



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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Capitalism and Class Struggle in Kenya in Past and Present

An Essay by Kimani Waweru with an Introduction of the RCIT

PLUS: Action Program for Kenya // May 1968 in France

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.8, July 2018

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The picture on the cover shows a statue of Dedan Kimathi in Nairobi (Kenya);

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/85/Statue_of_Dedan_Kimathi_Nairobi%2C_Kenya.jpg

Revolutionary Communism is the monthly English-language journal published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT). The RCIT has sections and activists in Zambia, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Brazil, Mexico, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and Austria. Furthermore, the RCIT has fraternal relations with the Alkebulan School of Black Studies (Kenya), the Pacesetters Movement (Nigeria), the Pan-African Consciousness Renaissance (Nigeria), Courant des Jeunes Penseurs Congolais (Democratic Republic of Congo), the Marxist Group 'Class Politics' (Russia) and Sınıf Savaşı (Turkey).

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Action Program: Forward to a Free and Socialist Kenya!

Economic Freedom and Political Power for the Workers and Oppressed through Socialist Revolution!

Issued by Alkebulan School of Black Studies (Kenya) and the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), April 2018

The working people of Kenya suffer a similar fate as all other oppressed people – in Africa and around the world. They face the brutal consequences of capitalist super-exploitation and imperialist oppression. This is why our fate is closely connected with global developments and why our liberation struggle is inextricably linked with the international struggle of the workers and oppressed.

While our country has formally achieved independence in 1963, only foreign corporations and a small minority of black capitalists and big land owners have benefited from this. While this elite grows richer and richer, the vast majority of the working people still suffer from poverty and misery. According to official numbers of the World Bank, at least 46% of the population live below the poverty line. The real figure is certainly higher. More than 39% of the population of working age is unemployed with an even higher number among the youth (53%)! Nearly two thirds of urban residents have no access to improved sanitation.

The workers, poor peasant and urban poor of Kenya are exploited by foreign corporation and the small domestic black capitalist class. More than 40% of Nairobi Stock Market and a similar share of the banking sector are in foreign hands. Land is mostly concentrated in a few hands. Three powerful political families are estimated to own more than 1 million acres of rural land, while at least 4 million rural Kenyan citizens are entirely landless and at least 11 million own less than 1 hectare.

Our country is a semi-colony – it is formally independent but in reality a pawn in the hands of the imperialist Great Powers, mainly the U.S., Europe and China. The Great Powers have a long history of exploitation and robbery of the human and natural resources of our continent. This

robbery continues until today albeit in different form. Half of Kenya's rising public debt is owed to external creditors. As a result 30%-50% of the annual export income has to be used for debt service.

African migrants, if they manage to get to Europe – despite all war ships and border fences – face racist discrimination and economic super-exploitation as cheap migrant labour.

Kenya's participation in the occupation of Somalia – a war of aggression against the Somali people – reflects the role of the government as a reactionary minion in the service of the Great Powers.

Despite the delusively fairy story of the capitalist ideologists about the advantages of the market economy, poverty and exploitation are the grim reality of capitalism today – in Kenya, in Africa and around the world.

It can not be otherwise, as capitalism is a global system where a small minority of capitalists owns the economy and enriches itself by the labour of the vast majority. Their system is not superior but rather decaying. This is why the world economy experiences repeatedly severe crisis and stagnation.

The liberation of our people is not possible via small reforms and change of government. One can change the head of the government but the system dominated by small elite of foreign and domestic capitalists remains the same. The Kenyan working class and the oppressed masses can only liberate themselves if they overthrow the ruling class and expropriate the corporations and big landowners.

The workers and oppressed must take their fate in their own hands instead of putting their hopes in this or that politician. This is why we fight for an authentic workers and poor peasant government, based on popular councils



NEW RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM!

Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

Adopted at the 2nd World Congress of the RCIT in November 2017

Introduction * Foreign Exploiters – Out of Africa! * The Wealth to Those Who Create It! Economic Freedom Now! * Down with the Capitalist Dictatorships and Corrupt Pseudo-Democracies! * Organize the Workers and Oppressed for the Mass Struggle! * For a Government of Workers and Poor Peasants! For a Socialist Revolution! * For Pan-African Unity! For the United Socialist States of Africa! * For a United Front of Struggle! Overcome the Crisis of Leadership – Build a Revolutionary Party Nationally and Internationally! * Appendix

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

and militias, which can open the road to a socialist future. Only a free and socialist Kenya – as part of the *United Socialist States of Africa* – can guarantee our people a future of welfare and peace!

Such a government will not come to power via parliamentary elections, backroom deals or a military coup d'état. The workers and poor will rather take power via a mass popular uprising resulting in a socialist revolution.

More than five million wage labourers represent the core sector of the liberation forces. While they constitute the majority of the urban labourers there is also a significant minority of workers among the rural labourers.

While the working class represents the central class in the liberation struggle, its most important allies are the poor peasants and the urban poor. About 75% of the working people are employed in agriculture. Subsistence production accounts for almost half of the total agricultural production. In Nairobi nearly 2.6 million people – two third of the city's population – live in informal settlements. The working class can only open the road to socialism if it makes the demands of the poor peasants and the urban poor part of its program.

Our liberation struggle is international by its nature. Since our enemies operate internationally, so must we join forces with our brothers and sisters in other countries inside and outside of Africa. Only as an international class will we be able to fight back. Fighting for the liberation of all workers and oppressed will be the surest road of liberation of us!

Liberation will not happen automatically. We can only achieve it if we fight with a strong revolutionary party which unites the politically most advanced workers and youth. Such a party must be part of a Revolutionary World Party. The crucial task today is the construction of such a party – in Kenya and internationally.

This *Action Program for Kenya* is based on the analysis and strategy outlined in the RCIT's "*Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa*". We call all activists who share our programmatic outlook and who are prepared to dedicate their lives for the liberation struggle of the workers and oppressed to join us. Let us build together the *Alkebulan School of Black Studies* and the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*!

Free Kenya and the whole of Africa from capitalist super-exploitation and imperialist oppression!

We say: Kenya as well as the whole of Africa can not be free as long as our people are held hostage by imperialist Great Powers, multinational corporations, foreign settlers and the small domestic capitalist class. The working class and the oppressed must fight them so that they can finally expropriate them.

The *Alkebulan School of Black Studies* and the RCIT fight for:

* *Expel all the Great Powers (US, China, EU, etc.)! Shut down the US and UK military bases in Kenya!*

* *Expropriate all the imperialist banks and corporations without compensation! For the nationalisation and centralization of all banks and the creation of one state bank operating on the basis of socialist guidelines!*

* *Cancel all debts! Down with the economic terrorist regime of the IMF and World Bank! No to all "free trade" treaties with the imperialist powers!*

* *Defeat the military intervention of the Great Powers and their local stooges!*

* *Force the old and new colonial powers to pay compensation for centuries of slavery, exploitation and oppression!*

* *Abolish all privileges for the settlers!*

* *Reject imperialist border controls! Open the borders! Raise the wages for migrants to the levels of domestic workers! Full equality of migrants! Stop the racial oppression of Black people in Europe, Latin America, US and other parts of the world! Stop the Islamophobic discrimination of Muslim migrants in Europe; No to all religious-based persecution of minorities!*

Jobs and Education for all! Nationalise the economy under the control of the workers and poor peasants!

We support every struggle, as limited as it might be, for the improvement of the living conditions of the workers and poor peasants. However, we are aware that no sustainable rising of our living standard is possible as long as industry and banks remain in the hands of foreign and domestic corporations and the land in the hands of a few big landowners.

This is why the *Alkebulan School of Black Studies* and the RCIT fight for:

* *Jobs for all and higher wages! For safe and secure job! For a public employment programs to expand infrastructure, housing, education, health care, etc., financed by massive taxing of the rich!*

* *Nationalization of all big corporations, mines and banks under control of the workers!*

* *Nationalization of large estates so that the poor peasants can decide how to best utilize the land!*

* *Raising women's wages to the level of their class brothers! For a popular campaign to stop violence against women!*

* *Jobs and education for all youth! Equal wages! Abolish child labour!*

* *Free health system for all, financed by a massive taxing of the rich!*

* *The right to decent food, housing and social protection for all!*

No to the war of aggression against the Somali people! Immediate withdrawal of Kenya's troops!

The Kenyatta regime has led our country to join the imperialist occupation of Somalia – the so-called "*African Union Mission to Somalia*" (AMISOM) with more than 20,000 troops. We denounce this aggression as an act national oppression against the Somali people in the service of the imperialist Great Powers. While we don't give political support to the petty-bourgeois Islamist *Al-Shabaab* militia, we support the struggle of the Somali people against this reactionary foreign occupation. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all Kenyan troops from Somalia!

* *Immediate withdrawal of Kenyan troops from Somalia!*

* *Support the resistance against the imperialist occupiers and their local henchmen!*

Defend democratic rights! Down with the Kenyatta regime! No illusions in Odinga's NASA!

We denounce the regime of Uhuru Kenyatta who belongs to one of the richest families in Africa and has a long record of collaboration with the imperialist great powers. The President is a darling both of the Western imperialist powers as well as of Chinese imperialism. He slavishly implements the austerity program dictated by the Interna-

tional Monetary Fund. His regime constantly violates our democratic rights and has organized a massive fraud in order to safeguard its "reelection".

The *National Super Alliance* (NASA), led by Raila Odinga, constitutes the biggest opposition force. We oppose all forms of repression and discrimination against it by the Kenyatta regime. However, we have no illusions about Odinga and NASA. They represent bourgeois forces who only desire to become part of the capitalist machinery so that they can share the positions and privileges among themselves. NASA has no interest in removing the fundamental illnesses of the country – the super-exploitation by imperialist powers (US, EU and China) and the oppression by a thoroughly corrupt and repressive state apparatus wedded with the ruling capitalist class.

While we are prepared to participate in joint practical actions with pro-NASA forces in order to organize massive protests on the streets against the Kenyatta regime, we reject any political alliance with it. The central task was and remains to build an independent workers party based on a revolutionary action program.

The *Alkebulan School of Black Studies* and the RCIT fight for:

- * For the freedom of speech and assembly!
- * Defend the right to strike and demonstrate!
- * For the freedom of political and union organization, as well as the freedom to make use of all communication and information media!
- * No discrimination of ethnic or religious minorities!
- * For the right to elect and recall all public officeholders!
- * Access to human rights, including political rights for prisoners!
- * All state officials and their actions – especially police, army, intelligence, administration, legal, enterprise directors, etc. – must be monitored by workers' and popular councils!
- * For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!
- * Down with the Kenyatta regime!
- * For a Government of Workers and Poor Peasants! For a Socialist Revolution!
- * Long live a free and socialist Kenya!
- * Long live the United Socialist States of Africa!

Organize the Workers and Oppressed for the Mass Struggle!

We know from our history, that the workers and oppressed can not trust the promises of corrupt politicians. They must fight for their rights by themselves. The methods of fighting are mass mobilisations on the streets, in workplaces and in schools and universities. We fight for our rights by using all forms of mass struggle dictated by concrete circumstances. In the current situation such methods will primarily be *mass demonstrations, strikes and general strikes, occupations, etc.*

As revolutionaries we call in all struggles for the formation of *action committees* of workers, youth and the popular masses in workplaces, neighbourhoods, villages, schools and universities. Furthermore, revolutionaries call for the formation of *self-defence units* in order to defend strikers, demonstrators, migrants and refugees against the violence perpetrated by police and fascists.

We do not ignore existing mass organizations like trade unions, student unions or peasants' organizations. But we are aware that they are often dominated by corrupt bureaucrats and careerists. We therefore advocate the formation of revolutionary factions and rank and file opposition movements inside these mass organizations in order to advance the struggle for democratisation of these organizations.

No future without socialism! No socialism without a revolution! No revolution without a revolutionary party!
Long Live the Revolution! Aluta Continua!

For the RCIT's analysis and strategy for the African liberation struggle, we refer readers to our numerous articles and documents which can be accessed at a special section of our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>. In particular we refer to our programmatic document:

Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa Economic Freedom and Political Power for the Workers and Oppressed through Socialist Revolution!

Document of the 2nd Congress of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) in Lusaka (Zambia), November 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/manifesto-for-the-revolutionary-liberation-of-black-africa/>

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Comments on a Remarkable Document on Kenya's Capitalism

Preface to "Social Investigation and Class Analysis in Kenya"

By the Editorial Board of 'Revolutionary Communism', June 2018

Below we reprint an essay written by Kimani Waweru, a comrade from the socialist Pan-Africanist organization *PALIACT* in Kenya. We consider this document as very informative and recommend it to every socialist interested in the history of capitalism and class struggle in Kenya. It offers a socialist analysis of the economic, social and political history of this country.

The author is not a member of the RCIT and does not consider himself as a Trotskyist. This does not minimize the value of his document. Nevertheless, we want to elaborate a few comments in this preface which deal with issues which we either consider as particularly important or which, in our opinion, are missing or not sufficiently clear in this essay.

1. In the chapter "*Fall of Berlin Wall and Mushrooming of Civil Societies 1990*" (in the first paragraph) the document mentions the cold war between two camps – "*capitalist and communist*". We are aware that the USSR was often characterized as "*communist*". But in our opinion these were not authentic communist societies but rather Stalinist dictatorships of a privileged bureaucracy based on post-capitalist property relations. There were important socially and economically features in these countries which we Trotskyists supported (capitalism was abolished, no bourgeoisie existed, social reforms, etc). It was absolutely legitimate of various national liberation movements struggling against the imperialist powers to take material and military aid

from the USSR. Hence, our tendency defended the USSR and similar countries in the Cold War against the Western imperialists. But we took into account that these states were ruled by a privileged bureaucracy which oppressed the working class. Hence we sided with the workers when they rose up against the dictatorship (e.g. in Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, Poland 1980/81) and advocated a political revolution. So, for all these reasons, we would not call the USSR as "*communist*".

2. In the chapter "*Somali Question/Terrorism*" the document describes various aspects of this issue. In our opinion, this chapter is not very clear about the conclusions of its analysis. In our opinion Al-Shabaab clearly is a petty-bourgeois Islamist force which advocates reactionary Salafism. But AMISOM is a reactionary force which occupies Somalia in the service of the imperialist powers. We think that there is a legitimate national resistance in Somalia against the AMISOM forces which we support. However, socialists clearly can neither support the reactionary politics and ideology of Al-Shabaab nor any terrorist actions against civilians.

3. The author points out that the poor peasants often need to supplement their income by selling their labour power. This is a typical feature in many semi-colonial countries. Lenin also dealt with this in his analysis of Russia at his time. We would characterize such a strata of poor peasants as a semi-petty-bourgeois and, at the same time,

Books of the RCIT

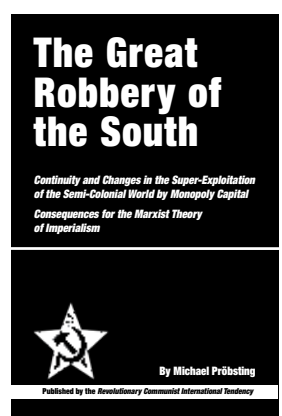
Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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)



semi-proletarian layer.

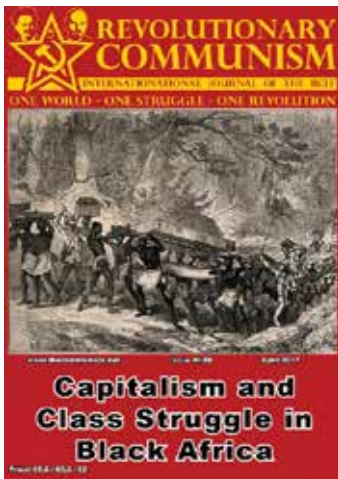
4. We strongly agree with the statement at the end of your document: "*National, international and comprador bourgeoisie are whom we should aim to defeat since they own the means of production and they use it to exploit workers and strongly defend the status quo.*" It has been a classic failure of many Stalinist and petty-bourgeois forces that they desired for an alliance with the so-called "national" bourgeoisie against the comprador bourgeoisie and imperialism. This strategy always ended in a subordination of the working class and the poor peasants to the bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie is no and can not be a real opponent of imperialism as it is itself connected with the imperialist world market (through exports, loans, etc.)

5. The document states in the last chapter: "*In Kenya peasants, workers, and the lower petty bourgeois remain the leading force for change, and what they need most is a progressive movement offering them leadership and ideology. With those two they can accomplish miracles and change everything.*" While this is true, we would have formulated it somehow stronger in the following sense: in our opinion it is the correct and Marxist position to view the working class as the primary class which should take the leading role among the popular and oppressed classes and layers. This does not minimize the role of other layers. All oppressed popular classes (working class, poor peasantry, urban poor, etc.) must be rallied against the capitalists and imperialists. However, the issue is which class should take the lead *inside* this alliance of classes and layers. Marxists see the working class as the most modern class which should take the leading role. This is not because of their numbers but because it is located in the centre of the capitalist value production while the poor peasantry works in more back-

ward economic relations of production. As it is known, the peasantry in Russia before 1917 was proportionally even bigger than the peasantry in Africa today. This, however, did not change the position of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to view the working class as the central class in the liberation struggle. It might be true that the working class currently lacks the ability to play such a role given its backward leadership and its political inexperience. But, as the author describes it so powerful in his document, if the petty bourgeoisie takes the leading role in the liberation struggle, the struggle is doomed to fail. Hence, revolutionaries should orientate primarily to the working class as it is this class which should become the leading force in the liberation struggle of all popular and oppressed classes and layers (workers, semi-proletarian layers, poor urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, etc.).

The RCIT has elaborated its program for Africa in various documents. Our most comprehensive document is the RCIT's "*Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa*" (<https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/manifesto-for-the-revolutionary-liberation-of-black-africa/>). We have also summarised our programmatic conclusions for Kenya in the "*Action Program: Forward to a Free and Socialist Kenya!*" (See in this journal).

Finally, we want to emphasize again that the document "*Social Investigation and Class Analysis in Kenya*" is a highly interesting and useful document which deepens the insight of all socialists interested in the economic, social and political history of Kenya. The RCIT and its comrades in the sympathizing section in Kenya look forward to advance the discussion and collaboration with the comrades of PALIAct!



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa

*An Analysis of Imperialist Exploitation and Oppression
and the Perspectives of the Liberation Struggle*

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

Introduction * Some Background Notes on Black Africa's Modern History: How Colonial Plunder and Oppression Blocked Independent Development * Popular Struggles against Colonialism Led to Formal Independence * Formal Independence as Disguised Imperialist Dependency * The Reactionary Role of White Settlers * Is Capitalist Black Africa Rising? * Africa in the Grip of Imperialism * China as a new Imperialist Great Power Challenging the Western Domination * The Working Class and the Oppressed * Rising Class Struggle * Key Lessons for a Revolutionary Strategy in Black Africa * Imperialist Domination and Authoritarian Regimes Remain in Place despite Formal Changes * Breaking the Capitalist Chain – The Program of Permanent Revolution * The Revolutionary Struggle against Imperialism * Imperialist Chauvinism and the Anti-Imperialist Patriotism of the Oppressed * The Independence of the Working Class and the Struggle against the Popular Front * The Struggle for Pan-African Unity * The Revolutionary World Party and its African Sections * Footnotes

Social Investigation and Class Analysis in Kenya

By Kimani Waweru, October 2015

Introduction

Kenya is an African country located in eastern part of the continent. It neighbours Uganda to the West, Southern Sudan to the North West, Tanzania to the south and Ethiopia to the North and Somalia to North east. The capital city is Nairobi, and the name came from the Masai phrase Enkare Nairobi meaning a place of cool waters. This capital city came about after the headquarters of the Kenya Uganda Railway in 1896 was established. Kenya has a total land area of 580,367 square kilometres; the dry land being 569,140 square kilometres while water surface area amounts to 11,227 square kilometres. The coastline stretches 536 km along the Indian Ocean. Most of the notable features include the second highest mountain in Africa Mt. Kenya, which is 5,199 m tall. The two main rivers are Tana (1,000 km) and Athi (390 km). The biggest lake in Africa is Lake Victoria which happens to be shared by the three East Africa countries.

Population Distribution and Nationalities

Kenya has 42 nationalities living across the country, but the Agikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Abaluhya and Akamba constitute more than 70% of the population. According to Census conducted in 2009, the country's population stood at 38.6 million people, with an average growth of 2.46% per year. It is now approximately 46 735 133; the female demographic is 23 392 129 (50.1%) while the male population is 23 343 023 (49.9%). [1] Youth, people between 15 and 35 according to the African Union definition, account for the majority of Kenyans.

Almost all nationalities have their languages which they use to communicate among themselves. Nevertheless, Kiswahili and English are the official languages. Kiswahili is the most used, and particularly by workers and peasants. Religiosity is a factor in the lives of Kenyans as over 97% are believers of different faiths; 85% being Christians, Muslims 11.2%, indigenous [2] 1.5% while non-believers [3] are approximately 2%.

Economy

Kenya's economy depends largely on agriculture. About 80% of the work force engages in subsistence agriculture. Most of large scale agricultural activities, that are mainly done for commercial purposes and using machines, such as tractors, harvesters etc. are done in the central highlands and rift valley which were illegally occupied by the white settlers in the colonial period, and were transferred to African ownership only after independence in the 1960s as is explored later. In these regions there is a lot of monocropping which has detrimental effects on the environment. Furthermore, poor wages and work conditions, as well as the use of environmentally harmful chemical fertilizer characterize a lot of this large scale farming. Related, tea and coffee are among the leading foreign exchange earners in Kenya. Coffee was first introduced in Kenya in 1905 while tea was first planted in 1923, and initially the white

settlers forced the colonial government to issue laws to bar Africans from growing coffee. The laws ensured that only the white settlers could profit from growing tea and coffee for export. Furthermore this legislation required African to seek licenses to grow these products and these were very difficult to obtain, all this was meant to keep Africans from competing with the settlers in this sphere of Agriculture. The Africans were only allowed to plant these crops in 1954 after the Swynnerton Plan [4] was put into place. Both crops are now produced in large and small scales. Large scale plantation farming is dominated by multi-nationals such as Brooke Bond and Unilever, while small scale farming is done by the peasantry who face limited returns on these products due to fluctuating coffee and tea prices. Peasants have their own cooperatives which help in marketing.

Horticulture i.e. growing of vegetables, fruits and flowers for sale is another agricultural activity which is growing expeditiously. These exports are ranked second behind tourism and have overtaken tea and coffee as far as foreign exchange is concerned. Since it requires large capital, it is controlled by the wealthy and multinationals such as Homegrown limited.

Tourism is the country's principal source of foreign exchange, and has in the recent past experienced a number of challenges. This is due to negative travel advisories from the leading countries whose tourists visit Kenya. The said countries have advised their citizens against visiting Kenya due to what they say is insecurity. They cite terrorism incidents executed by the Somalia al-Shabaab militants. The government on its part has blamed those countries for what it sees as economic sabotage, claiming terrorism is a global phenomenon and should be handled careful by giving solidarity to the countries affected instead of issuing travel bans against them.

China has become the leading source of direct foreign investment in Kenya, and has contributed a lot towards infrastructure development in the country. This has seen Kenya shifting its reliance on grants from the western countries to those from China. This is seen to be one reason behind the cold relationship between the Western countries and Jubilee government. Notwithstanding this close relationship, the emergent role of China in Africa is viewed, often, suspiciously by a wide array of non-government actors and the public at large.

Kenya's gross domestic product for 2014 was 5.4% and is predicted to grow to 6% in 2015. Despite this, economic growth is rarely felt by the lower class who live below the poverty line; 46% of the population survive on less than two dollars a day. About two-thirds of Kenya's 4.3 trillion shillings economy, according to New World Wealth report 2014, is controlled by 8,300 super-wealthy individuals. This is as a result of continuous colonial and post-colonial policies that lead to entrenchment of an unequal distribution of wealth, and this continues to occur even while Kenya has recently been declared a middle-income country. For many years Kenyans have been struggling to remedy both political and economic injustice, it is on this basis that

it will be important to historically analyze Kenya so that we can be in a position to know how the challenges came about and how we can resolve them.

Kenya Political History Up To the Present Time Pre-Colonial Period

Nationalities living in what is in the present Kenya territory lived relatively peacefully before the coming of imperialists, with each adhering to their respective cultural norms. The disputes among the different nationalities used to be resolved in an amicable manner, though in rare cases nationalities had to fight for a variety of reasons, such as livestock raids etc. One example is that of the Agikuyu and the Maasai who had intermittent conflict, yet despite this often consider each other "in-laws" as they used to intermarry. The Eurocentric notion that was formulated, and which is still being fostered, and states that Kenya nationalities used to live in a primitive way is far from the true. Many nationalities had their own ways of handling their affairs be it economic, social or political. They had structures which handled all issues that would come up. For example the [5]Agikuyu first unit was the family, and the husband or father was the head, although there are also longstanding examples of Kikuyu matriarchy. Several family members within a village used to form a Kĩama gĩa itũra (village council), and the oldest elder was the leader and a representative of the village. Representatives of various villages used to form Kĩama gĩa Ndundu (District council), and the most senior elder who had exhibited great wisdom used to be chosen as Mũthamaki or Mũchiri (leader or judge). All those elected in every district used to form Mwaki wa Matũra (National

Council), this is the national council which used to elect a judge during its meetings. The Gikuyu nation had its own military wing which was called Njama ya ita (council of war). This council was composed of young men between the ages 20 to 40 years who were the nation's fighters, and besides this they would perform the difficult tasks that the nation demanded of them. The leadership within the nation was based on merit and not inheritance. Any minor dispute within the family was resolved by the father, and the more the complex ones were referred to the village council. The village council dealt with family matters and also civil matters related to debts, as result of barter trade, and dowry. Criminal matters such as theft, witchcraft and assault were also brought before the council, and the offenders were usually made to pay compensation to the complainant.

Wealth created by people was shared equitably and the surplus remained in the territory for communal use. Land which was the source of wealth was in plenty, and you could hardly find people who did not have land. In some instances, particularly among Agikuyu, those who committed serious criminal acts were ostracized from the village. When these people landed in another village they were called Ahoi (seekers), since they had nothing of their own. They were, in most cases, then given a piece of land to start their life again. This means no one was denied the right to access land for subsistence.

British Protectorate 1884-1920

The first foreigners to set their foot in in present day Kenya were the Portuguese, and this was in 1498. Their superior military and naval technology helped them to con-

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.

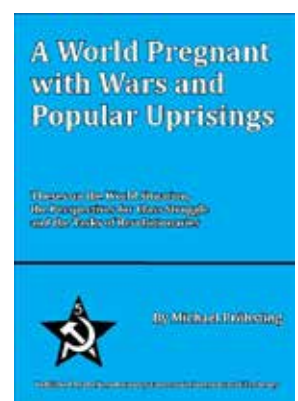
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists' analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic 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/>



quer the coastal part of the country. During that period they encountered constant resistance from the Africans and this made them build Fort Jesus, a fort that they used to defend themselves from both external (international) and internal (local) aggression. In the 17th century the Africans together with Omani Arabs living on the coast mobilized one another and defeated the Portuguese

By the 17th century, most parts of Europe had defeated feudalism, which was a system hindering further development of the productive forces, replaced it with capitalism. The defeat of feudalism and the ushering in of capitalism brought about competition for resources in the world. It is due to this that major countries in Europe, such as Germany, Britain, France, Dutch Holland etc., started sending people as explorers and missionaries to find areas where resources could be found in order to propel their respective economies. Some were people like German Doctor Ludwig Krapf, David Livingstone, John Hanning Speke, James Grant and Frederick Lugard among others. These people did a marvelous job for their respective countries because it is their work that made Europeans more geographically familiar with certain areas, as they had mapped out the land, thus facilitating the deepening of their imperial ventures.

As enslavement of Africans began to slow down and the scramble for Africa began to emerge, Portugal called for a conference in Berlin, from 1884 to 1885, so that Europeans could occupy different parts of the continent. It was a division of Africa as if it was a cake, and the dynamics between European countries at the time shaped which country received what part of the continent. At this conference, the entire continent, save for Ethiopia and Liberia, was divided among these countries.

East Africa Protectorate (EAP) 1884-1920

After the Berlin conference Kenya became a protectorate of Britain. Britain then gave the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), under the leadership of Sir William Mackinnon, the right to administer and develop Kenya on its behalf. William embarked on deceiving different Kenya nationalities into signing dubious agreements. The first major task of the company was to construct a railway from Mombasa seaport to Kisumu and then Uganda, and this railway line was designed to help ensure the flow of the stolen wealth from Kenya and Uganda to Britain. Since most of the natives lacked skills for railway contraction about 32,000 skilled and semi-skilled Indian workers were brought to execute the job. More than half of these Indian workers returned upon the completion of railway while about 6,700 settled in Kenya and Uganda. The company's mandate was cancelled and transferred to the British foreign office on 1st July 1895. The Kenyan people, upon seeing how things were developing and realizing that the people they thought were friends were actually on another mission to steal their wealth, resisted courageously. Some of the freedom fighters who resisted the British are listed below.

Waiyaki wa Hinga[6]

In 1890 Waiyaki organized his fighters of the Agikuyu nation to attack a military base that had been constructed by IBEAC in Dagoreti, and they burnt it down. The fort

was rebuilt later only to face the same fate. The IBEAC was forced to relocate the fort to Nairobi where it, nevertheless, was attacked constantly. The Britons were forced to devise a way of capturing Waiyaki and what they did is that they invited him for a fake peace agreement and captured him then. They took him to Kibwezi where they buried him alive in 1892.

Nguunju wa Gakere[7]

Nguunju Led Nyeri people in resisting British rule, he was arrested together with his son on 6th December 1902, and deported to Kismayu until 1905. He was transferred to Muranga where he died in detention in 1907

Koitalel Arap Samoei

When the railway line reached Nandi land Koitalel led Nandi people in resisting British imperial rule. This went on for close to 10 years, and it was only in 1905 when Meinertzhagan, a British soldier, tricked him into signing an agreement only to shoot him later while shaking hands with him.

Ebei

Ebei, together with diviners called Oinyo, Koletiang' and a prophet called Lowatel, led Turkana people in resisting British rule. They lost many of their people and livestock but did not surrender. Ebei was unfortunately shot dead in 1924.

Moraa wa Ngiti

She was a woman who was married to Ngiti, a medical expert, who led the Gusii people in resisting the establishment of a military base in Kisii town in 1907. She was later arrested and tortured but she did not denounce her will to resist British slavery.

Mekatilili wa Menza and Wanje wa Madoroka

Metatilili was a woman while Wanje was a man. They both led the Giriama in resisting British rule, and urged people not to pay taxes, such as the hut tax, of the day. They also urged youth to combat the collaborators. The imperialists arrested them in 1914 and detained them in Kisii about 600 kilometers away. Surprisingly they escaped and walked back to Giriama land despite their advanced age. They were arrested again and deported to Kismayu in Somali until 1919.

Since capitalism entails the exploitation of labour and the accumulation of economic surplus, the British imperialists were determined to steal Kenyan wealth. To perfect this they encouraged settlers from Britain and South Africa to settle in Kenya. Nations such as the Agikuyu, Kamba, Kalenjin and Maasai who were living in the agricultural areas (North Rift and central parts of Kenya) lost most of their land as they were forced out to pave way for settlers. Some settlers allowed the displaced Africans to squat on their land in order to secure a continuous supply of cheap labour, and it is in this way that squatters in Kenya emerged. Since settlers were in need of labour, the imperialists designed laws which could force the Africans to work for them. Some of these laws included poll tax and

hut tax laws meant to force Africans to leave their homes and work on settler's farms. Furthermore the Natives Ordinance law was specifically designed to keep the worker with his employer and prevent him from deserting duty. Every time an African left employment the employer had to sign the worker's kipande (identification card), which was always hanged around the neck, as evidence that the African was not a labour deserter. The kipande had to be produced on demand for the police or the administration. This degrading practice continues up to today as Kenyan police have habit of harassing ordinary people by demanding an identification card from them. Another law was the Masters and Servants Ordinance and the Vagrancy regulations which later came to be called the Vagrancy act. This law was established to make sure that African's did not loiter at the expense of working for their employer. The squatters continued to use the European occupied land for themselves, while at the same time working for the settlers. Nonetheless, as time passed they began to compete agriculturally with settlers. It is on this basis that the Resident Native Ordinance was passed to demand that squatter payments be made in labour and not in any other kind or in cash.

British Colony 1920-1963

In July 1920 the territory under the East Africa Protectorate became part of the British Crown, and was called the Kenya Colony. This meant that Kenya was like a County of Britain and was to elect its governor similar to the way the county government operates today. Major-General Sir Edward Northey was appointed as the first Governor of the British colony of Kenya.

Despite ostensive "self-rule" the change didn't affect the status quo as the exploitation and suppression of Africans went on, and it is in this regard that the Africans began to struggle to end British rule. In 1921 Harry Thuku, a colonial civil servant, formed the East Africa Association (EAA) and became its chairman. The organisation had the backing of workers and did a lot of work in campaigning for the end of exploitation by connecting the economic liberation of workers to politics. In this regard Harry Thuku asserted that Africans had to end their exploitation by overthrowing British imperialism in Kenya. The colonial government later arrested Thuku and detained him at the Kingways police station (today Central Police Station). When people heard that their leader has been arrested they mobilized one another and headed to the station where they demanded his release. A woman by the name Muthoni Nyanjiru challenged men to force themselves into the station and free their leader. The colonial police, together with some settlers who were enjoying the sweat of the workers at nearby Norfolk hotel, then began to shoot indiscriminately killing over 200 people and Muthoni Nyanjiru was one of them. The colonial government later banned the EAA and made it illegal the formation of national organisations, while still allowing for regional ones. This action precipitated the formation of regional organisations based on nationalities and examples of these are the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), Taita Hills Association, Young Kavirondo Association and Ukamba Members Association, among others. These associations continued to agitate for social justice and independence.

In order to prevent a potential African rebellion, the colonial government issued the Devonshire White paper in 1923 which stated that, essentially, when the interests of alien races (meaning the British and the Asians) conflicted with African interests, the latter would be paramount. The paper was not adhered to as it was a gimmick intended to hoodwink Africans while the racist status quo remained.

The colonial government also interfered with African cultural practices, and it perfected this through their religious missionaries. An example of this is when the protestant missionaries launched a campaign against female circumcision. Since most of the schools were run by the missionaries, parents of African children seeking admission to school were made to formally state that they were against female circumcision. Failure to do this meant that one had to be excommunicated. This was one of the reasons that led the KCA leadership to form Karinga Independent Schools Association (KISA). The Africans also devised other ways of promoting their endeared culture and an example of this in 1929 was the muthirigu (anti-government song). This song was an expression of protest against the suppression of African traditional values and practices, particularly female circumcision. While female circumcision, at the present time, has been medically proven to be of no health benefits as it harms girls and women in many ways, during that period female circumcision, especially among the Agikuyu, was highly valued and every woman was yearning for the initiation. Similarly, during the colonial period African customs such as brewing beer and traditional wedding ceremonies were termed as primitive, and African religious beliefs were demonized at the expense of Christianity and banned. Furthermore the promotion of colonial names as first names for the African were undertaken, and most Africans were made to feel that colonial names were superior to theirs. This habit has perpetuated up to present time, and those who practice Christianity adopt colonial names after being baptized, while European Christians do not adapt other names even after being baptized. These bestial practices by the colonialist contributed a lot to diverting Africans from their culture and coerced them to ignorantly embrace imported foreign practices

Harry Thuku was released in 1930 and became the president of the KCA in 1932. It seems that the jail sentence softened him since he then left the KCA to form a reactionary organisation called the Kikuyu Provincial Association (KPA). This new organization collaborated with the colonialists. Nevertheless, this did not demotivate Africans from exerting pressure on the colonial government to return back their stolen land.

The Roles of Workers in Fighting for Liberation

By 1930s the working class in Kenya had become a force to reckon with, and this was a direct result of the colonial system which had facilitated the expansion of economy. It did this by exploiting the labour of the workers who continued to live miserable lives. Due to the significant amount of workers, in 1934, Makhan Singh formed the Indian Trade Union of Kenya (ITUK), and became its first general secretary. Since issues affecting workers could not be achieved by workers fighting along racial lines, he convinced his fellow members to change the name of the

union to the Labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK) so that it could accommodate other people irrespective of colour, race or religion. Under his leadership LTUK was able to take stands that were beneficial to the workers. Furthermore, it formed alliances with progressive political groups fighting for freedom of the country. In 1948 LTUK, the African Workers Federation (AWF) led by Chege wa Kibacia and other small trade unions merged to form the East African Trade Union Congress (EATUC). The merged trade union took an anti-imperialist stand and worked with the Mau Mau revolutionary movement in recruitment exercises, and also to educate workers. Due to its strong stand the colonial government refused to register it. One of its major successes was to organize a boycott against a member of loyal family (Duke of Gloucester) from commissioning Nairobi to city status. Both Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai were arrested and arraigned in court but were acquitted after fielding a strong defense through a lawyer. Makhan Singh was arrested again and detained in Lodwar until 20th October 1961.

There were some trade unions which sided with the colonialist and one of these was the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Union (KFRTU) which was formed in 1952. It later changed its name to the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL). This union was led by Tom Mboya who had a close relationship with the USA government and with the CIA. It is because of its reactionary history that after independence in 1963 some workers opted to form another union – the Kenya Trade Unions Congress. This forced the neo colonial government to form a ministerial committee, under the chairmanship of the reactionary late Julius Gikonyo Kiano, to bring the two unions together in 1965. The committee recommended the disbandment of the two trade unions and instead the formation of a single national trade union which was given the name the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU). The government did this in order to tactfully confuse disenchanted workers, and lead them to believe that the newly formed union was going to take care of their interests. COTU has always been on the side of the ruling class although it disguises itself by issuing “progressive” rhetorical statements in public forums and in press conferences. During the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that were spearheaded by IMF, and led to the loss of many jobs, COTU didn't fight the said policies.

Mau Mau Rebellion and other African Resistances

In late 1930s and 1940s colonial resistance was basically reformist in character because the leadership of the political organisations was the petty bourgeoisie. These were people who had received colonial education and better employment opportunities, and thus were able to articulate issues affecting Africans in a clearer manner. It should also be noted that a large percentage of the population at that time had no formal education but this did not deter them from giving their leaders unwavering support.

In 1944 Eliud Mathu was appointed to the colonial Kenya legislative council in the same year a group of other petty bourgeoisie leaders, who included Mbiyu Koinange, James Gichuru, Albert Owino and others, formed a union which they called the Kenya African Study Union (KASU). In the following year the same people dissolved KASU

and in its place formed a political union which they called Kenya African Union (KAU). KAU became active and had its own weekly newspaper called Sauti ya Mwafrika (African Voice). When Jomo Kenyatta returned from Britain he took over the leadership of KAU in 1947. KAU continued to agitate for freedom but due to its petty bourgeois leadership it fell into the imperialist trap of delaying independence. This was because it was following constitutional means as the way of achieving ultimate freedom; they forgot that laws were serving the colonialists, and that they were being manipulated by these very same forces.

It happened that there were some dedicated members of KAU, as well as other non-members, who had realized that independence was not to be achieved by constitutional means. It is for this reason that the idea to form the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA), commonly known as the Mau Mau, was conceived. Many of the top KAU leadership were not even aware of the plan. Many of the members of the army were young men who were initiated in 1940s, and had been conscripted to fight in the Second World War on the side of Britain. These young men had acquired battle experience and realized that the British army was not invincible as was believed.

The Kenya Land and Freedom Army began a war against the colonial government around 1948, and inflicted great losses to the regime. In order to contain the movement the colonial regime declared a state of emergency in 1952 and banned KAU. Six members of the KAU (Jomo Kenyatta, Ochieng Oneko, Paul Ngei, Kung'u Karumba, Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai) were arrested for, ostensibly, being behind the movement. Of those six arrested it was only Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai who knew about the movement. Stanley Mathenge[8] was initially the leader of the movement but was replaced by Dedan Kimaathi in March 1953. The two later disagreed and this led to a division in the army, leading to two separate camps and each being led by these two leaders. Because of the determination of the movement to resist colonialism, the colonial government started to bring some cosmetic changes in the colony in order to hoodwink Kenyans. Among them was the 1954 Swynnerton Plan which was meant to get rid of communal access to land by individualizing it. The plan benefited the colonizers due to the fact that the African, who really only got small parcels of land, thought psychologically that they had won. Under the plan[9] land was registered in the names of the present male-heads of households without recognition of the use rights of female heads of households, and whose husbands were still with the Mau Mau. This plan therefore did not help Mau Mau fighters who were in the forest fighting.

Another gimmick was to increase the number of Africans in the legislative assembly, LEGCO, to eight, ostensibly, to highlight African issues. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, a progressive nationalist, became the chairman of this group. The regime, in its resolve to divide unity among the oppressed nationalities, allowed only the formation of political organisations based on districts. And since districts were then based on nationalities, the organisations that were formed were ethnic based e.g. the Baringo Independence Party among the Nandis and the Central Nyanza District Congress for the Luos. This division brought disunity among the Africans and continues to date.

The Mau Mau movement was supported by the peasants

and workers who would supply them with food and other necessities. In order to cut off this support, the peasants were forced to dig a trench measuring between 10 feet deep and 15 feet wide around the Nyandarua (Aberdares) mountain range. The colonialist also designed a scheme that coopted some Mau Mau to their side as spies, and this was a big blow to the movement as it was hard to know the genuine fighters from the fake ones. Some of these fighters revealed most of the movement's secrets and the hide outs. It is believed that it was the work of pseudo fighters that contributed to the shooting and arrest of Field Marshal Dedan Kimaathi, the leader of the movement, on 20th October 1956. Kimathi was arraigned in a colonial court and hanged on 18th February 1957 by the regime. The capture of Kimaathi did not deter the other fighters as they continued fiercely with the struggle.

On realizing that they could not hold on to power, the colonial government began, tactically, to groom the potential future African leadership. These were petty bourgeois politicians like Tom Mboya, James Gichuru and Jeremiah Nyaga etc. who Africans believed were on their side, but who were actually cultivated by the colonialists. The ones with radical views, such as Jaramogi, were demonized. Those who were won over attacked Mau Mau and its stand, claiming that everyone fought for independence. It did not take much time for the true colors of some petty bourgeois leaders to be noted, and it was due to this fact that some disgruntled members of Mau Mau, together with patriotic Kenyans, decided to form the Kiama kia Muingi (Mass Party). The party was meant to continue to agitate for the genuine demands of Africans—claims that were being negated. The demands included distribution of land to all landless Kenyans, support for the Mau Mau who were fighting in the forest and unity among all nationalities, among other issues. The party was viciously attacked by the regime and its lackeys, and was banned in 1960.

The USA, currently the leading capitalist state, partnered with rightist politician Tom Mboya to offer Kenyan students scholarship to study in the USA. The idea was meant to cultivate within the student leaders capitalist ideas, and that would assist in the preservation of the status quo. The colonial regime and USA knew well enough that if they

did not control the minds and the intellectual development of Kenyans, they would not be able to control the politics and the economy of the country. The idea helped many students, including Barack Hussein Obama Senior the father of the current US president (Barack Obama) and also the winner of 2005 Nobel winner the late Prof. Wangari Maathai, to go to the US. Others like Prof. Maina Kin'yatti, even after being a beneficiary of the program, opted to stick to leftist ideology. Likewise the USSR, through Jaramogi, helped many students to study in USSR. Some of the students' who benefitted, like the late former minister Kamotho, ventured from socialism and actually became very great defenders of the capitalist model of production.

Formation of KANU and KADU

In 1960 the colonial regime allowed the formation of parties with a national outlook, and it was because of this development that the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) were formed on 27th March 1960 and 25th June 1960 respectively. Both parties, though national, had ethnic biases within them, and an example of this is that KANU was dominated by the two bigger nationalities i.e. Agikuyu and Luo, while KADU was dominated by the Luhya, Masai and Kalenjin. This can be traced to the seeds of ethnicity planted by the colonial regime in 1956 noted earlier. As far as ideological outlook was concerned, the two shared similar ideas. That said KANU had two camps; reactionary politicians like Tom Mboya and Gichuru and progressive politicians who had a pro people agenda among them Pio Gama Pinto, Bildad Kaggia and Jaramogi Odinga.

When legislative elections were held in March 1961 KANU emerged the winner but refused to form a government until Jomo Kenyatta was released from detention. This prompted the colonial regime to ask KADU to form the government, and this party agreed. This was an act of betrayal. Kenyatta was released on 21st August 1961 after the colonialists were fully convinced that he was to serve them and continue with the status quo. Due to prevalent progressive ideas put on Kenyatta because of his past patriotic work in the 1930s and 1940s. Peasants and workers celebrated his release believing that he was to free them

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from political and economic bondage. As a result he was elected as the leader of KANU after Gichuru stepped aside and joined the reactionary side of the party. Unfortunately, the statements which came from him while he was leader were contrary to the wishes of people who had celebrated his release. In contrast to what they expected he supported colonial land policy by stating that the land which had been stolen from the people had to be bought back from the settlers. People, especially freedom fighters, wondered where they could get money to buy the said farms yet they had spent most of their youth fighting and in detention.

Kenyatta was then elected unopposed as the representative of Muranga in LEGCO after Kariuki Njiri resigned for him. His election allowed him to become one of the delegates who went to London to negotiate the Kenyan constitution in Lancaster, in February 1962. The general elections were held in May 1963 and KANU won comfortably. In December of the same year Kenya was declared independent and Kenyatta became prime minister on December 12th 1963.

The new neocolonial government of Kenyatta didn't recognize the critical role that the Mau Mau played in the fight for national independence. Ironically, Mau Mau roles were recognized by people from outside Kenya e.g. African- American nationalists such as Malcom X. Mau Mau also inspired many oppressed people in Africa into taking arms to liberate themselves from the colonialists, and among them were FLN (Algeria), MPLA (Angola), FRELIMO (Mozambique), PAIGC (Guinea Bissau), MK (South Africa), etc.

Flag Independence & Neocolonialism from 1963

The new government aligned itself with the imperialist forces and rarely questioned the neo-colonial policies that were hurting Kenyans and which they supported. The multinational companies that were exploiting workers continued do so as though nothing had changed. The land that thousands had died for remained in the hands of the white settlers and collaborators. The military force that had been killing and maiming freedom fighters became the armed force of Kenya. The new leaders embarked on grabbing land, and the president became one of the biggest land owners in the country; Kenyatta's extended family alone owns thousands of acres of prime land in Kenya. In order to hide their grabbing they conspired with the land ministry to buy the said land at very cheap prices from a settlement transfer fund scheme that was established by the British colonial government and the World Bank to facilitate the buying of land from the British settlers. The left wing politicians in the then ruling party KANU, led by Jaramogi, Pinto and Kaggia, began to question the manner in which land issue was being handled since most Kenyans had no land. The government, in order to appease the landless, came up with idea of encouraging people to form cooperative societies so that they could buy land from the settlers. Peasants who were financially well off heeded the idea, and benefited from the scheme. Those who could not raise money remained landless and a majority of them were forced to sell their labour to earn their living.

In 1965 the neo colonial government, in a desperate move to deceive Kenyans that it was promoting socialist ideals,

developed an African socialism governance framework published in Sessional Paper number 10. In reality the paper had nothing to do with socialism and was purely capitalist. It was attributed to American economist Edgar Edward who had been contracted by Tom Mboya to draft it. It was later reviewed and revised, first by an informal group chaired by Mboya with Mwai Kibaki, Ndegwa, Knowles and Edwards as members, and then by the Ministers sitting in the Development Committee[10]

Pio Gama Pinto, together with other left leaning politicians, developed a counter paper in which Pinto himself was to table in parliament and which could have possibly led to a no confidence vote for Kenyatta. Pinto had also confided to his colleagues that he had information on how the funds given to Kenyatta government by foreign countries to help freedom fighters was misused[11]. The paper and the said information are attributed to Pinto's assassination on 22nd February 1965. The assassination of Pinto did not deter the progressive politicians in the government from highlighting people's issues, such as land, that were being neglected by the government. In response to this the reactionary wing of the KANU government convened a delegate conference meeting in March 1966 in Limuru with the aim of replacing the so called rebel members, and this mission was later accomplished.

Having been removed without procedure from the government, the said members resigned from KANU and decided to form an opposition party that they named the Kenya People's Union (KPU). The party was meant to further the people's ideals, and when general elections were called later that year KPU contested and won several seats despite the claims of rigging against them. The government, fearing the ideological challenge it faced from KPU, decided to ban the party in October 1969 for, supposedly, causing chaos in Kisumu during a presidential function. The banning was followed by the jailing and detention of KPU leaders, among them Jaramogi Odinga and Ochieng Oneko. Rivalry among reactionaries within KANU also led to the assassination of Tom Mboya, an imperialist stooge, in 1969.

With the silencing of the progressive forces the government embarked on entrenching a capitalist system in country. Multinational companies partnered with the comprador regime to steal from and exploit Kenyan workers. By the early 1970s about 65% of the multinationals faced no competition, and therefore could set prices of basic commodities at will allowing them to make abnormal profits which were then repatriated to their mother country. In 1971 there was conspiracy to overthrow the government of Jomo Kenyatta, and 13 officers were implicated tried and jailed. In response to this Maj-Gen Joseph Ndolo, the first African head of the military, resigned and was replaced by Mulinge.

The clamour for land among the squatters, for better wages among the workers and better payment for cash crops produced by peasants in the rural areas continued. J.M Kariuki, a one time detainee and a former private secretary of Kenyatta, became the darling of the people for articulating their issues. The system felt threatened by his bold resolve to protect the rights of the lower class and thus conspired to eliminate him in 1975. His death led to protests against the regime even from its own backyard --central region.

Most of the open spaces to express discontent were shut down, and academicians within the universities decided to do something to free the country from the dictatorship. In 1975 the said academicians formed an underground party and called it the Workers Party. The party took a leftist stand and operated in innermost secrecy. The party, knowing too well that the people who were to bring genuine change were workers and peasants, endeavored to reach and enlighten them. It did this through some of its members working aboveground as individuals in cultural activities. The most famous of their activities was theater, and an example of this is Ngugi wa Thiong'o's play *ngaa-hika ndeenda* (I will marry when I want) was performed in Limuru by ordinary peasants. The play depicted the struggles of peasants and workers, and in recognizing its power the government of the day banned it and detained the writer. The party also produced newsletters and booklets, and due to the discipline and commitment of its members the regime didn't at one time know the origin of the publications nor the people behind them. The party was later to rename itself the December Twelve Movement (DTM).

Death of the 1st President and the Taking Over of Moi in 1978

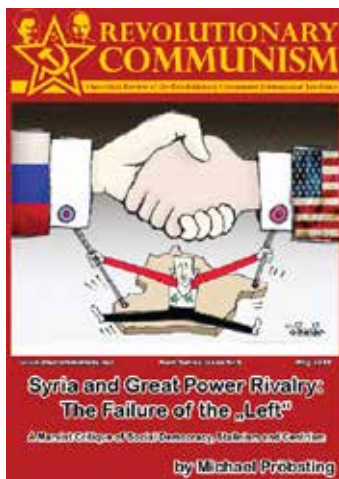
In 1978 the president passed on and his vice president Daniel Moi took over as leader and promised to follow the *nyayo* (footsteps) of his predecessor. The word *nyayo* then became synonymous with his leadership. He released all political detainees, including Ngugi wa Thiong'o, yet after warming his seat he showed his true colours by promoting nepotism, corruption and intolerance to criticism. He banned unions that he deemed powerful and that appeared to be able to challenge his leadership. Some of them were the Civil Servants Union (CSU) and the Nairobi Uni-

versity Academic Staff Union (UASU). He also won over some organisations such as Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO), a national non-governmental organisation for women, and made sure that it was aligned to his ruling party, the organisation then changed its name to KANU-MYWO. As the workers are a powerful sector that drive the economy, he courted the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) that was, and still is, an umbrella body for most of the trade unions in Kenya.

These developments led some politicians, led by Jaramogi and George Anyona, to form another party, the Kenya African Socialist Alliance, in 1982. The party was meant to challenge the KANU regime and offer Kenyans solutions to the problems they were facing. The government didn't allow the idea to get to the fruition stage as it arrested and detained Anyona, while Jaramogi, due to his age, was put under house arrest. This action by the two motivated the dictatorial regime to change the constitution by introducing Section 2A. This clause changed Kenya to a one party state, therefore making it illegal to form another party.

On 1st August 1982 a group of soldiers from the Air Force attempted to overthrow the government but were unsuccessful as loyal Kenya Army soldiers, led by Mahamoud Mohamed, thwarted the coup. After this coup attempt the government increased its oppression against those who were expressing different views on how the country should be governed. The first to bear the brunt of this aggression were student leaders and politicians who were thought to be critical of the government. Progressive academicians at the universities such as Maina wa Kinyatti and Mukaru Ng'ang'a were not spared either as they also found themselves driven to prisons. Others like Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Shiraz Durrani were forced to seek asylum in Britain to avoid arrest.

On 10th February 1984, the KANU government sent its military to Wajir to, as they claimed, smoke out members



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

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

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018

*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*

Introduction * The liberation struggle of the Syrian people against Assad retains its just character * Against all imperialist aggressors! * Old and new Great Powers * The Ex-Stalinist turned social democrats: “God save the United Nations” * The Stalinists (and some caricatures in Trotskyist camouflage): social-imperialist servants of Assad and Putin * The Morenoite LIT, UIT and FLTI: the heart on the right place but not their brains * CWI and FT: failure to understand the imperialist nature of China and Russia * CWI / SWP(UK) / FT: refusing to support the Syrian Revolution * Conclusion * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

of the Degodia clan who had refused to disarm following clan-related conflict with the Ajuran clan. This region is the the North Eastern part of Kenya and is a region populated by Kenyan-Somalis. The army rounded up around 5000 men of the Degodia clan and took them to Wagalla airstrip for interrogation. Women were beaten up, raped and their houses burnt. After four days of torture, without food and water, hundreds of men lay dead after being mercilessly murdered. This extremely violent episode has been referred to as the Wagalla massacre.

The underground movement MKDTM (Mwakenya-December Twelfth Movement) went on with its work of distributing numerous newsletters, booklets and leaflets for several years without detection by the system. Most of the movement central committee members (Kamoji Wachiira, Al-Almin Mazrui, Edward Oyugi and Maina wa Kinyatti) were subsequently arrested not because of their movement work but because they were teaching progressive ideas to students at the universities. The arrest really affected the party as some ideologically inexperienced members of the DTM assumed leadership. Though committed, this leadership made some serious errors that caused some members to be killed, tortured and imprisoned by the regime. The leadership, for example, without clear ideological agreement merged with other groups that were opposing the Moi regime and formed the Muungano wa Wazalendo wa Kukomboia Kenya (MWAKENYA). Leaders also recruited people without fully vetting them as a revolutionary movement demands. All the same, even with the above weaknesses, Mwakenya played a critical role in awakening students, workers and peasants and in encouraging them to resist the regime.

With dissenting forces crushed the Moi government entrenched a dictatorship by manipulating the constitution and undermining democratic ideals. For example, the Constitution of Kenya (amendment) Act No 8 of 1988 made it lawful to detain capital offenders for 14 days before they could be formally charged in a court of law. The regime also denied its citizens the right to choose the person of their choice by introducing Mlolongo (queue) voting system in 1988. The system rigged out most people who the system was not comfortable with by making Kenyans too scared to openly vote (as the queue would betray who they were voting for) for the opposition. The church been the only institution that Moi shied away from suppressing, and it tried to fill the critical gap left by the crushed opposition through persistently and consistently criticizing Moi's authoritarian regime. The exiles also played a crucial role and exposed the dictatorial practice of the regime to international organisations such as Amnesty International.

Fall of Berlin Wall and Mushrooming of Civil Societies 1990

Away from the national space, internationally things were also changing as countries in Eastern and Central Europe that were under the influence of the Soviet Union, began to pull out of the Soviet camp. From 9 November 1989 East Germany finally allowed its citizens to visit West Germany and West Berlin, and this facilitated the fall of the Berlin Wall that had separated the two sister countries for decades. These developments led the Soviet

Union to disintegrate into fifteen separate countries, and each declaring its independence. All this precipitated the end of the cold war; a battle of ideology and propaganda between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc. Following this the capitalist camp became bold as they had no serious challenge to their ideology. During the cold war both camps, capitalist and communist, had played key roles in trying to influence Kenya to join their respective camps. In the early 1960s the Soviet Union had helped build the Lumumba Institute and the Kisumu General Hospital in Kenya, and this was done through Jaramogi Oginga and Pinto. The influence of the Soviet became minimal after the crushing of the KPU in late 1960s. This left USA and other NATO countries with the space to impose their ideology, and thus Kenya became a comprador state under the influence of the USA and Britain. At home, the Kenyatta and Moi regime did their best to impress their masters and an example of this is when Moi hosted Mozambique terrorist group, RENAMO, that was been funded by the USA, to overthrow a leftist leaning FRELIMO government. Due to this and other similar actions, Moi was protected and was rarely criticized by the said governments even if he committed widespread human rights abuses.

Things changed with the end of cold war as most Southern countries under the influence of capitalists were forced to adhere to bourgeois democracy. Interestingly the USA and Britain, traditionally strong defenders of the Moi regime, began to exert pressure on the government to bring "change." Despite this other politicians who had been rigged in the 1988 elections, such as Kenneth Matiba, teamed up with activists, progressive lawyers and the church to demand change which would include the introduction of the multi-party system. Moi could not withstand all that pressure and in December 1990 summoned KANU delegates (National Governing Council) to propose the changing of the constitution to (re)legislate multi-party system in Kenya. The meeting ordered the Attorney General to prepare legislation that would make Kenya a multi-party state. Moi, in a desperate move to prove his claims that the multi-party system would bring divisions, sponsored ethnic clashes in which he incited Kalenjins against Agikuyu living in the Rift Valley. The clashes caused many deaths as well as significant displacement and loss of property.

Introduction of Neoliberalism in Kenya (Privatization, Deregulation, Liberalization)

The imperialist countries pushed for the "democracy" they wanted and also, at the same time, pushed the government into introducing structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in the country. The SAPs were meant to open the country to the penetration of overseas commodities and enable the privatization of public companies and services. As is widely documented they led to the impoverishment of many Kenyans, and these effects were contrary to what the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the main agents of the programs, were saying about the possible benefits of SAPs.

Neo liberalist policies that are intertwined with SAPs undermined the provision of free or affordable healthcare services. This was because the government was forced to slash the social services budget and was therefore com-

pelled to introduce user charges,[12] and also deregulated the prices of pharmaceutical drugs. Since then many poor Kenyans were and still are unable to seek health services in public hospitals and afford much needed drugs due to the said policies. Likewise the education sector was not spared either as public universities that used to give free tertiary education introduced tuition fees that even today are prohibitive to many families in Kenya

The policies contributed to the loss of many jobs as subsidized commodities and cheap counterfeit products from USA, Asia and Europe found their place into the Kenya economy, leading to the closure of local industries. Price controls were abolished thus giving the multinational companies, together with national capitalists, the ability to increase the prices of their products so as to receive maximum profits at the expense of the people.

Mushrooming of Non-Governmental Organisations

This period witnessed the formation on many Non-Governmental Organisations with different mandates, and many with the goals to, ostensibly, reduce the effects of neo liberalism. The said NGOs were mainly funded by imperialist countries and foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, an organization that was named after America's first billionaire who bought the land on which the United Nations New York headquarters stands, and Ford Foundation etc. As can be discerned, the said funders were the same ones imposing and steadfastly adhering to neoliberal policies.

Former leftist activists were coopted into the NGO world and formed human rights organisations such as the Kenya Human Rights Commission (Al-Amin and Willy Mutunga who were both former members of December Twelve Movement) and SODNET (formed by Edward Oyungi etc) are but two examples. One progressive NGO the Release Political Prisoners Pressure Group joined other groups demanding change. The funding of the NGOs was and still is a well-designed tactic to divert activists from keeping on with the revolutionary route i.e. dismantling all the structures which uphold exploitation and oppression of human beings, and the fate of RPP can attest to this. The NGOs were confined to fighting for bourgeois democracy (reforms), although it is noteworthy that this helped in opening up the democratic space. The problem comes when they fail to proceed beyond bourgeois democracy as is the case today.

With the introduction of multi-party politics it was noted that most of the unjust laws were left intact and many of the people who had been jailed for fighting the same were still in prison. It was due to this that the civil society embarked on fighting reforms and for the release of political prisoners. This resolve led to the mothers of political prisoners to camp at Freedom Corner (Uhuru Park), and they staged a hunger strike demanding for the release of their sons. The fight for reforms was not that easy as it saw many activists arrested and charged with fake charges. The activists of early 1990s were very committed and courageous, as opposed to those of today whose big motive for engaging in activism is money.

The repeal of section 2A opened the floodgate of political parties formed mostly by the same politicians who had left the ruling parties. They had no ideological distinction

from KANU, and it happened that the liberal politicians and lawyers, many of whom had left KANU, opted to join Forum for Restoration of Democracy (FORD) due to its connection with Jaramogi Odinga. The one time Moi vice president Mwai Kibaki, together with some wealthy politicians, formed another party and called it the Democratic Party. The December Twelve Movement that was operating underground at the time had a different ideological outlook from these parties. During this time it decided to change its name to MWAKENYA DTM (MKDTM). This change was meant to capture the history of the party. The leadership of the party met some opposition leaders, among them Jaramogi, and requested them to push for the change of the constitution before competing with KANU. Their request was not adhered to as the opposition leaders were not interested in this since they thought they could defeat the KANU regime with the same constitution. When elections were held in December 1992, the government used its state machinery and rigged them. Nonetheless, some opposition members won some seats and this brought about the first multi-party government.

The introduction of a multi-party system did not stop the KANU regime from brutalizing its citizens, and it continued to use oppressive laws to harass critics who at that time included civil society activists. MKDTM refused to participate in the 1992 elections and continued to operate underground producing leaflets and newsletters. Because of the party's ideological outlook it differed from other parties, and continued on with its work to end the system of capitalist exploitation. Due to this work the system planned and assassinated its national coordinator Karimi Nduthu on 24th March 1996. Karimi was also the secretary general of Release Political Prisoners that was an aboveground organisation fighting for release of political prisoners and the repeal of oppressive laws.

Fight for a New Constitution and Role of Civil Society

It is around this time that the campaign for the change of the constitution that was led by organisations such as the Citizen Coalition for Constitutional Change (4Cs), the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) and Release Political Prisoners (RPP) among others was in top gear. The opposition later joined the CSOs in the campaign. The KANU regime, which was against the change, finally succumbed to pressure and agreed to bring about constitutional change. It is on this basis that the regime approached some opportunistic politicians within the reform movement and formed the Inter Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) that was comprised of representatives from KANU, DP, Ford Kenya, Ford Asili and Safina. The constitutional change process was unfortunately hijacked from civil society. By 1997, the IPPG had come up with minimal reforms, mostly on electoral process, but left the dictatorial powers and structures basically intact. When elections were held in December of that year, KANU, as it did in 1992, used the said structures to rig itself back by getting 40% of votes cast against 60% of the combined opposition.

After the 1997 general elections, and as a result of the IPPG recommendations, a bill on the Constitution of Kenya review was published in August 1997,[13] and became law in November after being assented to by the president. The law created a legal framework to carry out the con-

stitutional reform and provided a parliamentary route to constitutional change. All this time that this law was proposed and assented to CSOs and other stake holders were not involved, and it was on this basis that the said CSOs protested their absence in the process and the parliamentary route which was proposed. The protest bore fruits as the government agreed to include CSOs and the church in the process and this resulted in the amendment of the Constitution of Kenya Review Act. The amended act made people participation a key element in constitution making, and stated that 54 stakeholder groupings were to be represented in the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC). The composition of the commission led to disagreements, between the opposition political parties and the government, about the process of nominating members to the Commission. The impasse gave the government the audacity and opportunity to pick the members of the Commission without consulting other stakeholders. Having controlled the process, the government formed a Parliamentary Select Committee that was chaired by Raila Odinga's National Democratic Party. Raila had by then made alliances with KANU and had been appointed the secretary General of KANU and a cabinet minister. The civil society and churches disagreed with the manner in which the constitutional change process was being carried out and it was on this basis that they formed the Ufungamano Initiative that was supposed to run parallel to CKRC, and which was led by Prof. Yash Ghai. The two commissions later merged and started working as a team. The commission went countrywide collecting views from the public and later on came up with a draft of a new constitution. Delegates who were to debate the documents were chosen by the stakeholders.

In 2002 President Moi preferred Uhuru Kenyatta as the KANU flag bearer for the general elections that were slated for December of that year. Some politicians who were hoping to get the KANU ticket, such as Raila Odinga and George Saitoti, led a mass walk out from the party weakening it. The said politicians joined the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and that later on formed an alliance with the National Alliance of Kenya which was led by Mwai Kibaki, Kijana Wamalwa and Charity Ngilu. Together they formed the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Many civil society activists such as Kibutha Kibwana contested the election on NARC tickets, and other activists such as Willy Mutunga supported NARC with logistics. When elections were held in December 2002 KANU lost its first elections, since its formation, to the NARC party, and Mwai Kibaki became the third president of the Republic of Kenya.

NARC Regime

The new government absorbed many people from civil society and gave them jobs. Notable persons were John Githongo who became a permanent secretary, and Maina Kiai who became the chairperson of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR). Due to the government being largely composed by people associated with reforms, psychologically Kenyans thought that human rights abuses and corruption would become a thing of the past. Nonetheless, ideologically there was no genuine change as the capitalist system, that promotes corrup-

tion and the abuse of human rights, was still in operation. The new government reconvened the delegates that were appointed by the previous regime to debate the constitution draft. The debates went on for a long time as the two opposing parties took different stands. The NARC government also experienced internal wrangles as two sides that had formed the government started accusing one another of not honoring a memorandum of understanding that they had signed, and which stated how they would share government appointments. The differences made some of ministers, among them Raila Odinga, join KANU in opposing the government. In the meantime the delegates debated the draft and came up with the proposed constitution that came to be called the Bomas Draft. The draft was then put into a referendum, and sadly it was politics and not the content of the constitution that decided how the people cast their votes. Politicians who had disagreed with the government, such as Kalonzo and Raila, allied with the opposition KANU in mobilizing their respective nationalities and in opposing the constitution. Likewise, the government mobilized their supporting nationalities i.e. Agikuyu etc in supporting the draft. Eventually, when the constitution referendum was held in November 2005 the NO side, whose symbol was an orange, defeated the YES side whose symbol was a banana. The ministers who were on NO side were all sacked in a cabinet reshuffle. The NO side regrouped and formed the Orange Democratic Movement party. The YES side also worked closely with moderates KANU officials and formed the Party of National Unity (PNU).

The politicians didn't try to heal the seed of negative ethnicity that they had planted during the referendum campaign and which had divided the country along ethnic lines. In contrast ethnicity was hyped during the campaign for 2007 general elections, and intelligence reports had reported of the possibility of violence after the elections. The elections were held peacefully but when the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) declared Mwai Kibaki of PNU the winner of the presidential elections, violence erupted in many parts of country. This led to the death and displacement of hundreds of people and the loss of property. The ODM party claimed that the elections were rigged while the PNU side was emphatic that they had won fairly. The imperialists, knowing too well that their interests were in danger due to violence, forced the two camps to negotiate. They then chose Kofi Annan, a former UN secretary general who had served them appropriately during his tenure, as the mediator of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Committee (KNDRRC).

The two groups came up with four key resolutions (Agenda Four) that were to be tackled either immediately or in the long term. They were:

Agenda item one-- to stop violence and restore fundamental rights and liberties.

Agenda item two-- to address the humanitarian crisis and that involved resettlement of internally displaced people (IDPS).

Agenda item three -- to resolve the political crisis.

Agenda item four-- to examine and address constitutional, legal and institutional reforms, poverty and inequality, youth unemployment and land reforms.

The two main competing forces, Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki camps, signed the National Accord Reconciliation

Agreement (NARA) on 28th February 2008, and agreed to form a coalition government where they shared power. This government is often referred to as the nusu mkate government; the "shared loaf" government.

Coalition Government 2008-2013

The coalition government, though very bloated, worked well save for squabbles related to the power between the two principles. Since the National Accord Reconciliation Agreement (NARA) had set the stage for constitutional change, all legal requirements for the steps to be undertaken were passed by the parliament. The important organs which handled the process were the Committee of Experts (CoE), the Parliamentary Select Committee, the National Assembly and the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) that conducted the referendum on the constitution. The final draft of the proposed constitution was put into vote on 4th August 2010, and over 69% voted in favour of the draft constitution. The draft was then declared the new constitution on 30th August 2010.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) Case

It should also be understood that the government had, on February 2008, set up the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) also known as the Waki Commission, and the Independent Review Commission (IREC). CIPEV was created to investigate violence that occurred after the 2007/8 general elections, while IREC was created to look at whether general elections were conducted well. The two commissions did their work as stipulated and presented their reports to the president and prime minister. The CIPEV report had suggested that the parliament set up an internal tribunal which was to handle post-election violence cases, failure to which a list of alleged perpetrators that had been handed to Kofi Annan by CIPEV Chairperson Justice Waki was to be given to the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Ocampo. The parliament failed to set up tribunal. The ICC did its investigations and six people were indicted, and it seems

they were politically selected since three were from one side of the competing camp while other three were from the other camp. Four of the inductees have been acquitted while the remaining two still have cases in the ICC. The court gets most of its financial assistance from imperialist countries, while most of its logistical work is carried out by international NGOs through the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) which has over 2 500 members including Kenyan civil society organisations.

General Elections 2013

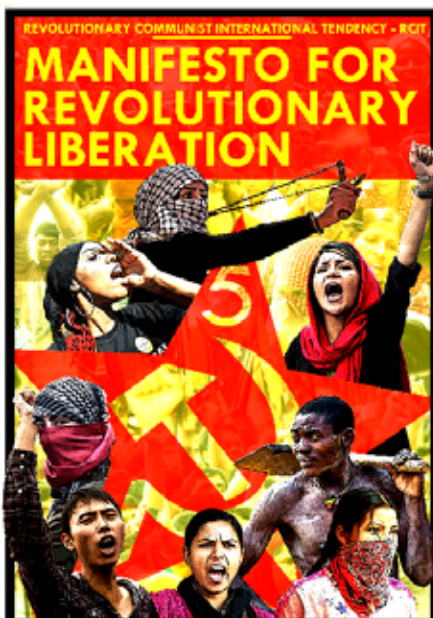
In 2012 a political realignment within the major rightist parties was witnessed; TNA allied with URP to form the Jubilee Coalition while ODM allied with Wiper to form the Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD). When elections were held in March 2013, the Jubilee Coalition won after garnering more than 50% of the votes. The results were disputed by CORD who appealed to the Supreme Court. The court, however, maintained that the electoral exercise was conducted free and fairly.

Jubilee Regime

The Jubilee Coalition principals, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, were sworn into office on 30th March as president and deputy president respectively. Their government is different from the previous ones as it was formed on the basis of the 2010 constitution. With the new constitution, ministries were merged and those heading them are barred from engaging in politics. Devolution was introduced meaning there are two types of government; the national and county administrations. Most of the services that were historically undertaken by the national government, such as health, were transferred to the counties.

The Jubilee Government and Civil Society Organisations

The relationship between the government and CSOs has not been cordial, and this is because of the perception that



NEW RCIT PROGRAM!

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

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

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

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the CSOs in Kenya significantly contributed to the ICC cases of the president and his deputy. It is also believed that it is on this basis that the government, through the Ministry of Devolution, introduced an amendment to the Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) Act that was passed by the 10th parliament with great input from the NGOs in January 2013. The main goal of the act was to encourage public benefit organisations to maintain high standards of governance and effective self-regulation. The amendment had limited external funds to not more than 15% of the budget of organisations, and if this proposal had been implemented it would have made many NGOs close as a majority depend on external funds. The amendment didn't go through due to pressure from the NGOs and politicians, and the Justice and Legal Affairs Parliamentary Committee subsequently rejected the bill and recommended some amendments; among these was the removal of the 15 % capping of funds.

Somali Question/Terrorism

Terrorism has become one of the biggest challenges to the Jubilee government. This is because Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group operating in Somali and locally, targets non-muslims in Kenya for what they say is revenge for the killings that have been undertaken by the Kenya Defence Forces in Somalia. Kenya sent its military to Somalia in October 2010 following constant attacks, and the kidnapping of tourists and ships along the coastal region by criminals from Somalia who were suspected to be Al-Shabaab. The group had denied its involvement in the said kidnappings but the government, due to what was seen as pressure from imperialist countries, insisted that the criminal activities were committed by Al-Shabaab and that the invasion of Somalia was the only way to stop these occurrences. The Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) have since merged with AMISOM forces.

Al-Shabaab originally took advantage of the split of the Islamic Court (IC). The Islamic Court had taken power in 2006 after defeating warlords, and brought some stability in Somalia for the first time since the overthrow of Siad Barre in the early 1990s. The Islamic Court was dislodged by the Ethiopia military with the blessing of USA, and after this defeat the Islamic Court divided into two; the moderates agreed to work with Transitional government while the radicals formed Al-Shabaab which is influenced by Salafi or Wahhabi religious beliefs. The more radical group wanted to make Somalia an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Their extremist actions have made them very unpopular in their country and worldwide. Opposition politicians in Kenya, who were behind the sending of the troops, are now calling for the withdrawal of the troops. They say that that act of terrorism in the country is as a result of Kenya armed forces in Somalia, assertions that have some national support. The government on its side has stated that withdrawing will be giving terrorists an upper hand to terrorize Kenya. In October 2014 the government introduced Security Laws (Amendment Bill 2014) that it said are meant to fight terrorism. Civil societies have been protesting this bill and state that the amendments were going against the constitution, and contained a number of controversial provisions that set back the process of reforming the police and the broader security

sector. The protests led the government to invite some political stakeholders to discuss the controversial provisions before they were taken to parliament. The MPs agreed on them and the amendments were brought to parliament for passage on 18th December 2014. The debate turned political as all the opposition MPs opposed the security bill while all those from the government supported it. The bill was, however, passed in an unruly manner, but it passed and was later assented to by the president becoming law. In response to this MPs teamed up with Civil Society to challenge the act in the High Court, and after deliberations the court nullified some sections but failed to nullify the entire act.

The Importance of a Social Investigation and Class Analysis in Kenya

Social investigation entails the interrogation of the conditions of society. The division of society into classes means that one class is exploiting the labour of another and therefore expropriating the social surplus created by the productive class. It is therefore crucial to analyse the classes in Kenya so that the exploited classes can know who to align with, as they wage struggle for political and economic changes. Classes have different attitude towards bringing political and economic change. Below are some of the different classes

Rich and Poor Peasants

They are mostly found in rural areas and are of two types: rich and the poor. The rich have a lot of land that they use in commodity production (commercial) and employ day labourers and temporary labourers who they pay daily, and at the end of the week or month. Since the said peasants are driven by the urge to make a profit they exploit the labourers, a majority who are poor peasants who supplement their needs by selling their labour power.

The poor peasants have small pieces of land that they use for substance farming. Some also engage in zero grazing and sell their meagre products to, for example, dairies. They are, however, in most times forced to supplement their subsistence needs by selling their labour power to rich peasants or other owners of means of production. They have groups such as merry go rounds which they use to assist themselves economically. As noted earlier, they contributed a lot in the struggle for independence as they allied themselves with the Mau Mau and in this role they supplied food and other essential goods to this Land and Freedom Army. They possess togetherness and assist one another when misfortune happens to one of them. Some are organised through cooperatives that market their produce, and elect directors of the same. Unfortunately, in some instances, the elected directors conspire to defraud them and this forces them to rise up against them. One example is the case of the peasant farmers affiliated to Rumukia Coffee Farmers Society in Nyeri County who held a peaceful protest against the management of the cooperative for unfairly making deductions from their earnings in November 2014. A lack of strong organisation hinders them from achieving their goals.

Pastoralists

Pastoralist culture and livelihood is shaped by the live-stock that they rear for meat, blood and milk. They are mostly found in remote areas, and particularly in the Northern part of Kenya where there is a lack of infrastructure and basic services. They occupy more than 60% of total land in Kenya, although the larger part of this area is arid and semi-arid. The Maasai, Turkana, Pokot, Samburu and Rendille etc., are all pastoralists. Many pastoralist groups are very conservative as they have, for many years, been rigidly stuck within traditional cultural practices and animal husbandry even when the practices have been overtaken by time and contextual changes. In recent times a small percentage have started to diversify by cultivating various crops on small parcels of land. The money economy has forced some to exchange their animals for cash, and thus deepening their incorporation within the market economy. In their urge to maximize their wealth some pastoralist groups engage in cattle rustling using sophisticated firearms, thus exacerbating insecurity in pastoral regions. This urge has made them to go against cultural practices which forbade the killing of women and children during such the raids.

Most of the leaders from the region are, in most cases, anointed by ethnic spiritual leaders as the traditional norms dictate. This is one of the reasons the leaders are highly regarded by their respective community and in most cases use this loyalty to manipulate their subjects into fighting neighbouring communities. The ruling class, knowing too well how influential leaders are, normally win them over and make the pastoralists ignorant of their predicament. The pastoralist class though, being one of the groups marginalized by the system, remain inactive and their anger to their predicament is, most times, triggered by their leaders cum politicians. Therefore this class happens to be a very tricky one to organize for the actual revolution.

Semi Proletariat (Traders, Petty Traders, Boda Boda Riders)

The Kenyan economy has, for a number of years, witnessed minimal growth and therefore is unable to absorb the thousands of youth who finish school every year. It is due to this that most people have opted to engage in small businesses in order to earn their livelihoods. In recent times there has been an abnormal increment of business levies by the county governments, and these levies have ended up affecting small business people. This has then made many small business owners protest, especially when they are made to move out of the street. An example of this is the case of traders in Thika town, Kiambu County who protested on 17th January 2015 when the county government closed Jamuhuri Market because the traders had refused to pay the new fee. Elsewhere, on 26th February 2015 Boda Boda riders in Mumias in Kakamega County organized a demonstration to protest increased levies on them from Sh20 to Sh30 per day. Notwithstanding this collective action, the problem is that the said protests are mostly spontaneous and do not last long due to the lack of organisation to spearhead and direct the struggle.

The Proletariat or Working Class

The working class in Kenya is not powerful and this could be attributed to, as we have noted earlier, the ineptitude of the COTU which is an umbrella of all the private trade unions in Kenya. Nonetheless, this has not deterred some from rising up against injustices at their work places. There have been many cases where workers, due to poor working conditions and low pay, have protested and even downed their tools. The employers under this system are owners of the means of production and are connected to the state. The powerful class use violent state machinery, such as the police, to suppress protesting workers. A case in point is when workers of Kapric Apparels Export Processing Zone Limited in January 2015 held a demonstration protesting against low pay and poor working conditions, and the anti-riot police officers used teargas to disperse them.

Petty Bourgeois

Petty bourgeois in Kenya can be divided into three parts; the lower part which consists of teachers is the most active of the three since it has strong organisations i.e. KUPPET and KNUT. Their problem is that they rarely protest about issues affecting the country and the education sector. Most of the time they protest due to salaries and allowance issues, and an example is the strike which the unions called in January 2015 and which lasted three weeks.

The middle petty bourgeois consists of doctors, professors and highly skilled people. They rarely protest as conditions allow them to live comfortably, although in recent times the doctors have been up in arms with the national government for devolving health services and including the payment of their salaries to the county level. On 10th December 2013 they went on a strike that lasted for more than ten days, and their core demand was that health functions be reverted back to the national government. Human rights activists can be categorized in this class as their attitude towards change is similar. They abhor the abuses perpetrated by the regime and they are good at criticising the state and in articulating the problems well. In addition, some go to an extent of saying that what is needed is revolution. On the other hand they are able to enjoy some privileges such as medical cover, a good salary and good housing under the current state of capitalism. And when it comes to the actual action they tend to shy away since they are not willing to forego the said privileges, as the revolution is not a joke and it demands dedication and sacrifice that they are not prepared to give. There are a few people of this class who forego the said privileges; rocking the boat and committing what Amilcar Cabral called class suicide and thus siding with the people in fighting for the real change. Most of the world revolutions in the world were led by such people e.g. Lenin in Russia, Cabral in Guinea Bissau and, Fidel Castro in Cuba

The upper petty bourgeois are the senior people of big local and international companies. Their status helps them live comfortably since they get many benefits in terms of allowances. They are indifferent towards the predicament of lower class, and in most cases they view them with contempt. It would take a major economic crisis for this class to rise up against the government.

National Bourgeois

National bourgeois are Kenyan people who have a substantial amount of wealth which they have invested and used to employ people. Some of these people include Manu Chandaria, Naushad Merali, Chris Kirubi and the Kenyatta family etc. These are people who are happy with the way things are since they are able to squeeze surplus labour from their workers without any hindrance. They are closely tied with the system and most times during the general election they pour money to support the competing presidential candidates so that their investments can be protected. They are against foreign investors as they see them as competitors, and many times preach about the protection of local companies or nationalism that is just to advance their selfish agenda.

Comprador Bourgeois

This class consists of the senior most people working for multi-national companies in Kenya. They help in promoting the imperialist agenda by siphoning national wealth and expropriating it to their mother countries. The class also consists of political leaders who promote the same. Since independence the political class have been comprador, but in recent past the same class has been caught in a catch 22 where it wants to serve the imperialists and at the same time wants to protect the national bourgeois. This again has made the imperialists turn against the current government; not necessarily abandoning them but rather chastising them for not protecting and serving them as the previous governments have. In April 2015, the political leadership of the country refused to renew a military agreement that supported the training of British troops at the British Army Training Unit, Kenya (BATUK). This unit operates from Kahawa Barracks and has bases in Archers Post and Laikipia County. Kenya refused even after the British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond held talks with the Kenyan President.

Declass or Lumpenproletariat

Declass mostly live in slums and are the most exploited and dehumanised by the system. The majority have limited levels of education and are unskilled. They include "hustlers", muggers, prostitutes, petty thieves and the unemployed. This class will do anything in order to survive and this is why it is used by politicians to do all manner of dirty work including beating and insulting rivals. It is also used by NGOs to fulfil their project goals e.g. attending workshops. On the other hand some members of this class can become agents for change if they are made conscious about their predicament by people who have a clear and pro people ideology. The class share the same characteristics as the petty bourgeois, in term of political wavering, and cannot be the main force for change in Kenya.

Who are Friends and Enemies of Change in Kenya?

From the above analysis it is clear that those who are the most exploited by the system are bound to yearn for change, while those who benefit from it will defend the status quo. Since no genuine change can come about without involving the people it is therefore mandatory to reach them. The historical analysis has shown us that over the

year's people have failed to achieve what they want due to aligning themselves with the wrong people. For instance in the 1950s the petty bourgeoisie within KAU had disguised that they were for the land and freedom advocated for by the Mau Mau, but behind the scenes they were busy courting and cavorting with colonialists and demonising the movement. The masses who were not well advanced embraced them due to their sweet talk only to be disappointed after flag independence. Therefore, it is usually important to do a social investigation class analysis so that people can know the right people to align with, and not be deceived by words and superficial deeds.

In Kenya peasants, workers, and the lower petty bourgeois remain the leading force for change, and what they need most is a progressive movement offering them leadership and ideology. With those two they can accomplish miracles and change everything.

The middle petty bourgeois waver between the oppressor and the oppressed, they only join the side of the oppressed when they are in problems. Therefore the people should be wary of them due to their opportunism.

National, international and comprador bourgeoisie are whom we should aim to defeat since they own the means of production and they use it to exploit workers and strongly defend the status quo. They are the most powerful as they control the state machinery, and influence peoples thinking through their own media. Big media companies (NATION, Standard Group, Royal Media and Media Marx) are owned by this class. Revolutionary changes which have occurred in the world have shown that even with the power they possess, this class is usually defeated by organised masses lead by revolutionary party.

Footnotes

[1] <http://countrymeters.info/en/Kenya>

[2] This is a religious belief which entail praying and worshipping God the way Africans used to before the coming of missionaries.

[3] Nonbelievers are people who do not believe in any religion and may question religious doctrine, but are not necessarily anti-religious

[4] Refer to Historical Background – Mau Mau Rebellion

[5] Facing Mount Kenya-by Jomo Kenyatta, published in 1938

[6] History of Resistance in Kenya 1884-2002 by Maina wa Kinyatti published in 2008 by Mau Mau Research Centre Nairobi.

[7] Detained by Ngugi wa Thiong'o published in 1981 by East African Education Publishers Ltd, Nairobi,

[8] Mau Mau from Within by Karari wa Njama and Barnett published in 1965.

[9] Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission Volume 2b.

[10] <http://www.developmentstrategies.org/Archives/1977ReviewEastAfrica/rea2.htm>

[11] Bildad Kaggia Book – The Struggle for Freedom and Justice

[12] Fees charged are for registration, consultation, for drugs and medical supplies or charges for any health service rendered, such as outpatient or inpatient care.

[13] History of Constitution Making in Kenya by Media Development Association & Konrad Adenauer Foundation published in 2012

“Everything was possible” – France, May 1968

Note by the Editor: The following article has been published by the predecessor organization of the RCIT (the League for a Revolutionary Communist International; later renamed into League for the Fifth International) in 1993. The founding cadres of the RCIT have been expelled from the LFI in 2011 when they protested against the centrist degeneration of this organization.

While the article gives a detailed and insightful overview over the events, we wish to state one disagreement with the views of the author. The comrade wrote in this article: “France did not experience a fully developed revolutionary situation in May 1968, but important elements of one erupted and almost as rapidly disappeared in a sharp reassertion of bourgeois power.” We think that this is an insufficiently clear statement. (In fact, this confused formulation was the result of some internal disagreements inside the LRCI’s international leadership at that time concerning this question.) Indeed, France experienced in May 1968 the beginning of a revolutionary situation which ended when the de Gaulle regime retook the initiative at the end of May. True, this situation did not evolve into an armed uprising or a bloody counter-revolution. But not all revolutionary situations result in such an escalation. However, this necessary correction does not invalidate the excellent character of this article.

50 years after France was rocked by the biggest general strike in European history, Emile Gallet recalls the events and examines the actions of the Left.

Grainy black-and-white film of Parisian students hurling rocks at the police, crowds choking on clouds of tear-gas, the passing of time lends romance to the media view of May 1968 – a student insurrection that came out of nowhere and was essentially libertarian in its politics.

The romance is tinged with cynicism; the barricade fighters were rapidly incorporated into bourgeois society, becoming newspaper magnates, ministers, and TV personalities. But there is another May ‘68, one in which a student revolt against state repression lit the fuse of a massive explosion of workers’ action, leading to a 10 million strong

general strike, to President De Gaulle’s panicky flight to Germany, to a situation in which, for a few days “everything was possible.” Then the bourgeoisie was saved from disaster by the French Communist Party (PCF), which did all it could to ensure that the general strike did not lead to a revolution, nor even to a “Left government,” but rather to the temporary strengthening of De Gaulle.

At the start of 1968, France had 550,000 students, with well over a third of them in Paris. Their numbers had nearly tripled since 1960. This spectacular growth was a rejection of the changing needs of French capitalism, which had undergone a feverish technological renewal in the ten years following de Gaulle’s seizure of power in 1958.

But campus facilities had barely expanded to accommodate this rapid growth. The lecture theaters were crammed to bursting, and even the new universities built in the early 1960’s were already in a dreadful state. There was mass discontent with this as well as the petty restrictions imposed on the youth by the university authorities. Nanterre in the Paris suburbs was the center of this disaffection.

Nanterre campus was built to house 7,000 students. Yet during 1967-68, there were 12,000 students, while the university cafeteria could only accommodate 100 people!

This explosion in student numbers occurred at the same time as unemployment began to take off. The long boom of the 1950’s and 1960’s had come to an end. There were 450,000 registered unemployed at the beginning of 1968, and the government’s 5th economic plan was based on the figure rapidly rising to 600,000. There was a sudden loss of confidence in the future and young people felt society to be closed and unresponsive to their needs.

Youth under 21 did not have the right to vote, and there was stifling governmental control over the media—especially the TV and radio. This led to a dull, old-fashioned conformity, which increasingly chafed all layers of youth in a period when other imperialist countries—notably Britain and the USA—were experiencing an explosion of “youth culture.” France seemed embodied in its ageing president: anachronistic, authoritarian, and austere.

Prime Minister Georges Pompidou had proposed an edu-

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cational “reform” designed to get rid of “bad” students. A system of degrees by credits was to be replaced all at once by one based on years of study. This was part of the student time bomb. However, probably the most important factor responsible for the politicization of this new layer of youth was the Vietnam War.

US imperialism’s murderous attempt to regain control over South-East Asia, and the courageous struggle led by the Vietnamese people, radicalized hundreds of thousands of youth all over the world. In the USA, Germany, and Britain mass protests had turned to street fighting. The effect in France was particularly strong, partly due to the political links between the French Communist Party (PCF) and the North-Vietnamese government. Solidarity actions abounded, especially following the launching of the Têt offensive by the North at the beginning of 1968. In the month of February 1968 alone, there was a major Paris demonstration every week.

Just as the student movement had clear and definite roots, so too the general strike of May-June was not a purely spontaneous event. From the spring of 1967 onwards, a series of strikes, occupations, and violent confrontations with the police showed that the working class was becoming increasingly combative.

In 1966, wages and conditions of French workers were low as compared with those of other West European countries. Their wages were the lowest; their hours, the longest (up to 52 hours a week in some industries); and their tax levels the highest. As the post-War boom began to fizzle out, the Pompidou government prepared a wave of austerity attacks.

In March 1967, the government began to issue decrees—without going through parliament—attacking the social-security system and letting unemployment rip. The government needed to use the big stick to ensure that its policies were imposed upon a working class that was restless. Probably the most significant of the pre-May strikes took place in Caen, in January. There, 4800 workers in the SAVIEM industrial vehicles plant went on strike over a long-running wage dispute. The work force was predominantly young (average age 25), was largely rural in origin, and had a very low level of unionization (6%). And yet these workers, who the bosses no doubt thought would be easy meat, turned out to be extremely combative.

The unions’ reaction to Pompidou’s attacks was to try and channel workers’ anger into easily controllable campaigns. On the December 13 1967, millions of workers participated in a day of action against the attacks on the social security and health system. Yet despite the obvious willingness of the workers to fight, the unions merely set the date for another demonstration. The date was May 1968!

The final sign of what was to come can be found in the declining influence of the PCF, especially among the young. The PCF had no real voice among school and college students. It insisted on maintaining separate youth organizations for each sex! The “Jeunesses Communistes de France” was for the boys, and the “Union des Jeunes Filles De France” was for the girls. They did have a joint newspaper, with the exciting title “Nous les garçons et les filles”—“We boys and girls.” But the prudish Stalinist bureaucrats were utterly unable to attract a generation that was beginning to experience the pleasures of the “sexual revolution.”

But even if we can trace the origins of May in the molecular processes that were taking place among workers and the youth, no one at the time foresaw the momentous, joyous, explosion of rebellion that was to come.

The bourgeoisie was indifferent to the malaise. In March, Georges Pompidou complacently addressed the Gaullist youth: “Today, it is difficult to revolt, because there is nothing to revolt against.”

Indeed, up until May, the French anti-war movement was nowhere near as radical as the German Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) or the Italian movement. The anti-war demonstrations in Paris were not as militant as those in Berlin, Berkeley, or London.

It is thus hardly surprising that in April 1968, Ernest Mandel, leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), polemicized against the “catastrophism” of the OCI and their Healyite British comrades in ringing terms:

“If we ignore the opinion of madmen, we quite clearly do not have, in the near future, the possibility of a revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie in France or Britain. There is not a pre-revolutionary situation in these countries.” (La Quatrième Internationale, April 1968, pg.8)

Paris was to be the center of the May maelstrom; it had the largest concentration of students in the Country. Of the 550,000 students, approximately 200,000 studied in the Paris region alone. On the Nanterre campus, the Trotskyists of the JCR, and various semi-anarchist tendencies, had organized protests against the university reforms. 10,000 students had gone on strike in December 1967 against the Vietnam War and for the freedom to display political posters on the campus. These campaigns had regularly led to verbal confrontation with the university authorities and to several pitched battles with the police.

On March 20, a few hundred students protesting against the War attacked the American Express office in Paris. A JCR member was arrested, and, two days later, 142 students founded the “Mouvement 22 mars” (March 22 Movement) to fight to get him out of prison. This group was to rapidly become the focus of a series of student struggles.

For example, the university authorities had forbidden students in the Halls of Residence to have overnight visitors of the opposite sex. The students demanded, quite rightly, to be treated like adults—which according to the law most of them were not! Focusing their mobilization on the repressive nature of the university authorities, the “22 mars” began to organize hundreds of students in regular discussion circles.

Fascists threatened an anti-imperialist day of action, planned by the “22 mars” for Friday May 3. Fearing a large-scale confrontation, the Vice-Chancellor of Nanterre declared that the University would be closed until the exams, at the end of June. Faced with this arbitrary and anti-democratic decision, the “22 mars” called a protest demonstration in the Sorbonne University, in the heart of the Latin Quarter.

As the demonstration assembled, the atmosphere was extremely tense. The police were everywhere, and the students were expecting an attack by fascists. Some 400 stewards controlled access to the Sorbonne, and the university authorities threatened to close the University if the students did not leave.

The students had no time to consider their reply, because

almost straight away the riot police waded in with their batons. In the streets outside, groups of students started lifting paving stones and hurling them at the police. In a short space of time, a mini-riot broke out as running battles between youth and students took place.

By the end of the battle, the Sorbonne was occupied by the police; the night air was full of the acrid smell of tear gas, and more than 600 students had been arrested.

One of the lecturer's unions, the SNESup, called for a solidarity strike on Monday, May 6 refusing to follow the legally obligatory "cooling-off period." The UNEF student union at last roused itself from its stupor enough to call on workers to join a solidarity demonstration in Paris on Monday May 6.

Mainly Trotskyists and Maoists gave out around 100,000 leaflets at factory gates by. Later, 30,000 demonstrators—still largely students, but also including worker-youth—marched through Paris beating off two police charges.

Every day of the week, May 6-10, witnessed a major demonstration. On most nights there were fierce confrontations with the police. The number regularly involved grew to 50-60,000. On Wednesday, May 8, the PCF, which had initially denounced the demonstrators as "petty-bourgeois trouble-makers," tried to march at the head of the demonstration. The students stewards put the self appointed "vanguard" firmly in their place.

May 10 proved to be the key day—or rather night. Provoked by the refusal of the Minister of Education to reopen the Sorbonne and Nanterre, 30,000 students decided to try and take back the Sorbonne. They surrounded the university and faced repeated baton charges, tear-gas grenades, and brutal beatings. The students fought back with everything to hand. The streets were denuded of paving

stones, trees were cut down, and cars were pushed into the road to form barricades.

After this "night of the barricades," it was obvious that the government was going to have to give in. Shocked by the police violence, the public was clearly on the side of the students. There was no guarantee that the police would win. Quite the opposite, as more and more youth flooded into the Latin Quarter, it was certain that the police would eventually be beaten.

Pompidou, who had been on an official visit to Afghanistan, returned to France on Saturday, May 11. He immediately took stock of the situation and, like any sensible politician, caved in. All the universities would be reopened, and the reform would be shelved.

On Monday May 13, a massive victory celebration took place with between 600,000 and 1 million demonstrators thronging the streets. All over the Country, millions of workers went on strike to express their solidarity with the students and to protest against police violence. Both the government and the union leaders hoped that that was the end of the matter. But the movement, which until then had been limited to students, became transformed into a national and working-class movement.

At the Sud-Aviation aero plant in Nantes, the workers had been fighting for higher wages for some time. Inspired by the students' victory, on May 14, they occupied the factory, locked the manager in his office, and called for solidarity from other workers in the town. The next day, the Renault plant at Cléon went on strike.

Finally, on Thursday May 16, the Renault Billancourt plant, the symbol of the French industrial working class, and a fortress of the PCF and the CGT trade-union federation, went on strike. Significantly, it was young workers



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By Michael Probsting, May 2018

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by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its

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who began the movement, against the advice of the local union leaders.

Within a few days, and without a call from any union leaders, the vast majority of French workers were out on strike. Out of France's 15 million workers, around two thirds took action. More than four million remained on strike for more than two weeks; two million were on strike for more than a month. The demands raised by the strikers were many and varied: pay increases, the removal of authoritarian managers, ending the attacks on the social-security system.

Every sector of French society was affected. The industrial working class took action on a scale never before seen. Companies like Peugeot, which had never known a major strike, were paralyzed. The mines, the docks, and public transport were all on strike. The media workers—especially the state-controlled ORTF radio and TV station—fought for workers' control over what was said and shown.

Other sectors, less used to the class struggle, also went on strike or occupied their enterprises. Opera singers, actors, footballers, taxi drivers, all took action. The movement, without being called for or coordinated by any party or union bureaucracy had become the largest and longest general strike in European history. And like every general strike, May 1968 posed point blank the question, "who rules?"

As the general strike grew, the trade unions—and especially the PCF-controlled CGT—did all they could to limit its scope and to turn its revolutionary force into the small change of ephemeral or petty reforms. The Stalinists struggled desperately to limit the influence of the revolutionary groups on the workers.

"L'Humanité," the PCF's daily paper, attacked the youth who had participated in the "Night of the Barricades" as "provocateurs" and "scum."

Following the occupation of Billancourt, demonstrations went from Paris to the huge Renault plant virtually every night. The CGT kept the factory gates firmly shut and put up posters warning the workers against "people from outside the labor movement" who "serve the ruling class."

Where occupations had been launched, the unions systematically tried to weaken the independent organization of the workers, sending them home and preventing the occupation becoming a living center of political education. Where strike committees existed, they were generally composed of local union leaders.

The CGT also did its best to keep the labor movement separate from the students. For example, on May 24, two separate enormous demonstrations took place in Paris, one called by the CGT, the other by UNEF. In the provincial towns, this kind of tactic was more difficult, and the two movements tended to mix together, threatening the bureaucrats' influence and showing the possibility of forging a united attack on the government.

Deeply shaken by the demonstrations and by the abject failure of De Gaulle to restore order, Pompidou began a marathon set of negotiations with the union leaders who were nearly as frightened of the movement as he was. The agreement they reached—7% increase in wages, shelving of certain attacks on social security, increase in the minimum wage—were a few stale crumbs from the capitalists' table.

As soon as they tried to sell this miserable deal to the

workers, it became obvious that it was not enough. When Seguy, leader of the CGT went to Billancourt to explain the agreement on May 27, he was booed and shouted down in the PCF's industrial stronghold!

Throughout the Country, it was the same story. The strikers would not go back to work; they would not accept the agreement. The sense of expectation of the need for some fundamental change had taken hold of the entire working class. Reeling from the shock of rejection, the PCF and the CGT tried hard to raise their sights, to turn the movement into pressure for a change of government.

They called another demonstration on May 29. Again 600,000 people marched, this time under the slogan "for a people's government." The smell of 1936 and the "Front Populaire" were in the air. De Gaulle flew to Germany in order to meet with a cabal of his closest military aides, while ministers began to burn their secret archives.

And yet, the next day, the tide began to turn. De Gaulle returned from Germany, having decided against the "last and fatal choice" of using the army against the strikers. Instead, knowing the electoralist cretins who led the workers, he called a general election and mobilized his supporters in a massive reactionary demonstration on the Champs-Élysées.

The PCF was only too willing to divert the flood into the parliamentary watermill. It called on workers to return to work and to settle matters at the ballot box. Pointing to the electoral victory of the Popular Front in 1936, the Stalinists assured the masses that the "people's government" demanded on May 29 could be produced without bloodshed and suffering by the upcoming elections. At first, there was considerable resistance. But without any alternative objective, disappointed but not defeated, the workers slowly returned to work.

Woe to those who abort a revolution. When the elections took place at the end of the month, the PCF's hopes were dashed. To their astonishment, the Gaullists won 55% of the vote and were swept back into office, while the Stalinists lost over half their seats, falling from 73 to 34 deputies. Even more staggering was the vote in the constituencies around the major factories. For example, around Flins, the PCF lost 25% of its votes as compared to a year before. How could it end like this?

First, it must be remembered that the electoral system was profoundly undemocratic. Youth under 21 did not have the right to vote, and an estimated 300,000 youth of voting age were not on the electoral roll because of the government's refusal to update it.

Secondly, although the rump of the old SFIO stood, together with the tiny Left-reformist PSU, the PCF was really the only workers' party. And it had just dramatically betrayed the May general strike. Young workers and students were hardly inclined to vote for it—or even to vote at all. "Elections, piège à cons" (roughly translated—"Only fools vote") was a popular slogan in June and afterwards.

Despite this sad finale, May 68 played a fundamental role in shaping the modern French class struggle. De Gaulle lost the mystique of invincibility. In little more than a year, he lost a referendum and resigned, returning to his village in Lorraine in a huff, there to live out his embittered old age. The Gaullist "strong state" was scaled down and reformed by Pompidou.

The PCF began to decline, which has continued unabated

ever since. At the same time, a political space opened up on the Left, which the Social-Democratic reformists (Mitterrand and the new Socialist Party) occupied for two decades. To the Left of the PCF, a number of relatively large centrist groups formed.

Far from being an event, which is only of interest to nostalgic “forty-somethings,” the great explosion of May 68 continues to reverberate in today’s class struggle. Even more importantly, it carries a series of lessons that are of fundamental importance to a new generation of youth. For us, the task is not to repeat May 68 but to surpass it.

The far-Left and the students

During May, the Trotskyist groups played an important role in the early, student-dominated phase of the struggle.

They all argued for links between students and the working class, and they influenced tens of thousands of radicalized youth: students and workers. The massive wave of class struggle constituted a major test of their politics.

Since the beginning of the 1960’s, the Parisian student milieu had been the focus of a series of thoroughgoing political struggles between different far-Left tendencies. The main result of these debates was the weakening of the traditional student organizations, especially the “Union National des Etudiants de France” (UNEF, the students’ union) and the “Union des Etudiants Communistes” (UEC), which organized the many student members of the PCF. The victors in these struggles were mainly the small Trotskyist and Maoist groups.

In 1966, major splits in the UEC led to the creation of the “Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire” (JCR—Revolutionary Communist Youth, with around 400 members, and linked to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International) and the “Union des Jeunesses Communistes marxistes-léninistes” (UJC-ml, a Maoist group of around 200 members).

Meanwhile, the “Fédération des Etudiants Révolutionnaires” (FER—Federation of Revolutionary Students, with around 500 militants linked to the “Organization Communiste Internationaliste” of Pierre Lambert) occupied the “unionist” ground increasingly vacated by the UNEF.

The most conservative of the centrist groups in May was the FER. During the “Night of the Barricades” on May 10, 1,000 students of the FER came out of their meeting around midnight and marched in serried ranks to the barricades—but not to fight! Denouncing the “petty-bourgeois” nature of the attempt to take the Sorbonne, they called instead for “500,000 workers in the Latin Quarter on Monday May 13.” They then calmly marched away from the barricades, away from the burgeoning pitched battle, leaving tens thousands of students to fight the police to a dawn standstill.

A week later, Charles Berg, a leader of the OCI and of the FER, defended their political cowardice:

“20 or 30,000 students could not beat the thousands of riot police. I have no hesitation in saying that we were correct, having gone in orderly ranks to the barricades, to call on the students to break up their demonstration which was necessarily going to be transformed into a bloodbath.”¹

Berg and the Lambertists were wrong. Firstly, there was no “bloodbath” that night. While the students did not retake the Sorbonne, they were not beaten. Fights with the

police are not an end in themselves, and wherever revolutionaries are decisively outnumbered, they would do best to avoid them. But that was clearly not the case on May 10. The students were already well experienced in fighting the police, and there was no good reason not to participate.

This very non-revolutionary reflex by the Lambertists was explained by their position of always orienting to the “official” organizations—UNEF and the trade unions, especially the anti-communist “Force Ouvrière” union. The Lambertists have a visceral distrust of organizations that were not under their control or that of the unions.

Centering all their activity on their campaign for “3,500 youth to our central Paris meeting in June,” the FER and the OCI did not feel the need to participate in a battle involving 30,000 students!

As could have been expected, the FER’s refusal to participate in the “Night of the Barricades” did not impress the bulk of the students and youth. Despite their long-term work among students, the JCR, the Maoists, and VO rapidly left them to one side.

For their part, the JCR played a key role in setting up the “22 mars.” Daniel Bensaïd, a leader of the USFI, was one of the founders of the Movement. The JCR’s project was to try and repeat the success of the German SDS in mobilizing school and college students and in setting up a kind of “youth party.”

This marked an important break with the politics of its parent organization, the “Parti Communiste Internationaliste,” which had been carrying out “deep entry” into the PCF since 1953.

Even at its foundation, in 1966, the JCR had agreed with the PCI’s perspective:

“We are not trying to create a new party—the political weight of the PCF and the CGT makes that an illusion for the moment. The building of the revolutionary party will have to go through the traditional organizations of the working class (PCF and CGT). The revolutionary party will only be created through the building of a left tendency in the PCF.”²

The JCR youth had, in practice, broken with this schema, but in the first two weeks of May, their policy was essentially empirical and reactive, following the initiatives of the anarchist leader of the “22 mars”, Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Although they pointed out the necessity of links between workers and students, this remained essentially a paper position: the real battles, according to the JCR, were to be fought on the streets of the Latin Quarter.

In a similar way, the third “Trotskyist” organization, “Voix Ouvrière,” had also made a “turn” towards students. Having traditionally emphasized its highly propagandistic work-place orientation, VO was initially extremely disdainful of “petty bourgeois” student struggles. “When the first protests against the University reform took place in autumn 1967, VO explained that they had no chance of winning their demands and called on “the best of the university youth to break with their social milieu and put themselves at the service of the workers and of socialism.”³

This truly petty-bourgeois moralism attracted only the most guilt-ridden middle-class students. The best of the youth carried on fighting as best they knew how.

After the foundation of the “22 mars,” VO woke up to the fact that something important was happening. Their facto-

ry bulletins covered European student struggles regularly, and they began to realize that the best “service” students could give to the working class was to fight back against the bosses’ government!

Although all three organizations called on the students to orient to the working class, none of them made any concrete proposals for how this could be done. There was no consistent campaign for links with particular factories or for the speakers from the various union branches to come and speak to the students and vice versa. Even more surprisingly, demands centered on the students’ immediate struggles were largely absent.

The movement’s spontaneity tended to hypnotize all the “revolutionary” groups, sweeping them along through the rapids of the general strike. Despite this fantastic opportunity, their “revolutionary politics” remained fundamentally abstract.

Above all they were unable to give to the young revolutionary workers or the students clear tactics to combat and defeat the reformist leadership of the labor movement, either because they ignored it (VO, JCR) or adapted to it (OCI).¹

The far-Left and the workers

The “Trotskyist” forces entered the May events very weak in numbers and with a weak implantation in the working class. They wanted to but were unable to play a more important role in the factories and in the strikes. As two JCR leaders put it a short while later:

“The PCF refused, under any circumstances, to try and contest power, and the revolutionary current which was forming on the left was not yet ready to take it. Those who could take the power would not; those who wanted to could not yet do so.”¹

The JCR in fact strengthened itself among the students winning thousands over the next few years to subjectively revolutionary politics. A correct policy towards the mass workers’ organizations could in addition have greatly strengthened the revolutionary nucleus in the working class.

For this, it was necessary to combine immediate economic, democratic, and transitional demands that pointed the vanguard in the direction of taking power. It was necessary to place demands on the reformist leaders, to offer the united front in a principled but non-sectarian way. The three major groupings were unable to do this, tied as they were to inherited wrong political methods and strategic conceptions.

For the Lambertists of the OCI-FER, the key questions were those of the attacks on Social Security, the 40 hour week, guaranteed jobs, a generalized wage increase, and for the abrogation of the university reform and the government’s economic Plan.²

This reformist program was, in fact, that of the trade-union leaderships. It failed to raise the key question of workers’ control. It was a mere repetition of what was being said by local union leaders in thousands of factories up and down the France.

By putting its main emphasis on the fight for “the weapon of victory: a national strike committee”³ without focusing on the key question of rank-and-file control of the strike, the OCI-FER showed it was obsessed with maintaining

at all costs its links with the established trade-union bureaucracy, especially with Force Ouvrière, even where the bureaucrats were sabotaging the movement by opening negotiations with the government.

Voix Ouvrière was also heavily affected by Tailism. Although at the height of the strike it declared “Long live the general strike! Down with the reactionary Gaullist police state!”⁴ VO had no idea of how to connect their maximum program with the immediate struggles of the workers. For VO, the real objectives of the strike were very different:

“The occupiers will not go home, work will not begin again until the workers have at least obtained full satisfaction on the following demands:

- “1. No salary below 1000f
2. Return to the 40-hour week (or less, where possible) without loss of pay, with the work divided up between all workers
3. Payment of all strike days, without which the right to strike means nothing.
4. Full union and political rights in the enterprises: for the right to circulate newspapers and ideas, for the right to assembly in the enterprises.”⁵

This series of demands, put forward at a time when 10 million workers were on strike, was repeated over and over again by VO. Yet again, these are nothing else than the demands the workers were already raising, with a bit of “orthodoxy” thrown in (sliding scale of hours). The incredible experience gained by workers through occupying their plants is ignored here. No attempts were made to make the fight for workers’ control — the key issue raised by the strike — conscious and central.

Even if VO had had a better implantation, had been “the” revolutionary party, it would merely have formed the Left wing of the spontaneous workers’ movement.

The JCR, which was clearly undergoing a Left-centrist evolution, understood better than the other two organizations the importance of raising slogans that went beyond the current consciousness of the workers and students. They called for the nationalization of occupied factories under workers’ control based on factory committees. They also called for the opening of the books and warned workers against the trap of “co-management.”⁶ There were, however, two yawning gaps in the program of all three organizations.

Firstly, none of them warned clearly that the reformists — and especially the trade-union leaders — would try to sell out the strike, nor armed the workers politically and organizationally for how to prevent this.

After the sellout, the PCF was an easy target, and all groups attacked its bailing out of the Gaullist regime. But the key question of fighting for elected strike committees as a way of preventing the union leaders from betraying was never raised.

Secondly, and even more surprisingly, the question of attacking the Fifth Republic, and all its anti-democratic structures, was not raised as a real alternative to parliamentary and anti-parliamentary cretinism.

A revolutionary situation?

France did not experience a fully developed revolutionary situation in May 1968, but important elements of one erupted and almost as rapidly disappeared in a sharp re-

assertion of bourgeois power.

The general strike of May created a duality of power in certain factories. Managers and owners had been locked out; elements of workers' control over production were established in several centers.

This posed a real challenge to the rule of the bosses in these areas. They showed, however briefly, the power of the mobilized proletariat. Nevertheless, most factories did not even possess a strike committee, and the workers did not elect those that did exist.

Dual power in society as a whole certainly did not exist even though the Nantes Strike Committee, exceptionally, took control of public transport, controlled the roads leading to the town, and even issued food coupons to strikers, which were honored by the local traders.

More typically, the committees of action that the far-Left tried to establish amounted to little more than united-front bodies embracing students and workers. They were mainly discussion forums rather than united-front bodies for deciding action, and they probably existed in fewer than a quarter of the workplaces on strike.

But the general strike by its amplitude and its duration certainly posed the question —“which class rules?”— even if the armed insurrection and the seizure of power by the working class never became the task of the day. The problem was that the parties and union federations of the working class, the PCF and the SFIO leaders, the CGT, CFDT and FO bureaucracies, answered this question unambiguously: the bosses!

The immediate tasks during the second half of May were

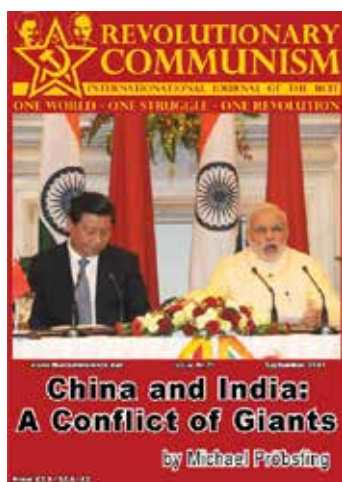
to elect and generalize truly democratic strike committees and build local and citywide councils of action that could link up all the exploited and oppressed and effectively challenge the legislative and executive powers of the government. In this way the workers and their student allies could have prevented the political initiative from slipping away from them and back to De Gaulle.

Instead, the strike and the student mobilizations reached a dead end. The reformist leaders made it clear, not only to the working class but also to the terrified reactionary petty-bourgeoisie, that they had no intention of leading the millions of mobilized workers and hundreds of thousands of mobilized youth into a direct struggle for power. The students and the far-Left had no solution to this crisis of leadership in the workers' movement.

Waldeck-Rochet, the Secretary-General of the PCF, justified his party's support for the Grenelle Agreements, which gave workers a few hundred Francs pay increase by the following classical reformist logic:

“In reality, there were the following alternatives in May. Take steps to ensure that the key demands were satisfied, while at the same time pursuing a policy of democratic changes by constitutional means—this was our Party's position. Or else provoke a trial of strength, in other words move towards an insurrection, including the use of armed struggle aimed at overthrowing the regime by force. This was the adventurist position of certain ultra-Left groups.”

What breathtaking cynicism and dishonesty! If all the workers wanted was a pay increase why did they launch a wave of factory occupations? Why did the workers of



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Nantes begin to take control of their city? Why did the Vitry workers try to set up direct trade relations with the local farmers? Why? Because the working class was spontaneously moving in the direction of taking control of its whole way of life.

The PCF claim that a revolution was not possible because a majority were not in favor of it, because the repressive apparatus remained intact. This conceals the fact that they did nothing to develop these conditions. They sought to reduce everything that was revolutionary in the situation back to the level of normal union negotiations and a normal election campaign. The result was that the economic gains that were made proved ephemeral, and the reformist parties suffered a serious parliamentary setback.

The Stalinists hated the idea of revolution like the plague. They were totally reconciled to the Fifth Republic and its institutions. Worse, they even sought to preserve De Gaulle because of his anti-American, relatively “pro-Soviet” stance.

The real task in those weeks was to bridge the gap between the workers’ legitimate desire for immediate improvements in wages and conditions, for more democracy, and the desire for a different class government, a different class power.

This bridge could have been built through a fight for transitional demands to strengthen the movement for workers’ control in the factories and through repeated calls for a workers’ government, exposing time and again the reformist leaders refusal to fight for power. The hold of these leaders had to be weakened and broken, and this could not be done simply by denunciations.

These demands should have been linked to a massive unionization drive; extending control over the determination of wage levels and hours of work, rather than just allowing the CGT bureaucracy to do it for the workers; defense of the workplace occupations from the CRS by

workers’ self-defense.

In addition, it was vital to broaden the mass movement to other layers beyond the industrial working class. This could only have been done by agitation and propaganda, first of all directed at the mass of poorer farmers and, secondly, at the lower levels of the army.

The sizeable proportion of the French population that lived in the countryside was largely untouched by May, although peasant organizations in the west declared support for the struggles of the workers and students. Even more striking, the army — despite its 180,000 conscripts — remained solid. There was an appeal from the 15th Infantry Regiment calling for soldiers’ committees to be set up and pledging not to fire on strikers, but this appeared to be unique.

Last but not least, there was an important place for far-reaching democratic demands. Not only should De Gaulle have gone but so should the whole Bonapartist paraphernalia of the Fifth Republic too. Instead of parliamentary elections, there should have been agitation for a constituent assembly, to be elected by universal suffrage of all over the age of 16.

Such a program, combining immediate, democratic, and transitional demands would have provided the French working class and radicalized youth with a platform for settling their accounts with the Gaullist “strong state” and with the whole of French capitalism.

Notes:

- 1 Combat, 5/17/68 2 JCR leaflet, Caen 1966
- 3 VO, 29.11.67, pg. 4 4 Bensaïd and Weber, pg. 164
- 5 Informations Ouvrières 387, May 1968
- 6 Information Ouvrières 388, 5/23/68
- 7 Voix Ouvrière 20.5.68, pg. 1 8 ibid
- 9 Avant-garde jeunesse 14, 5/27/68, pg. 5

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.

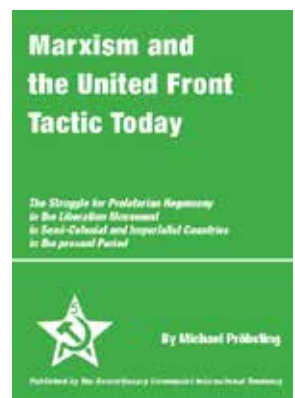
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

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.



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 5th Workers International on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without a revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

