sup>40</sup> Here is not the place to deal with the weaknesses of their solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. At this point it is sufficient to say that they are part of the small minority of socialists who continue to support the Syrian liberation struggle.

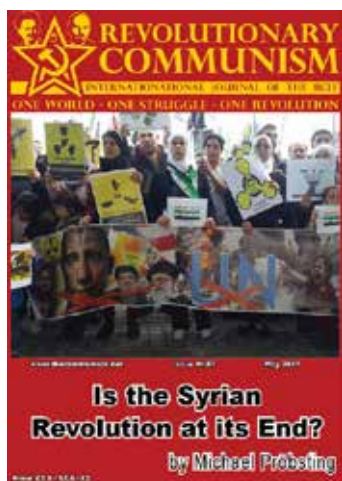
Neither is here the place to point out in detail that the leaderships of these organizations, while getting it right in Syria, have sided with the counter-revolution in other cases: e.g. their support for the right-wing, semi-fascist rebellion in the Ukraine in 2014<sup>41</sup> or for the reactionary provocations of the right-wing opposition in Venezuela against the left-bourgeois Bonapartist Maduro government.<sup>42</sup> The LIT leadership goes even further and praised the Egypt military coup of General Sisi in July 2013 as a "second revolution" and cheers the impeachment of Rousseff and the arrest of Lula by the reactionary bourgeoisie in Brazil.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately neither the LIT nor the UIT leaderships

are able to combine their legitimate support for the Syrian Revolution with an understanding of the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers. Trapped in the wooden schema of the centrist Morenoite tradition, they staunchly refuse to recognize the imperialist character of Russia and China.

While both correctly oppose Russia's military intervention in Syria, they refuse to understand that Russia (as well as China) has become an imperialist power. This becomes obvious if we look at the LIT and UIT statements on the recent events in Syria:

*"The leader (Trump, Ed.) of a coalition that, since 2014, killed thousands of civilians, is suddenly horrified because of the "barbarianism" of his Syrian counterpart. "What happened is barbaric and inadmissible. We are studying the response. Nothing is discarded so far," he said. Then, he announced "important decisions" in the next "24 to 48 hours." There is a concrete threat of a military attack on a bigger scale than the current one – characterized by some analysts like "imminent." From the IWL-FI, we repudiate any type of military intervention by imperialism against Syria. That is not the solution to oppression and to the atrocities of al-Assad's regime. In the Syrian case, [an intervention] will always pursue to defeat the revolutionary process, not the dictator. Washington uses its missiles serving a policy: better conditions to control the country in a future political "transition". He does not care about the lives or aspirations of the Syrian people. (...) The Syrian people have lost too much blood already, confronting Assad's dictatorship. A victorious imperialist military intervention, even under the hypothesis of overthrowing Assad's regime, will be nothing but a new dictator-*



### NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

## Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified?

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2017

*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*

Introduction \* The Nature of the Local Coordination Councils in Syria \* The Contradictory Nature of the Petty-Bourgeois Rebel Factions \* A note on the adjectival juxtaposition of "progressive" to liberal democrats versus "reactionary" to Islamists \* Hayyat Tahrir al-Sham and Other Islamist Militias \* The Role of Religion in Democratic and National Liberation Struggles \* Some Arguments on the Ongoing Progressive Character of the Syrian Revolution \* Have the Rebels Become Agents of US Imperialism and Regional Powers? \* On Foreign Powers' Support for Liberation Movements p\* Lenin and Trotsky on Liberation Struggles and Imperialist Interference \* What Did Lenin and Trotsky Say about Getting Support from Imperialists? \* Imagining Two Different Scenarios of the Revolution's Success & Failure \* A Period of Defeats and Retreats: What Are the Reasons? \* Some Thoughts on the Future Prospects of the Arab Revolution \* The Urgent Need for a Revolutionary Party \* Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

ship, for the people. It would be the dictatorship of imperialism, the greater genocide of human history.”<sup>44</sup>

“Ordered by the ultra-reactionary Donald Trump, the US, UK and France launched a criminal attack with missiles over places near the capital Damascus and Homs, in Syria. (...) Our socialist current, the IWU-FI, has spent years repudiating Bashar al Assad dictatorship and his genocidal actions against Syrian people, military supported by reactionary Putin and the Ayatollahs regime of Iran. (...) IWU-FI has been reporting on the permanent imperialist intervention of the US, together with the NATO and their allies, the petrol Arab monarchies and the Zionist State of Israel. (...) Now we repudiate the bombing ordered by Trump. We do not acknowledge imperialism any right to pretend “justice” is served in this way. Yank imperialism is the largest killer in history, with invasions and aggressions everywhere in the world. (...) Their actions are a smokescreen to show they are the world police and to hide that, in fact, they support al Assad, together with Russia and Iran. They have been years negotiating and agreeing military actions with Russia with the argument of “defeating terrorism” in order to support the dictator Bashar al Assad who, since March 2011, saw his power at risk as hundred of thousand of Syrian people took to the streets. We call the people of the world and the political, union, students and left organisations from around the world to express their disapproval to the imperialist bombing. We also call to repudiate Assad regime and Putin and to express solidarity with the Syrian people.”<sup>45</sup>

In both cases we see that while they, correctly, denounce both the U.S. as well as the Russian military attacks in Syria, they characterize only the Western powers as imperialist. This is no accident or oversight. The leaderships both of the LIT as well as of the UIT have repeatedly stated in theoretical articles that they consider China and Russia not as imperialist powers but rather as large semi-colonial countries like Brazil, Mexico, India or South Africa.

“The definition of China as a capitalist country has its peculiarities, on the basis that it is a country where capitalism was restored and is still governed by the CPC, a Stalinist party. It is not an imperialist country because it is a country that has been semi-colonized by the large multinationals of imperialist world (U.S. and European), which dominate it, and its total depen-

dence on exports to those countries. China is a large semi-colony with respect to imperialism, such as, for example, Brazil, India and Russia, minding the differences”<sup>46</sup>

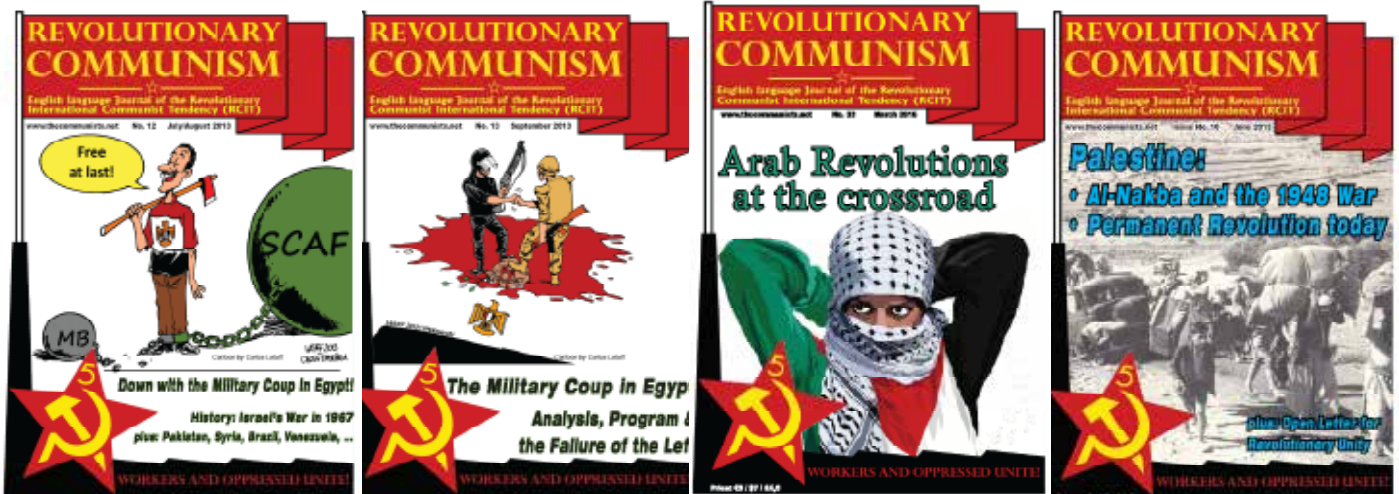
“This example goes to prove that Chinese economy is being used by the multinationals to super-exploit the world, while turning China into a semi-colony of world imperialism, a condition of submission which leads to immense contradictions that will explode in the forthcoming years. (...) And then a myth cropped up: China is to be the new global superpower, followed by new regional powers: Brazil, Russia, India, Mexico, South Africa, etc. It is true that these countries have a privileged relation with imperialism; however, this relation presupposes their subordination to the transnationals: they are part of the process of re-colonisation.”<sup>47</sup>

This is a complete denial of reality as we have elaborated in our works on Russian and Chinese imperialism and summarized above. How do the LIT and UIT leaders explain that Russia and China, these supposed semi-colonies of U.S. imperialism, manage to challenge the supremacy of Washington?! How do they explain that Putin has succeeded to bring Syria under his control and expand Moscow’s influence at the expense of the U.S.?! How do they explain that China is becoming one of the, if not the, largest foreign investor in Africa, Asia and Latin America and that its political weight is constantly rising to the strong irritation of the U.S. Administration?! These centrists are completely unable to understand, not to say to explain, the dynamics of the world situation in the present historic period. In fact, they must feel like archeologists who discover an old writ with hitherto unknown characters.

The LIT and UIT leaders seem to be unaware that there is an inevitable conclusion of their wrong analysis of Russia and China as supposed semi-colonies of U.S. imperialism. If this would be true, they would have the duty, in case of a confrontation between Moscow and Beijing with Washington, to support the former and to call for their victory against U.S. imperialism!

As we have elaborated many times, it is the classic and correct position for Marxists to support in any given conflict semi-colonial countries against imperialist powers. Taking the example of a conflict between semi-colonial

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Brazil and imperialist Britain, Trotsky made this unmistakable clear:

*"I will take the most simple and obvious example. In Brazil there now reigns a semifascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case I will be on the side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slaveowners, and robbers!"* <sup>48</sup>

It is true that the LIT and UIT leaders have fortunately not drawn such conclusions (until now) to side with Russian and Chinese imperialism against the U.S. But this is not the result of their correct analysis but rather a product of their political indolence. Their theoretical failure to understand what imperialism is and what it is not is without doubt a scratch which can easily become gangrene.

Let us finally also briefly mention the much smaller *"Fracción Leninista Trotskista Internacional - Colectivo por la*

*Refundación de la IV Internacional"*. <sup>49</sup> (There is the saying "the name is program" but sometimes the name is simple in inverse proportion to the size of the group!). To their credit the FLTI comrades take the solidarity work with the Syrian Revolution more serious than many others (in fact this seems to be the only practical thing they are doing). Again, here is not the appropriate place to deal with the deficits of their position on the Syrian Revolution which suffers from the fact that they are undisturbed by dialectical thinking. Unfortunately the FLTI leadership has replaced the method of materialistic dialectic with vulgar conspiracy theories and reduces the complex reality of the Syrian liberation struggle to a secret conspiracy of the united front Obama/Trump-Putin-Xi-Assad-Hezbollah-Iran-FSA-HTS-etc against the insurrectional masses.

The FLTI leaders are certainly particularly consistent proponents of centrist Morenoism as they carry the nonsense about the semi-colonial nature of Russia and China to extremes. Instead of recognizing the rise of Russia and China as the most serious capitalist challenge for Western imperialism since many decades, the FLTI recasts the reality and characterizes Putin and Xi as "hitmen of U.S. imperialism" <sup>50</sup>

As we have dealt with the arguments of the FLTI on Chinese imperialism somewhere else <sup>51</sup>, we limit our remarks on the FLTI "analysis" to the following: Disarmed by a theoretical thoughtfulness of a dabbling duck, the FLTI leaders do not serve the Marxists by giving them a theoretical compass but rather construct a bizarre reality. The result is not Marxism but rather Neanderthal-Trotskyism.

## 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

## CWI and FT: failure to understand the imperialist nature of China and Russia

We will deal now with some other relevant organizations from the camp of Trotskyite centrism. These organizations have in common that they deny both the imperialist nature of Russia and China as well as the progressive character of the popular struggle against the Assad dictatorship (albeit they also oppose the regime, contrary to the Stalinists).

The *Committee for a Workers International* (CWI), whose dominant section is the *Socialist Party* in Britain, struggles since decades to understand the class character of China. Since many years it has internal discussions if capitalism finally has been restored in China or if it is still a deformed workers state. What can be said for sure is that the CWI does not feel the urge to come up with a clear class characterization of China and Russia. (This is hardly surprising given the long-time disdain of the CWI leadership for the Marxist theory as one could also observe, among others, by their crude rejection of Marx's law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall as the central law to understand the decay of the capitalist economy.) While there are rare occasions where they characterize Russia as an imperialist power, they usually reserve this characterization only for the Western powers.<sup>52</sup>

This becomes obvious when we read the CWI statement about the latest events in Syria as well as their last two extensive world perspective documents.<sup>53</sup> In all these documents – with combined more than 30,000 words – one will find numerous references to “U.S. imperialism” as well as other Western imperialist powers but not to Russian or Chinese imperialism. So while they denounce Russia's military intervention in Syria, they fail to give it an unambiguous class character.

A similar position has been adopted by the leaders of the *Trotskyist Fraction – Fourth International* (FT) whose main force is the *Socialist Workers' Party* (PTS) in Argentina. Surely, the FT comrades can, in opposite to the CWI, no be accused of being theoretical layabouts. Quite the op-

posite, they produce a number of books and pamphlets about issues the CWI leaders would normally not waste much thought on. Unfortunately, in the end the result is not much better.

Like the statements of other centrists, the FT declaration on the recent events in Syria use the term “imperialist” only when it comes to the actions of the US and Western powers but not when they mention Putin's war of aggression.<sup>54</sup> Again, this is no accident as one can see from more elaborated documents of the FT.

While the FT concede that China has certain “imperialist features” it claims that neither Russia nor China have created an “independent capitalist class”. Hence it talks, in the case of China, not about the “ruling class” but about the “ruling bureaucracy”. The following quote, taken from the central political document adopted at their recently held international conference, demonstrates that the FT claims Russia and China are much too weak and backward to challenge the U.S. They explicitly deny that China can become an imperialist power “on a peaceful road”, i.e. without a prior major and victorious war against U.S. imperialism.

*“In the past years, the imperialist features of China have deepened. (...) Briefly, China can not challenge today the global supremacy of the U.S. which will remain the most important imperialist power in the next years. The GDP per capita of China is much too low (...), the differences in the military field are still huge, and the same holds true in the technological sector. Furthermore, neither in China nor in Russia could an independent capitalist class consolidate itself given the peculiarities of capitalist restoration. Hence, the role of the state is still dominant. (...) There exists a double challenge: China wants to get out of the limitations which the imperialist world economy imposes on it and at the same time the U.S. tries to break China. (...) This demonstrates that there is no possibility of a “peaceful road” towards an imperialist development of China.”*<sup>55</sup>

Surely, China and Russia are “backward”, compared with the U.S. and other Western powers, when we look at the GDP per capita. But, as we have demonstrated in several studies, such discrepancies between imperialist states



have often been the case and do not contradict the imperialist nature of such “backward” Great Powers. We remind the FT comrades, to give just two examples, to the huge differences in labor productivity between Britain and Russia before 1914 or the massive gap on this terrain between the U.S. and Japan in the 1930s. (See for this Table 4 and 5)<sup>56</sup>

It is true that U.S. imperialism is, in principle, still superior to its rivals including Russia and China. But the truth is always concrete as Lenin liked to say. Yes, the U.S. is the biggest economic and military power. However, at the same time it is overburdened by the global responsibilities as the former absolute hegemon of the world. Contrary to Russia and China, the ruling class of the U.S. is internally bitterly divided.

To make a comparison: the U.S. like a big beast which is wounded. Russia and China are like smaller tigers which are, contrary to their rival, fit and fast. Under such conditions, the superiority of the U.S. becomes more relative and limited.

The thesis that China (or Russia) can not become imperialist powers “on a peaceful road” is not new. It has already been raised against the RCIT by another Latin American group. As we did reply already to these comrades, we consider such a position as fundamentally wrong. Of course, there has never been and there can never be a peaceful co-existence between imperialist powers in the long run. This is a pillar of Marxist theory as we have always pointed out.

But why do the FT comrades insist that there must *first* be a war before a state can become an imperialist power? Where did Lenin or Trotsky say such a thing? The US, Japan, and the EU have declined in the past decades without a world war. In the same period, new great powers can and have emerged.

Furthermore, we would like to remind the comrades that

Lenin himself explicitly pointed out the possibility of the emergence of new imperialist powers: “*Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, new imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan).*”<sup>59</sup>

The failure of the FT comrades to understand the rivalry between the US and China as the rivalry between two imperialist Great Powers becomes also apparent in another recently published article. This article, titled “*21st Century Economic Nationalism*”, deals with the rising tensions between the two powers on the issues of trade. However, despite the length of the article the author fails to mention a single time the word “*imperialist*” or “*imperialism*”!<sup>60</sup>

It is clear that the development of reality is far more advanced than the empty, wooden schemas of centrism. While they deny the imperialist nature of Russia and China, the reality is marked by the challenge of Western imperialism by the new Great Powers of the East. The centrists are, to paraphrase Lenin, prisoners of old formulas.

### **CWI / SWP(UK) / FT: refusing to support the Syrian Revolution**

Let us now briefly deal with the position of these organizations on the liberation struggle in Syria. The CWI, the FT as well as others combine such failure to recognize the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist powers with an abstentionist, neutral position on the liberation struggle of the Syrian workers and oppressed. While they accept, contrary to the Stalinist fools, that the Syrian Revolution started in 2011 as a legitimate popular uprising, they claim that the liberation struggle soon degenerated into a “sectarian civil war” with no side worthy of support. Such the CWI states:

*“The situations in Iraq and Syria constitute at the moment*

**Table 4. Population and Gross Domestic Product in 1913**<sup>57</sup>

	Population (in Million)	\$ Billions	Per Capita in \$
United States	97.6	517.4	5,301
United Kingdom	45.6	224.6	4,921
Spain	20.3	45.7	2,255
Russia	156.2	232.3	1,488
Japan	51.7	71.6	1,387
China	437.1	241.3	552

**Table 5. Relative GDP per capita (column A) and relative levels of industrialization (column B) in 1913**<sup>58</sup>

Country	A	B
Britain	100	100
France	81	51
Germany	77	74
Austria	62	29
Italy	52	23
Spain	48	19
Russia	29	17

the epicentre of the crisis engulfing the Middle East. The order inherited from the legacy of imperialism is exploding in the most brutal manner, under the effect of the power struggles for influence taking place between various reactionary forces and regimes. (...) On Syria, some on the international left have wrongly adopted some variant of a "campist" attitude, either by prettifying the -mostly jihadist- armed rebels fighting Assad, or by their apologism for the latter."<sup>61</sup>

"This is fundamentally a result of the counter-revolution that unfolded in Syria following a genuine mass revolt against the rule of Assad in 2011, inspired by revolutionary movements in Tunisia and Egypt. In the absence of strong, united, working class organisations and a socialist leadership, sectarian and Islamic forces were able to step into the vacuum, aided by reactionary Gulf States and Turkey and by Western powers. This led to the degeneration of the mass revolt into a vicious, multi-faceted civil war."<sup>62</sup>

Such an assessment is widely shared by many other Trotskyite centrists. The British *Socialist Workers Party* (SWP), leading force of the loose *International Socialist Tendency*, basically arrives to the same conclusions as the CWI:

"By 2013 the militarisation of the conflict meant people could no longer control the military groups that fought in their names. These became objectively driven by the war itself rather than the goals of the popular uprising. They have often echoed the brutality of the regime. The groups accepted military and financial assistance from countries such as Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in order to survive. These countries' rulers sought to profit from the crisis and advance their interests. They promoted the most reactionary and jihadist groups."<sup>63</sup>

So do the leaders of the *Trotskyist Fraction*. They characterize the Syrian Revolution (as well as the liberation struggle in Yemen) as a "reactionary civil war" between "the despotic regime of Bashar al-Assad" and "the so-called 'rebels'".<sup>64</sup>

At their recent XI. Conference, the FT comrades confirmed this assessment. They explicitly stated in their central world perspectives document: "From our point of view, the democratic uprising against Assad, which was part of the 'Arab Spring', has already been transformed into a totally reactionary civil war long time ago."<sup>65</sup>

We remark in passing that the same refusal to support the ongoing liberation struggle of the Syrian people is shared by other, smaller, groups like the "League for the Fifth International" (L5I)<sup>66</sup> or the *Permanent Revolution Collective* (CoReP).<sup>67</sup> While they are at least capable to recognize the imperialist character of Russia and China, they capitulate to the Western Islamophobia and use the Islamist leadership of the popular struggle against the Assad dictatorship as a pretext to take an abstentionist, Third-Campist position in Syria.

We have dealt elsewhere with the supposed transformation of the Syrian liberation into a reactionary civil war in detail.<sup>68</sup> At this point, we will only state that the abandonment of the popular uprising in Syria just because petty-bourgeois Islamist forces came to leadership is an outrageous and anti-Marxist capitulation to the reactionary wave of Islamophobia which is spreading in nearly all imperialist states around the world – in North America, Western Europe, Russia and China. These centrist deserters of the Syrian Revolution forget (or deny) the fact that various liberation struggles have taken place under a non-revolutionary leadership (including Islamists). We remind our opponents to the armed uprising of the Berber-

speaking Rif tribes against French and Spanish imperialism, in northern Morocco led by the Islamist Abd el-Krim in 1921-26 and which was enthusiastically supported by the Communist International.<sup>69</sup> The same was the case with the *Great Syrian Revolt* led by Sultan Pasha al-Atrash in 1925-27.<sup>70</sup> More present day examples are the Chechen liberation struggle against the Russian occupation or the national liberation struggle against the US occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It goes without saying that revolutionaries must not support such Islamist-led liberation wars uncritically. Quite the opposite, they have to explain – as they do in all class struggles where non-revolutionary forces stand at the top – that these forces are incapable of leading the struggle to victory. They must be replaced by a socialist, working class leadership. This is why building a revolutionary party is the most important task all over the world. But constructing such a party is only possible as part of an ongoing liberation struggle and not against or aside of it!

## Conclusion

We have now arrived at the end of this overview of the position of various reformist and centrist organizations on the recent events in Syria. These events are of crucial importance as they pinpoint two of the most fundamental lines of developments in the current historic period of capitalist decay: the accelerating rivalry between the old and new imperialist Great Powers (U.S, EU, Russia, and China) as well as the liberation struggle of the oppressed people against the reactionary ruling class and foreign occupiers.

These two issues are of primary importance for the global class struggle and will become even more important in the coming years. We have not the slightest doubt that the recent escalation of tensions between the imperialist powers around Syria is only a glimpse of the events to come in the next years. Those who are incapable to get a right orientation now and who fail to correct their mistakes will be hopelessly caught up in the coming whirlwind of big world political events.

In our recently published document *Six Points for a Platform of Revolutionary Unity Today* – a proposal directed to all freedom fighters, revolutionary organizations and activists – the RCIT has summarized the tactical platform which, in our view, is crucial for Marxists in the coming period.<sup>71</sup>

The above overview demonstrates that most of the so-called left is not prepared for the challenges of the class struggle ahead. We presume that the accelerating contradictions between the imperialist powers and between the ruling class and the workers and oppressed will rather increase the disorientation among these reformist and centrist forces resulting in social-imperialist capitulation and abstentionism from important class struggle events.

The RCIT calls all activists inside and outside of these organizations to break with such reformist betrayal and centrist confusion. All those who share a consistent line of anti-imperialism against *all* Great Powers and of consistent support for the struggle of the oppressed people should unite under a common banner and fight together for the creation of a new World Party of Socialist Revolution! Join the RCIT in this struggle!<sup>72</sup>



## Footnotes

1 Karl Marx: Theses on Feuerbach (1845), in: Marx Engels Collected Works (MECW) Vol. 5, p. 5

2 For our analysis of Assad's massacre in Douma, the US missiles strike in Syria and the escalation of the conflict between Great Powers we refer to the following articles and statements of the RCIT: Down with Imperialist Warmongering of All Great Powers! Syria attack, Protectionist Tariffs and Salisbury poisoning: Against all imperialist diplomatic, economic and military aggression! In U.S., EU, Russia and China: The Main Enemy is at Home! Support democratic and national liberation struggles of oppressed people! Joint Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and the Marxist Group 'Class Politics' (Russia), 13.04.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/syria-down-with-imperialist-warmongering-of-all-great-powers/>; ISL: On Trump's attack on Syria, 15.04.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/on-trump-s-attack-on-syria/>; Michael Pröbsting: Video Statement on the Chemical Attack in Douma! 11 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/multi-media-1/solidarity-with-the-syrian-people-in-douma/>

3 BBC: Trump, Syria, North Korea: Are we heading for a third world war? 11 April 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-43732320/trump-syria-north-korea-are-we-heading-for-a-third-world-war>

4 Our latest analysis of the world situation is summarized in Michael Pröbsting's recently published book: *World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries*, February 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>.

5 The RCIT has elaborated its analysis and programmatic conclusions for the Syrian Revolution in numerous documents. They are all collected in a special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>. In particular, we refer readers to our pamphlet: 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, 5 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>. See also the sub-chapter "The Syrian Revolution: In danger of annihilation" in chapter V of our book: *World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings*, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/chapter-v/>.

Naturally, there exists a vast literature on the Syrian Revolution by now and it is impossible to list it here in its totality. However, we would like to draw attention to some books, written partly from a bourgeois and partly from a progressive point of view, which we consider as useful and insightful into the subject:

Jules Alford and Andy Wilson (Editors): *Khiyana. Daesh, the Left and the Unmaking of the Syrian Revolution*, Unkant Publishers, London 2016, Sabr Darwish: *Syrians Under Siege: The Role of Local Councils*, Arab Reform Initiative, October 2016; Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami: *Burning Country. Syrians in Revolution and War*, Pluto Press, London 2016; Rania Abouzeid: *No Turning Back. Life, Loss, and Hope in Wartime Syria*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 2018; Fabrice Balanche: *Sectarianism in Syria's Civil War*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington 2018; Charles R. Lister: *The Syrian Jihad. Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*, Oxford University Press, New York 2015

6 Madawi Al-Rasheed: Bombing Syria is a Saudi-sponsored adventure that will achieve nothing, Middle East Eye, 17 April 2018, [http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/us-british-and-french-bombs-are-really-not-about-syrian-peo-](http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/us-british-and-french-bombs-are-really-not-about-syrian-peo-ple-758472764)

[ple-758472764](http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/us-british-and-french-bombs-are-really-not-about-syrian-peo-ple-758472764)

7 Since its beginning in 2011, we have published numerous documents on the Arab Revolution. They can be viewed in a sub-section of the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>. The latest comprehensive analysis of the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary process in the Middle East is entailed in chapter V of the above mentioned book on the World Perspectives 2018.

8 An overview of our positions on various imperialist aggressions in the past decades can be read in chapter 12 and 13 of our book 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*, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>

9 See on this e.g. the numerous RCIT statements and articles on the Astana process. See also RCIT: Syria: No to Turkey's Attack on Afrin! Defend the Syrian Revolution against Annihila-



Souad al-Kyari, a martyred female rebel fighter in Eastern Qalamoun

tion! The Syrian Revolution must reject sectarianism and strive to create multinational unity among Arabs, Turks and Kurds! Rally all forces against the Assadist-Iranian-Russian Aggression in Idlib! 22.01.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/no-to-turkey-s-attack-on-afrin/>

10 We have collected our vast literature on the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers in a special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. Our most updated analysis can be read in chapter IV ("Accelerating Rivalry Between the Imperialist Great Powers") of our book on the World Perspectives 2018: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/chapter-iv/>.

11 Hong Kong Trade Development Council: Changing Global Production Landscape and Asia's Flourishing Supply Chain, 3 October 2017, p.1

12 Hong Kong Trade Development Council: Changing Global Production Landscape and Asia's Flourishing Supply Chain, 3 October 2017, p.4

13 Forbes Global 2000 List (2017), <https://www.forbes.com/global2000/list/45/#tab:overall>

14 On the RCIT's analysis of China as an emerging imperialist power see the literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. In particular we refer readers to Michael Pröbsting: The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences. What are the background and the nature of the tensions between China and India in the Sikkim border region? What should be the tactical conclusions for Socialists and Activists of the Liberation Movements? 18 August 2017, Revolutionary Communism No. 71, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-india-rivalry/>; Michael Pröbsting: The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, December 2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-csr-pco-on-china/>; 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* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>.

15 On the RCIT's analysis of Russia as an imperialist power see the literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. In particular we refer readers to Michael Pröbsting: Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Len-

in's Theory of Imperialism, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; Michael Pröbsting: Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, Special Issue of Revolutionary Communism No. 21 (March 2014), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>.

16 SIPRI Yearbook 2017 (Summary), p. 16

17 SIPRI Yearbook 2017 (Summary), p. 15

18 It is true that parts of Syria are also occupied by other power like the U.S. and Turkey. But most of Syria's population live in the Russian sphere of influence.

19 See on this e.g. Saudi-Russia oil alliance likely to weaken OPEC's role, 19 April, 2018 <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/4/19/saudi-russia-oil-alliance-likely-to-weaken-opecs-role>

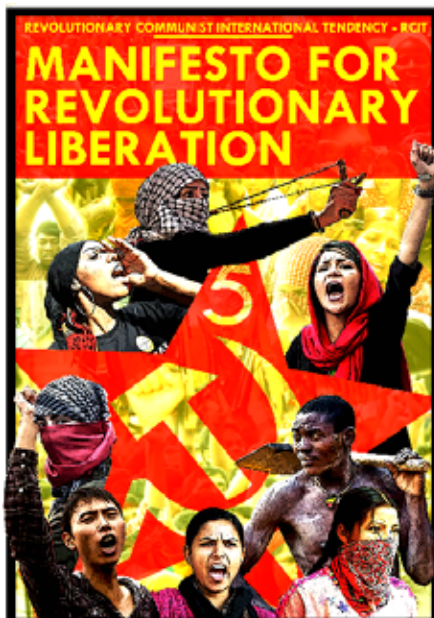
20 See on this e.g. chapter 13 of our book *The Great Robbery of the South*.

21 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: France: "Communist" Party fails to Vote in Parliament against Imperialist War in Iraq! 15.1.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/french-pcf-iraq-war/>; RCIT: Increasing Instability and Militarization in the European Union. On the Tasks of Revolutionaries in the New Political Phase which has Opened in Europe after the Terrorist Attack in Paris, 08.12.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/militarism-in-eu/>

22 We have elaborated our analysis of SYRIZA and its treacherous government policy in numerous articles and statements. They are collected in a special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/articles-on-greece/>; in particular we refer readers to our book on Greece: Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony. The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features, Vienna 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/greece-semi-colony/>

23 Party of the European Left: Hands off Syria! 13 April 2018, <http://www.european-left.org/hands-syria>

24 Al-Jazeera: Is France reinventing itself as a kingmaker in the Middle East? President Emmanuel Macron is trying to restore France's position as a 'power broker' in the Arab world, analysts say, 2018-04-17, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/france-reinventing-kingmaker-middle-east-180416094140646.html>



## NEW RCIT PROGRAM!

# Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

*Adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> 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*

25 There exists a vast literature on the Stalinist policy of the Popular Front. See e.g. Tom Kemp: *Stalinism in France*, New Park Publications, London 1984; Jaques Danos, Marcel Gibelin: *Die Volksfront in Frankreich. Generalstreik und Linksregierung im Juni '36*, Junius Verlag, Hamburg 1982. Leon Trotsky has extensively critiqued this Stalinist conception. See e.g. Leo Trotsky: *Whither France?* New Park Publications, London. The leading Stalinist theoretician stated the concept of the Popular Front in various speeches and writings after 1935. They are summarized in: Georgi Dimitroff: *The United Front. The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, Proletarian Publishers, San Francisco 1975

26 See on this e.g. the chapter "The Maoist Origin of the Super-Power Theory" in our pamphlet *Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power* (see footnote above for full title and the link).

27 A more detailed elaboration of the Trotskyist theory of the Stalinist states can be read in Leon Trotsky: *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Pathfinder Press 1972. The RCIT's analysis is summarized in chapter II in our book Michael Pröbsting: *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism*, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cuba-s-revolution-sold-out/>.

28 It would go beyond the scope of this essay to deal with the theoretical development of the Greek KKE more in detail. However, we want to remark that in the past years it has become, in some aspects, a rather untypical, left-Stalinist party. As such it formally rejects the classic Stalinist distinction between the "democratic", "antifascist", "patriotic" and the reactionary factions of the bourgeoisie. It comes also close to reject the stageist model of the revolution and to orient, in words, towards a socialist revolution. Finally, it also comes close, in some more theoretical articles, to view China and Russia as "capitalist powers". This interesting theoretical development is a reflection of the necessity to differentiate itself sharper from its left-reformist rivals (SYRIZA, LAE, etc.) and also because Chinese monop-

ly capitalists – as major owners of the port in Piraeus – directly attacks the dockers who constitute a core layer for PAME (the KKE-affiliated trade union). We have dealt with the KKE's positions to a certain degree in our book on Greece. (Michael Pröbsting: *Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony*)

29 Joint statement: *Condemnation of the bombing of Syria by the USA, United Kingdom and France*, 17 April 2018, <http://www.solidnet.org/portugal-portuguese-communist-party/portuguese-cp-condemnation-of-the-bombing-of-syria-by-the-usa-united-kingdom-and-france-en-fr-es-pt>

30 Statement of the Communist and Workers Parties of Europe condemning the escalation of the imperialist aggressiveness in Syria, 13 April 2018, <http://www.solidnet.org/greece-communist-party-of-greece/cp-of-greece-statement-of-the-communist-and-workers-parties-of-europe-condemning-the-escalation-of-the-imperialist-aggressiveness-in-syria-en-ru-es-ar-fr-sq>

31 Eliseos Vagenas: *The Military-Political Equation in Syria*, (Extensive excerpts from the article published in "Kommunistiki Epitheorisi", the political-theoretical journal of the CC of the KKE, issue 1 of 2016), <https://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/THE-MILITARY-POLITICAL-EQUATION-IN-SYRIA/>.

32 A number of books have been published about the Stalinist policy in the period of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. A number of documents have been published in Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie (Ed.): *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*. Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, Department of State, 1948. Many documents of the Stalinist parties in this period have become public only after 1989. Many of them have been collected in the German-language book: Bernhard H. Bayerlein. *Der Verräter, Stalin, bist Du! Vom Ende der linken Solidarität 1939-1941. Komintern und kommunistische Parteien im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Aufbau Verlag, Berlin 2009; another documentation is: J.W.Brügel: *Stalin und Hitler*. Europaverlag, Wien 1973. See also: Bisoovsky, Gerhard, Hans Schafranek und Robert Streibel (Ed.): *Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt*, Verlag: Picus Verlag, 1990.

# 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

33 See on this e.g. Gennady Zyuganov: The crisis in Ukraine and its deep roots, September 2014, <http://cprf.ru/2014/09/1108/>

34 For example, Zuyganov wrote in 2012: "It is a holy duty of Communists and the Orthodox Church to unite." (Mansur Mirov-alev: Russia's Communist Party turns to the Orthodox Church. After decades of militant atheism, Russian Communists turn to religious establishment to gain supporters, 2016-12-12, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/12/russia-communist-party-turns-orthodox-church-161212075756966.html>)

35 We have briefly dealt with this argument in our recently published book on the World Perspectives 2018 (see p. 59, footnote 99) as well as in chapter 10 in our book *The Great Robbery of the South*.

36 See IG: Drive the Imperialists Out of the Middle East! U.S./NATO: Get Your Bloody Claws Off Syria! <http://www.internationalist.org/syriausnatobloodyhands1804.html>

37 See SF: Defend Syria and Russia: Imperialism out of the Middle East, 14/04/2018 <https://socialistfight.com/2018/04/14/defend-syria-and-russia-imperialism-out-of-the-middle-east/>

38 V. I. Lenin: German and Non-German Chauvinism (1916); in: LCW 22, p. 183

39 A number of articles have been published documenting the support of many fascist organizations for the Assad regime. See e.g. Alex Rowell: Small wonder: The global fascist love affair with the Assad regime, <https://pulsemedia.org/2017/08/20/small-wonder-the-global-fascist-love-affair-with-the-assad-regime/>; Patrick Strickland: Why do Italian fascists adore Syria's Bashar al-Assad? 14 Feb 2018, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/italian-fascists-adore-syria-bashar-al-assad-180125115153121.html>. On the opposition to the latest U.S. strike against Syria by U.S. Nazis see e.g. the statement of Gregory Conte and Richard Spencer: Stay Out Of Syria, April 14, 2018 <https://nationalpolicy.institute/2018/04/14/stay-out-of-syria/>

40 For the RCIT's characterization of Morenoism see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Summary of our main differences with the UIT-CI, October 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/critique-of-uit-ci/>; LRCI: Barbaric Trotskyism: a History of Morenoism (1992), Part 1 and 2, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/morenoism-part-1/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/morenoism-part-2/>

41 For an overview of the RCIT's analysis of the events in the Ukraine and a critique of the reformist and centrist left see our numerous articles on this subject in the sub-section on Europe on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/world-wide/europe/>

42 For an overview of the RCIT's analysis of the events in the Venezuela see our numerous articles on this subject in

the sub-section on Latin America on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/>

43 For an overview of our critique of the LIT/PSTU see e.g. RCIT: In the Wake of the PSTU/LIT-CI Split, What Lessons Can Be Learned? An Open Letter to Members and Sympathizers of the International Workers League (Fourth International), 11.7.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/open-letter-lit-qi/>

44 Daniel Sugasti: We repudiate Trump's threats on more attacks to Syria! LIT-CI, April 10, 2018 <https://litci.org/en/we-repudiate-trumps-threats-on-more-attacks-to-syria/>

45 IWU-FI: We repudiate the imperialist shelling on Syria! No to Trump's killer missiles! April 14, 2018, <http://uit-ci.org/index.php/news-a-documents/1985-we-repudiate-the-imperialist-shelling-on-syria-no-to-trumps-killer-missiles>

46 Global Policy Theses, discussed and voted at the Fourth Congress of the IWU-FI, Chapter "VI. China: Towards a new hegemonic power?", <http://uit-ci.org/index.php/mundo/2018-04-05-19-24-25/1912-vi-china-towards-a-new-hegemonic-power>

47 Nazareno Godeiro: The validity of Lenin's imperialism theory, LIT-CI, International Courier, 09 October 2014, [http://www.litci.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2568:the-validity-of-lenins-imperialism-theory&catid=729:international-courier&Itemid=39](http://www.litci.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2568:the-validity-of-lenins-imperialism-theory&catid=729:international-courier&Itemid=39). In another, more recent article, the LIT leaders repeat their schema that China's ruling class is a servant of the (Western) imperialist powers: "So, an unprecedented historical combination occurs: the Stalinist apparatus, that had led the revolution and built the Bureaucratized Workers' State, restored capitalism and remained in power after doing so. But now they no longer defend the economic and social basis of a Workers' State, they are in the service of imperialist capitalism." (Alejandro Iturbe: Capitalist Restoration in China, September 7, 2017 <https://litci.org/en/capitalist-restoration-in-china-special/>)

48 Leon Trotsky: Anti-Imperialist Struggle is Key to Liberation. An Interview with Mateo Fossa (1938); in: Writings of Leon Trotsky 1938-39, p. 34

49 An overview of our critique of the FLTI can be read here: Michael Pröbsting: Summary of Our Main Differences with the FLTI, October 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/critique-of-flti/>

50 See e.g. „Down with the Vienna Summit the Peace of the Cemetery prepared by Obama and his Hitman Putin!“ (FLTI: Vienna Summit with US, Putin, Iranian Ayatollahs, the genocidal Al Assad, Zionism, Qatar, Turkey taking in its hand bourgeois generals of FSA, the chiefs of ISIS of Saudi Arabia, the Kurdish bourgeoisie... Under the command of Obama, all the executioners of the revolutions in the Maghreb and the Middle East are meeting, 4.11.2015, [https://www.flti-ci.org/ingles/medio\\_orientenoviem-](https://www.flti-ci.org/ingles/medio_orientenoviem-)

# China's transformation into an imperialist power

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[bre2015/proclama\\_viena03nov2015.html](http://www.thecommunist.net/bre2015/proclama_viena03nov2015.html))

51 See e.g. chapter 10 of our book *The Great Robbery of the South*.

52 We remark, as a side note, that the CWI sometimes mentions Russia's "imperialist interests". However, this does not automatically mean that they consider Russia as an imperialist power as they use the term "imperialist interests" in a loose fashion. In their World Perspectives document adopted in December 2014, for example, they also speak about the "regional imperialist reasons" of the Turkish president Erdoğan. (CWI: World Perspectives. A turbulent period in history, 15/12/2014 <http://www.socialistworld.net/doc/7008>)

53 Serge Jordan: No to the bombing of Syria! Build a mass movement against the war, CWI 12 April 2018 <http://www.socialistworld.net/index.php/international/middle-east/151-syria/9750-no-to-the-bombing-of-syria-build-a-mass-movement-against-the-war>; CWI: World Perspectives, 08 December 2017, CWI International Executive Committee, <http://www.socialistworld.net/index.php/theory-analysis/9544-cwi-world-perspectives>; 11th CWI World Congress: World Perspectives, 22 March 2016, <http://www.socialistworld.net/index.php/other-topics/activities/7517-11th-CWI-World-Congress--World-Perspectives>

54 Stop Bombing Syria! Nothing good can come of this bombing or any other imperialist military intervention, April 14, 2018 <http://www.leftvoice.org/Stop-Bombing-Syria>

55 As we could not find an English-language translation of this document, we have translated this quotes ourselves from the Spanish-language respectively the German-language version. (XI CONFERENCIA DE LA FT: Tensiones económicas e inestabilidad política. Documento sobre situación internacional discutido en la XI Conferencia de la FT, 22.3.2018, 2018, <http://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Tensiones-economicas-e-inestabili>

[dad-politica](http://www.klassegenklasse.org/die-welt-im-jahr-2018-teil-1-wirtschaftliche-spannungen-und-politische-instabilitaet/); FT: Die Welt im Jahr 2018 (Teil 1): Wirtschaftliche Spannungen und politische Instabilität, <https://www.klassegenklasse.org/die-welt-im-jahr-2018-teil-1-wirtschaftliche-spannungen-und-politische-instabilitaet/>)

56 See for this various works listed in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>; In particular we refer readers to our pamphlet *Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power*.

57 Angus Maddison: The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective, Vol. 1, 2001, pp. 183-185 and 213-215. The figures are calculated in 1990 international U.S. Dollars.

58 François Crouzet: A History of the European Economy, 1000-2000, University Press of Virginia, 2001, p. 148

59 V. I. Lenin: Imperialism. The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916); in: LCW Vol. 22, p. 274

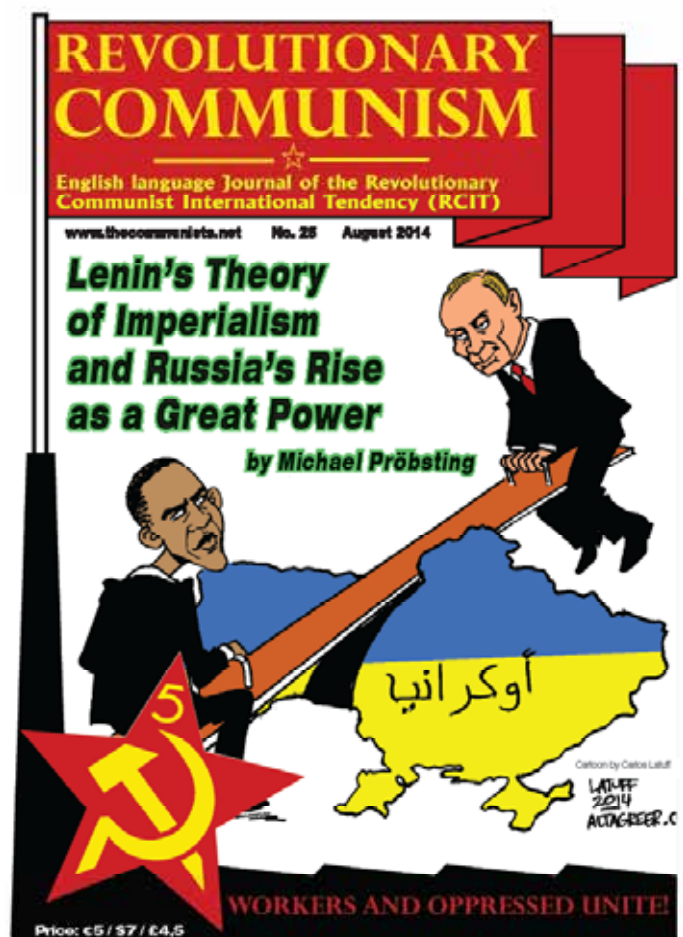
60 Juan Cruz Ferre: 21st Century Economic Nationalism, March 26, 2018 <http://www.leftvoice.org/21st-Century-Economic-Nationalism>

61 CWI: Theses on Middle East, December 2016, <http://workerssocialistparty.co.za/committee-for-a-workers-international/cwi-international-executive-committee-2016/cwi-international-executive-committee-2016-doc-3/>

62 Niall Mulholland: Trump orders missile strikes against Shayrat air base, Committee for a Workers' International, The Socialist issue 944, 12 April 2017 [https://www.socialistparty.org.uk/keyword/Committee\\_for\\_a\\_Workers\\_International/Cwi/25244/12-04-2017/attacks-ratchet-up-syrian-conflict-and-fuel-tensions-between-powers](https://www.socialistparty.org.uk/keyword/Committee_for_a_Workers_International/Cwi/25244/12-04-2017/attacks-ratchet-up-syrian-conflict-and-fuel-tensions-between-powers)

63 Jad Bouharoun: How revolution turned to horror in eastern Ghouta, SWP, 21 Mar 2018, Socialist Workers, Issue No. 2597, <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/46320/How+revolu>

## RCIT PUBLICATIONS ON RUSSIA AND IMPERIALISM



[tion+turned+to+horror+in+eastern+Ghouta](#). We have dealt with the CWI's adaption to social-imperialism on various occasions. See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: US Aggression against North Korea: The CWI's "Socialist" Pacifism. Hippy Day-Dreaming is an Impotent Tool in the Struggle against Imperialist War! Authentic Socialists say: Defend North Korea! Defeat US Imperialism! 12.09.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/cwi-and-north-korea/>; Michael Pröbsting: The CWI's "Socialist" Zionism and the Palestinian Liberation Struggle. A Reply from the RCIT, 15.9.2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/cwi-and-israel/>; see also chapter 13 of the book *The Great Robbery of the South*.

64 Claudia Cinatti: The Geopolitics of the Civil War in Syria, September 14, 2016, <http://www.leftvoice.org/The-Geopolitics-of-the-Civil-War-in-Syria>

65 See the central resolution adopted at the recent FT conference quoted above.

66 While the comrades of the *League for the Fifth International* (L5I) sided with the Syrian Revolution for some years, they later dropped their support and concluded that "there is a need to recognise that the Syrian revolution has been defeated." They declare the Arab Revolution as finally over: "Now, even if the brutal civil war in Syria resumes, with Idlib and other remaining liberated areas coming under renewed attacks, we have to recognise that the Syrian revolution, which began six years ago, has suffered a strategic defeat. Indeed, we can apply this judgment to the entire Arab Spring, given the reactionary nature of the civil wars in Libya and Yemen. It was defeated by a range of counterrevolutionary forces; military bonapartists, such as el-Sisi or Assad, monarchist, as in Bahrain, or salafist-jihadists who emerged out of the resistance. The task of revolutionaries in the Middle East and internationally is to face the truth, no matter how bitter, that they now face a counterrevolutionary period, whose duration cannot be known, before there will be a re-emergence of mass struggles." (L5I: Resolution on Syria, 02/03/2017, <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/resolution-syria>) What an unfortunate opportunistic adaption to the middle-class leftist milieu in Western Europe which despises the supposedly "Backward" Muslim people!

67 CoReP: The Liaison Committee of Centrists capitulates in front of Islamism, 2 October 2016, <http://www.revolucion-permanente.com/english/?p=250>. In this bizarre statement, the CoReP group attacks those Trotskyists, including the RCIT, who continue to support the liberation struggle in Syria, as "capitulators to Islamism". In fact, this article is rather a damning indictment of the French CoReP leadership's adaption to Islamophobic social-chauvinist public opinion of imperialist France!

68 See the numerous articles of the RCIT collected in the special sub-section on our website mentioned above. In particular we refer on this issue to our pamphlet *Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified?*

69 See on this e.g. David H. Slavin: The French Left and the Rif War, 1924-25: Racism and the Limits of Internationalism, in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, January 1991; see also numerous documents from the PCF which are reproduced (in German language) in Jakob Moneta: *Die Kolonialpolitik der französischen KP, Hannover 1968*, p. 42-61; Scott Nearing: *Stopping a War. The Fight of the French Workers against the Moroccan Campaign of 1925*, Social Science Publishers, New York City 1926; C. R. Pennell: *Ideology and Practical Politics: A Case Study of the Rif War in Morocco, 1921-1926*, in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Feb., 1982), pp. 19-33; C. R. Pennell: *Women and Resistance to Colonialism in Morocco: The Rif 1916-1926*, in: *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1987), pp. 107-118; Abd El Krim: *Memoiren. Mein Krieg gegen Spanien und Frankreich*, Dresden 1927; Fouzia El-Asrouti: *Der Rif-Krieg 1921-1926*, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Berlin 2007; Friedrich Jarschel: *Abd El Krim, Zeitbiographischer Verlag Limburg, Koblenz 1961*

70 See on this e.g. Michael Provence: *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism*, The University of Texas at Austin, University of Texas Press, Austin 2005

71 RCIT: *Six Points for a Platform of Revolutionary Unity Today*, February 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/6-points-for-a-platform-of-revolutionary-unity-today/>

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# What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for she is the only class that has nothing to lose but their chains.

The revolution can not proceed peacefully because never before has a ruling class voluntarily surrendered their power. The road to liberation includes necessarily the armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasant republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in rank and file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods and schools – in councils. These councils elect and control the government and all other authorities and can always replace them.

Real socialism and communism has nothing to do with the so-called "real existing socialism" in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba or Eastern Europe. In these countries, a bureaucracy dominated and oppressed the proletariat.

The RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of workers and the oppressed. We combine this with a perspective of the overthrow of capitalism.

We work inside the trade unions and advocate class struggle, socialism and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is a layer which is connected with the state and capital via jobs and privileges. It is far from the interests and

living circumstances of the members. This bureaucracy's basis rests mainly on the top, privileged layers of the working class - the workers' aristocracy. The struggle for the liberation of the working class must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their upper strata.

The RCIT strives for unity in action with other organizations. However, we are aware that the policy of social democracy and the pseudo-revolutionary groups is dangerous and they ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class.

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

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

In a war between imperialist states (e.g. U.S., China, EU, Russia, Japan) we take a revolutionary defeatist position, i.e. we don't support neither side and advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class. In a war between an imperialist power (or its stooge) and a semi-colonial country we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed country.

The struggle against national and social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) must be led by the working class. We fight for revolutionary movements of the oppressed (women, youth, migrants etc.) based on the working class. We oppose the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism etc.) and strive to replace them by a revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class win. The construction of such a party and the conduct of a successful revolution as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia are a model for the revolutionary parties and revolutions also in the 21 Century.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries! For a 5<sup>th</sup> Workers International on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*

