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India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes

PLUS: New Stage in U.S.-China Cold War * Class Struggle in the U.S.
On the Donbass Uprising in Spring 2014 * Thomas Spence (1750-1814)
Oppression of the Uyghurs in China

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The picture on the cover is from a rally in solidarity with Kashmir which was held in Vienna on 8 August 2019

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The Point of No Return Seems to Have Been Passed

Intensified Global Trade War, currency war and arms race open a new stage in the U.S.-China Cold War

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 7 August 2019

The last few days have seen crucial developments in the world situation that have resulted in a further escalation of the Cold War between the two largest Great Powers – the U.S. and China.

U.S. President Trump announced on 2 August that he will impose a 10% levy on US\$300 billion of Chinese imports from the beginning of September. That would mean that Trump has now targeted virtually all of the roughly \$550bn in goods America buys from China every year. It marks an abrupt end to a temporary truce announced at the G20 summit in Osaka.

In retaliation Beijing announced that Chinese companies will stop buying US agricultural products and that China will not rule out imposing import tariffs on US farm products that were purchased after 3 August.

More importantly, China's yuan exchange rate weakened below the psychologically important level of 7 to the US dollar in both onshore and offshore markets. It is the first time that the yuan has dropped below that level since offshore trading started in Hong Kong in 2010, and the lowest in the onshore market since April 2008. Overall, the yuan has lost 5% against the dollar since hitting a high in February of 6.6862 to the dollar. That helps exporters cope with the tariffs of up to 25% imposed by Trump on billions

of dollars of Chinese goods.

In response, the Trump Administration formally labelled China a currency manipulator, the first such move since 1994. It will, according to a statement of the Treasury Department led by Steven Mnuchin, ask the International Monetary Fund to “eliminate the unfair competitive advantage created by China's latest actions”. There can be no doubt these latest developments signal the strong possibility of a currency war with the United States.¹

These developments sparked panic in the stock markets with losses of 2-4% on most major exchanges in the U.S., Europe, and East Asia within a single day. The S&P 500, a key American stock market index, experienced its biggest one-day percentage decline since December last year, amounting to a \$766bn paper loss, according to Refinitiv data.²

The currency war: a new stage of the U.S.-China Cold War

Refuting the allegation of being a “currency manipulator”, *People's Daily*, the mouthpiece of the Stalinist-capitalist regime in Beijing, accused the US of “deliberately destroying the international order” and holding its own citi-

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan.
A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting analyses the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – the U.S., China, EU, Russia, and Japan. He shows that the diplomatic rows, sanctions, trade wars, and military tensions between these Great Powers are not accidental or caused by a mad man in the White House. They are rather rooted in the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system. This rivalry is a key feature of the current historic period and could, ultimately, result in major wars between these Great Powers.

Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is crucial for assessing the character of the current inter-imperialist rivalry.

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting critically discusses the analysis of modern imperialism by a number of left-wing parties (left social democrats, Stalinists, Trotskyists and others). He demon-

strates that most of these organizations fail to understand the nature of the Great Power rivalry and, consequently, are not able to take an internationalist and revolutionary stance.

The author elaborates the approach of leading Marxist figures like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg to the problems of Great Power rivalry and imperialist aggression against oppressed peoples. He outlines a Marxist program for the current period which is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

The book contains an introduction and 29 chapters plus an appendix (412 pages) and includes 61 figures and tables. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry
between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan
A Critique of the Left's Analysis and
an Outline of the Marxist Perspective



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

zens hostage. It warned: *"Today some in America are obsessed with American privilege to the point of destroying international rules and the international system ... These Americans need to wake up!"*³

The currency war is likely to continue. Beijing views it as an effective response to not only counter Trump's tariffs but to simultaneously drive the internationalization of its currency. The regime's international mouth piece *Global Times* stated: *"Although China has overtaken the US to become the world's largest trading nation, the share of the yuan in global central bank reserves was only 1.84 percent in the second quarter of 2018, as the US dollar remains the major global reserve currency. China clearly wants the yuan to play a bigger global role, but the US sees a threat from the yuan's internationalization. The ongoing trade war is prompting China to make strategic adjustments for a possible decoupling of its economy from the US. In that scenario, China is likely to reduce its dependence on the US dollar and push the yuan's global use. The process of the yuan's internationalization is likely to trigger more conflicts between Beijing and Washington. If the two countries are destined to come into conflict over the yuan's internationalization, the odds are: the sooner, the better. The yuan's sudden slump against the US dollar on Monday seems to have exceeded US expectations and triggered a hot debate among US observers. This suggests China now has the initiative in the trade war and won't be content to only play defense."*⁴

Edward Moya, a senior market analyst at the global forex group OANDA, said: *"Continued yuan depreciation should be expected, albeit at a staggered pace. (...) Currency wars are taking center stage ... [and] Beijing is likely to tolerate further weakness and we could see another 5% before the end of the year."*⁵

Rising global tensions

All of these developments are taking place against the background of a looming Great Recession and accelerated global tensions.⁶ Bloomberg, a mouthpiece of the U.S. monopoly bourgeoisie, reflected a growing sense of nervousness among its class: *"The escalating trade war between the U.S. and China is nudging the world economy toward its first recession in a decade with investors demanding politicians and central bankers act fast to change course."*⁷

The effects of the Global Trade War are hitting both Great

Powers. A bourgeois economist commented about the situation of the U.S. economy: *"The trade war evidently has contributed to the sharp slowdown in US economic growth. On Monday the National Association of Purchasing Managers reported the worst print in three years for its widely-followed services gauge. It had reported an even weaker number for manufacturing last week."*⁸

The increasing nervousness of the capitalists is reflected, among others, in the rush of investors for the safety of government bonds and the dumping of stocks. As a result the yields of 10-year and 30-year Treasury bonds are dropping to record low levels. At the same time, the *"spread between the 2-year Treasury yield and the 10-year yield, a longtime recession gauge, hit a low of 7.4 basis points, its lowest level since June 6, 2007."*⁹

The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis shows on its website some highly interesting statistics about the development of the business cycle since 1982. According to its data, each time the U.S. economy entered a recession soon after the spread between the yield on the 3-month Treasury bill and that of the 10-year Treasury note turned negative. Currently, this spread is close to -40 basis points!¹⁰

China's economy has also taken a hit. While the official growth figures of its economy are still impressive, its GDP growth of 6.2% in the second quarter came in at a 27-year low. Furthermore, the National Bureau of Statistics of China reported last week that manufacturing activity contracted for the third straight month in July.¹¹

All this is taking place when the Stalinist-capitalist regime in Beijing faces a massive challenge by popular uprising in Hong Kong which lasts now already for more than two months.¹²

Tensions are not limited to the U.S. and China as there has also been a major escalation of the tensions between two other Asian imperialist states – Japan and South Korea. The conflict between these two major capitalist economies – number three and number eleven in global ranking (in terms of nominal GDP) – will also have major repercussions for the world economy.¹³

Another flashpoint of the world situation is the renewed tensions between India and Pakistan after the ultra-chauvinist Modi government launched a massive attack on the constitutional rights of the Muslim-majority province of Kashmir.¹⁴ A military conflict in South Asia, which is

China's transformation into an imperialist power

A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power

By Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

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home to about 1.9 billion people or about one fourth of the world's population, would have tremendous consequences for the world situation.

Furthermore, the Trump Administration has scrapped the INF treaty that previously put certain limitations to the arms race.¹⁵ This will, without doubt, provoke retaliatory measures by Russia and China.

In order to increase Washington's pressure on China, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said last weekend that the U.S. wanted to deploy midrange conventional missiles in the Asia-Pacific region within months. This is a major threat to China. In response, Beijing warned that all "counter measures" were "on the table" if the US placed intermediate-range ground missiles in the area. Fu Cong, of China's foreign ministry, warned China's neighbours, including Japan, South Korea and Australia, not to allow the US deployment in their territory. Fu said: "If the US deploys missiles in this part of the world, at the doorstep of China, China will be forced to take countermeasures."

Interestingly, Australia, usually one of the most loyal Washington allies, has announced that it would not allow U.S. missiles on its territory. This reflects the decline of U.S. imperialist hegemony and the rising status of China as a new Great Power.¹⁶

The Cold War between the U.S. and China is also reflected in the fact that, for the first time, Beijing acknowledges the accelerating rivalry between the Great Powers. In the recently published issue of its bi-annual defence white paper, titled "China's National Defence in the New Era", the Chinese government states: "International strategic competition is on the rise. The US has adjusted its national security and defense strategies, and adopted unilateral policies. It has provoked and intensified competition among major countries.

(...) As the world economic and strategic center continues to shift towards the Asia-Pacific, the region has become a focus of major country competition, bringing uncertainties to regional security."¹⁷

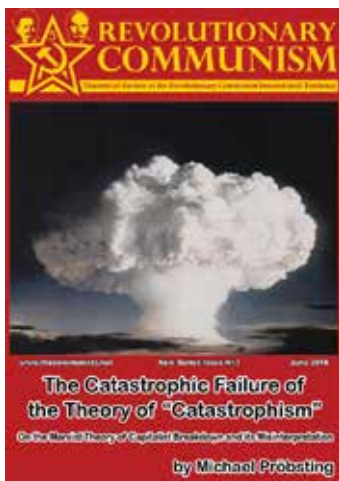
This is in response to the shift of U.S. military strategy which increasingly focuses on countering the challenge of China and Russia as new Great Powers.¹⁸

A Cold War that comes at no surprise

Trotsky, Lenin's most important collaborator in preparing and organizing the October Revolution in 1917 and later the founder of the Fourth International, liked to say: "The strength of Marxism lies in its ability to foretell."¹⁹ Naturally, this presupposes a scientific analysis of world capitalism and its inner contradictions, an analysis that requires regular serious examination and, if necessary, updates and modifications.

The RCIT has worked towards providing such a dynamic analysis. This is outlined in our annual World Perspectives documents as well as various books, pamphlets and essays. We have recognized for some time now the onset decline of U.S. imperialism, the rise of China as a new imperialist power, and the consequential, accelerating Great Power rivalry.²⁰

We stated in our program in 2012: "In the period of accelerated decline of capitalism the tensions between the ruling classes and states increase inevitably. If the prey gets smaller, the bandits fight harder for their share. Therefore, it is no wonder that the rivalry between the major imperialist powers exacerbates. The U.S. brace themselves against the end of its absolute hegemony as the imperialist leading power which lasted for more than half a century-long. China has entered the arena as a self-confident



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of "Catastrophism"

By Michael Pröbsting, May 2018

*On the Marxist Theory of Capitalist Breakdown and its Misinterpretation
by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its
"Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International"*

Introduction * A Note on the PO's term "Catastrophism" * What did the Marxist Classics Say? A Brief Overview * Empirical Evidence for the Long-Term Decline of Capitalism * What will come after Capitalism? * Epoch and Periods * The Current Historical Period which Opened in 2008/09 * Empirical Evidence for the Decay of Capitalism in the Present Historic Period * The Dialectical and the Mechanistic Interpretation of Cycles on Capitalism * Permanent Collapse? No, there is Collapse and Collapse * Consequences of "Catastrophism" (I): Confusion on Capitalist Restoration * Consequences of "Catastrophism" (II): Confusion on China and Russia as Capitalist Powers * Excuse: The Theory of "Long Waves" and Dialectical Materialism * From Economic Crisis to Revolutionary Situation? * Can the Crisis of Leadership be Solved without an International Democratic-Centralist Organization? * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format

new imperialist power and is expanding its influence. The EU is trying hard to become a unified and powerful force, and Russia are trying to increase its share in this geopolitical power struggle. Ultimately, the rivalry between the great powers threatens to lead to a new world war. Albeit this danger is not immediately pending, we experience an enormous increase of imperialist colonial wars and "limited" intervention in the semi-colonial world since a number of years (e.g. in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, etc. from the U.S. and the EU; in Chechnya and Georgia by Russia). This is accompanied by the increase in proxy wars and imperialist militarism and rearmament (especially concerning the technological modernization).²¹

In January 2018, we pointed to the "realistic possibility that a trade war could start in 2018 between the U.S. and China which would trigger another recession."²² A few months later, at the onset of the Global Trade War, we explained that while short-term compromises are possible, a full-blown conflict is inevitable: "Of course, it is not inevitable that a full-blown Global Trade War will take place in the next few months. As mentioned above, both U.S. as well as Chinese capitalists fear such a development and its consequences for the world economy. (...) For all these reasons, one cannot exclude that Washington and Beijing might find a temporary compromise and delay an all-out global trade war for some time. However, given the fact that warmongering in the Middle East and economic protectionism are essential aspects of Trump's political project, it is very unlikely that such a compromise could last very long. Despite all the inner contradictions and obstacles, there can be no doubt that militarism and protectionism are the key answers of U.S. imperialism against its decline as the hegemonial global power. This would also be the case if the U.S. would have a less mentally deranged and more perceptive President. For all these reasons, a full-blown Global Trade War is inevitable sooner or later."²³

Since then we have examined repeatedly the developments of the Global Trade War, its driving forces as well as its perspectives.²⁴

More and more serious bourgeois commentators are resigning themselves to the changes afoot with the view that the Global Trade War has now become the "new normal". David P. Goldman warned that "the escalating conflict between China and the US will likely be long and debilitating."²⁵ Gordon Watts noted that "barring a U-turn, the world's two largest economies appear to be hurtling down a road to financial mayhem with the global economy held hostage in the back seat."²⁶

A recent editorial of the British *Guardian* addresses this directly. It reflects the increasing nervousness of a bourgeoisie that continues to be haunted by the catastrophes of 20th Century capitalism.

"There is something eerily reminiscent of the summer of 1914 about the state of US-China relations. Neither side wants a trade war. Both countries would be damaged by a trade war. But step-by-step a trade war comes closer. The latest US tariffs come into force in less than four weeks' time. Without question these are the most crucial weeks for the global trading system since the 1930s. If Mr Trump and China's president, Xi Jinping, miscalculate, as all the signs suggest that they might, the upshot will be a full-blown trade and currency war that will shred business confidence, close factories and increase unemployment."²⁷

Such comments reflect the most farsighted bourgeois thinkers that are beginning to grasp the threatening outlines of a plunging decline of the capitalist political and economic order.

Conclusions

The Cold War between the U.S. and China confirms once more our thesis that the Great Power rivalry is one of the most important features of the present historic period that began in 2008.²⁸ We repeat, the precondition for a correct understanding of world developments lies in a recognition of the imperialist nature, not only of the old powers – the U.S., Western Europe and Japan – but also of the emerging imperialist powers, China and Russia.

Only on the basis of such a Marxist understanding is it possible to take a consistent revolutionary and anti-imperialist stance in emerging conflicts like the Global Trade War. This means a position of consistently opposing all imperialist powers and intransigently fighting all expressions of national chauvinism and militarism. In our "Six Points for a Platform of Revolutionary Unity Today" we have summarized the positions that we believe offer the only legitimate stance for Marxists:

"It is only possible to understand the driving dynamic of the present period of capitalist crisis and to take a correct position if one recognizes the imperialist character not only of the US, EU and Japan but also of the new emerging powers, Russia and China. Only on such a basis is it possible to arrive at the only correct, anti-imperialist program on this issue – proletarian internationalism and revolutionary defeatism, i.e., the perspective of consistent struggle of the working class independent of and against all imperialist powers. This means that revolutionaries refuse to lend support to any Great Power in inter-imperialist conflicts under the slogan "The main enemy is at home!"²⁹

The strength of the methodology of the RCIT lies in this, that its program and prognoses are capable of withstanding the test of great events. The present Global Trade War and the emerging Cold War between the U.S. and China demonstrate the superiority of the Marxist method.

We call all those who share such a strategic outlook to join us in building a Revolutionary World Party fighting for a socialist future that will liberate humanity from the heel of the imperialist powers in both the East and West!

Footnotes

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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

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United States: The Need for a Labor Party

By Yossi Schwartz, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23 July 2019

We live in an extreme reactionary episode of the capitalist system. However it is not one sided as in a country after country the exploited and the oppressed are fighting back.

Donald Trump's reflects the worst side of the American imperialism. He is openly a nationalist, a racist and a misogynist. A twin brother of the Israeli Prime Minister, of Narendra Modi of India and Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil. He reflects the motion to the right and the reactionary aspiration to roll back history to the time prior to the civil war, or at least to the Jim Crow period when racists lynched black people.

However every motion has its counter motion. The most important motion to the left in the USA is the black radical movement known as Black Lives Matter (BLM). These men and women hate not only the white racism of Trump and his supporters but also the hypocrisy of the other imperialist party –the Democratic Party. The white liberal supporters of the Democratic Party accuse them for not voting for Clinton. They claim that black people short-changed democracy by refusing to endorse Clinton. The day after the election, *US News World Reports* summed this position: "Clinton made her case to black voters. Why didn't they hear her?"

Alicia Garza, a co-founder of the Movement for Black Lives coalition, Black Lives Matter and longtime organizer in black and Latino communities, sees these accusation by the white liberals as part of a long history of blaming black people for the sicknesses of American capitalist racist system.'

The BLM became famous when they protested the George

Zimmerman's acquittal after killing Trayvon Martin in July 2013.

This protest was followed by the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, after Michael Brown was shot dead by Darren Wilson, a white police officer in August 2014. Brown's body was left in the hot Missouri sun for hours to rot. Ferguson's courts and police force are infamous for targeting black citizens for arrest and fines to collect millions of dollars to the city's treasury.

These protests were the beginning of the Black Lives coalition that is composed by more than 50 other racial justice organizations.

In April 2016, the coalition publicized its political platform: "*A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom and Justice*".

This very advanced platform begins with the following words: "*Black humanity and dignity requires Black political will and power. Despite constant exploitation and perpetual oppression, Black people have bravely and brilliantly been the driving force pushing the U.S. towards the ideals it articulates but has never achieved. In recent years we have taken to the streets, launched massive campaigns, and impacted elections, but our elected leaders have failed to address the legitimate demands of our Movement. We can no longer wait.*"

"*We believe in elevating the experiences and leadership of the most marginalized Black people, including but not limited to those who are women, queer, trans, femmes, gender nonconforming, Muslim, formerly and currently incarcerated, cash poor and working class, disabled, undocumented, and immigrant*".

"*While this platform is focused on domestic policies, we know that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white*

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People.

A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz provides a critical analysis of numerous Zionist myths about the Jews as well as about the Palestinians. He demonstrates that the Zionist claim that Palestine is the historic homeland of the Jews lacks any serious basis.

Palestine and Zionism shows that the history of Zionism in the 20th century is a history of colonialism in the service of the Great Powers and directed against the native population – the Arabs. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz deals with key events – the "Nakba" in 1948, the wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973, more recent events like the Lebanon War, etc. – which were decisive for the expulsion of most Palestinians from their homeland.

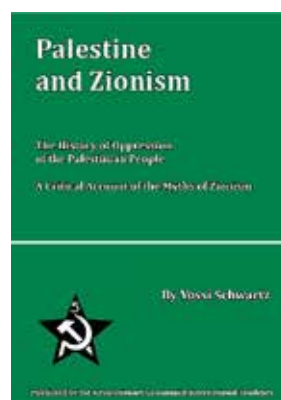
Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership by signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993.

In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz defends the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian people and

outlines a socialist perspective. He emphasizes that the only solution is the right of millions of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland and to replace the Zionist entity with one democratic state from the river to the sea – a *Free Red Palestine* with equal civil rights to the Arabs and the Israeli Jews.

The book contains an introduction and 7 chapters (112 pages) and includes 7 Tables and 3 Maps. The author of the book is Yossi Schwartz, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine..

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



supremacy know no borders. We stand in solidarity with our international family against the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation.” (1)

This platform reflects the militant spirit of important sectors of the vanguard in the USA. From this coalition revolutionaries will emerge. Great figures similar to the Jamaican poet Claude McKay and Otto Huiswoud both joined the Communist International at the time it was led by Lenin and Trotsky and before it was degenerated under Stalin.

In addition to the BLM there are others who move to the left. In June 2018, 29 year old Democratic Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a former bartender, won in New York’s 14th Congressional District. This victory came after she won the Democratic primary elections with 79% of the vote. She is known for raising important issues like Medicare-for-All, free college, a carbon tax, the abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, and a federal jobs guarantee. Some observers say that her election being a harbinger of a “socialist moment” in American politics.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is not the only woman who reflects a motion to the left as a counter motion to Trump and the right. In the current Congress there are four Congresswomen – Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and Ayanna Pressley – who take democratic anti-racist positions. In July this year the four called to impeach Trump.

Omar said that this is a president who equated neo-Nazis with those who protest against them in Charlottesville. Rashida Tlaib said that she was elected to fight the corporate assault and the corruption in the USA which means support for an impeachment of Trump. Trump demagogically said that she is a supporter of Al-Qaeda.

Tlaib and Omar have been the target of vicious attacks for their solidarity with the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement (BDS) and their criticism of the state of Israel. The House Democrats have not only opposed Tlaib on these counts; they’ve allowed Republicans’ racist attacks on Tlaib and Omar over these issues to go unchallenged. (2)

On April 9 this year five members of the DSA had secured seats on Chicago’s City Council. DSA’s nationwide membership has grown nearly tenfold since the 2016 presidential election. (3)

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is the largest socialist organization in the United States. Its youth section, Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), is composed by students from colleges and high schools, It is a member of the International Union of Socialist Youth, an affiliate of the Socialist International. The Socialist international was re-established in 1951 as a successor to the Labour and Socialist International, but its roots were the Second international that was established in 1889 after the first international collapsed following the effect of the failure of the Paris commune the first time the workers and the masses held power in a major city.

In 1914, it fell apart when major European socialist parties supported the entry of their respective countries in a world imperialist war. As result revolutionaries formed the Communist International (Third International) in 1919, while those who supported the reformist illusion of “evo-

lutionary socialism” kept the social-democratic name.

The program of the DSA emphasizes commitment to democracy as means and end. It fails to explain that democracy is a form that its nature is determined by its class content. Athens was the democracy of the slave masters. Parliamentary democracy is the form of capitalist democracy, while workers and oppressed councils’ democracy is the form of the working class power.

The DSA says that because *“we are unlikely to see an immediate end to capitalism tomorrow, DSA fights for reforms today that will weaken the power of corporations and increase the power of working people.”*

The DSA says: *“At the root of our socialism is a profound commitment to democracy, as means and end. As we are unlikely to see an immediate end to capitalism tomorrow, DSA fights for reforms today that will weaken the power of corporations and increase the power of working people. For example, we support reforms that:*

- * decrease the influence of money in politics*
- * empower ordinary people in workplaces and the economy*
- * restructure gender and cultural relationships to be more equitable.*

We are activists committed to democracy as not simply one of our political values but our means of restructuring society. Our vision is of a society in which people have a real voice in the choices and relationships that affect the entirety of our lives. We call this vision democratic socialism — a vision of a more free, democratic and humane society.

We are socialists because we reject an international economic order sustained by private profit, alienated labor, race and gender discrimination, environmental destruction, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

We are socialists because we share a vision of a humane international social order based both on democratic planning and market mechanisms to achieve equitable distribution of resources, meaningful work, a healthy environment, sustainable growth, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.” (4)

Nothing is wrong with demands for reforms in favor of the exploited and the oppressed but history has shown time and again that unless the struggles for reforms are connected to revolutionary perspective and propaganda, reforms that are achieved today will be reversed after a while. That unless the socialists are united in one international party in times of major conflicts their unity is falling apart.

Socialist politics begins with understanding that the first principle is the independence of the working class from the class enemy –the capitalists and their parties. This was clearly understood by Eugene Victor Debs who founded the American Socialist party

He said in 1912: *“We are today entering upon a national campaign of the profoundest interest to the working class and the country. In this campaign there are but two parties and but one issue. There is no longer even the pretense of difference between the so-called Republican and Democratic parties. They are substantially one in what they stand for. They are opposed to each other on no question of principle but purely in a content for the spoils of office.*

To the workers of the country these two parties in name are one in fact. They, or rather it, stands for capitalism, for the private ownership of the means of subsistence, for the exploitation of the workers, and for wage-slavery.

Both of these old capitalist class machines are going to pieces. Having outlived their time they have become corrupt and worse than useless and now present a spectacle of political degeneracy never before witnessed in this or any other country. Both are torn by dissension and rife with disintegration. The evolution of the forces underlying them is tearing them from their foundations and sweeping them to inevitable destruction..... The message of socialism, which, a few years ago was spurned by these people, falls today upon eager ears and receptive minds. Their prejudice has melted away. They are now prepared to cast their fortune with the only political party that proposes a change of system and the only party that has a right to appeal to the intelligence of the people."

Thus the perspective of a socialist movement must lead to a break with the Democratic Party that is the party of the capitalists and imperialists. This party is controlled by the big capitalists similar to the Republican Party. They are enemies of the workers and all the oppressed. The USA as an imperialist state is behind many local wars, reactionary policies toward non-imperialist states and play a very dangerous game that may lead to a WWII with other major imperialist states like Russia and China.

The issue of a Labor party is not new in the USA. It was raised by Leon Trotsky who said: *"Are we in favor of the creation of a reformist labor party? No. Are we in favor of a policy which can give to the trade unions the possibility to put its weight upon the balance of the forces? Yes. It can become a reformist party – it depends upon the development. Here comes in the question of program. I mentioned yesterday and I will underline it today – we must have a program of transitional demands, the most complete of them is a workers' and farmers' government. We are for a party, for an independent party of the toiling masses who will take power in the state. We must concretize it – we are for the creation of factory committees, for workers' control of industry through the factory committees. All these questions are now pending in the air. They speak of technocracy and put forward the slogan of "production for use." We oppose this charlatan formula and advance the workers' control of production through the factory committees."*

Of course today the demands should include black power, the full rights of the LGBT, the right of women workers and most importantly the most oppressed and exploited layers of women workers. However the transitional program that Trotsky advocated is essentially the correct program for the USA even today.

Footnotes

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- 3) Emma Whitford, 22 May 2019, <http://inthesetimes.com/article/21859/democratic-socialists-of-america-elected-officials-hold-accountable-DSA>
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- 5) Eugene V. Debs "This Is Our Year " But Two Parties And But One Issue

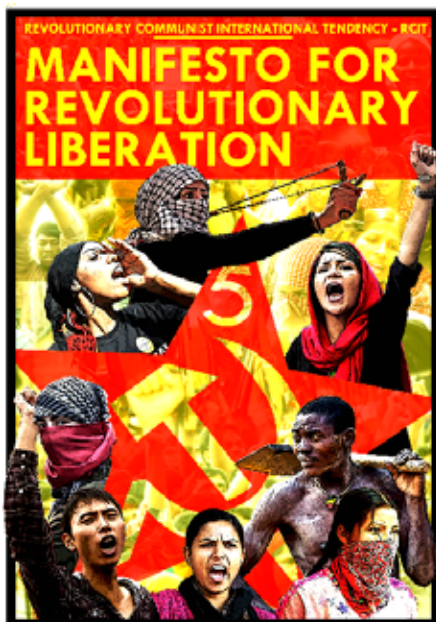
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PROGRAM OF THE RCIT

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

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

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A5 Format

37 Signatures Are Worth a Thousand Words

On a letter of 37 states, including Muslim countries, sent to the United Nations defending China's treatment of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 16 July 2019

The governments of 37 states have written a remarkable letter to the United Nations. In this letter, the signatories express their support for the policies of China's Stalinist-capitalist regime against its Muslim Uyghur minority.

*"Faced with the grave challenge of terrorism and extremism, China has undertaken a series of counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers. (...) We commend China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights. (...) We take note that terrorism, separatism and religious extremism has caused enormous damage to people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. (...) Now safety and security has returned to Xinjiang."*¹

Such words could have been taken from Orwell's dystopian novel "1984"! The Muslim Uyghurs are a nationality of an estimated eleven to fifteen million people living in East Turkestan (or Xinjiang as the province is officially called by the Chinese authorities). They have endured long-standing, national oppression by the regime in Beijing. The Chinese ruling class has systematically suppressed the Uyghur population and their culture. It has also implemented a policy of colonizing the province by settling Han Chinese people in order to change the ethnic balance. Many Muslim Uyghurs have been thrown into concentration camps. Last year, the United Nations published a report with shocking details. Gay McDougall, a member of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, cited *"estimates that upwards of a million people were being held in so-called counter-extremism centres and another two million had been forced into so-called 're-education camps' for political and cultural indoctrination."*²

It is with the utmost cynicism that the signatory states call such oppression *"a series of counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures"* and even congratulate the regime for its *"remarkable achievements in the field of human rights"*!

There is an English language adage that makes the point that *"A picture is worth a thousand words"*. In the case of the outrageous letter of sycophantic praise for the Stalinist-capitalist regime in Beijing you could amend that by saying that *"37 signatures are worth a thousand words."*

It is highly revealing to look at the list of the signatory states. A number of them are traditional and close allies of Chinese imperialism such as Russia, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Myanmar, and Belarus. These, mostly, authoritarian regimes are either Stalinist-capitalist governments or states that camouflage their capitalist policies with "socialist" phrases (North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela).³ Or they have, themselves, a notorious record of genocidal oppression of their own Muslim minorities (Russia and Myanmar).⁴

Additional signatories of the letter are the reactionary governments of a number of African countries – from Nigeria to Zimbabwe – that have close economic and political relations with the imperialist "Middle Kingdom".⁵ This reflects, we must note parenthetically, the rise of China as the imperialist Great Power that has now emerged as

a direct challenger to the traditional hegemon – the U.S.⁶

The "Muslim" traitors

However, what is particularly revealing is the fact that the list of states supporting this letter is complemented by a number of purportedly "Muslim" states. Among these are Saudi Arabia, Syria, Pakistan, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, and Bahrain. In the case of Syria, this development is hardly surprising given the fact that the criminal Assad regime has slaughtered more than 600,000 people since the beginning of the Syrian Revolution in March 2011.

However, it is extremely revealing that the official guardians of the *Kaaba* and the self-proclaimed defenders of the global Muslim *ummah* have added their names to the list of signers. So, these supposed "defenders of the faith" now congratulate China for the suppression of its Muslim minority and the staunchly conservative and anti-communist states embrace the supposedly "communist" and "atheist" regime?

How can this stunning contradiction be explained? Very simply: money talks! In reality, the Chinese regime has nothing to do with authentic communism that, in contrast to Stalinism, is totally opposed to the persecution of religious minorities. And the so-called "Muslim" governments violate every single of the five pillars of Islam on a daily basis. Is it not illustrative that the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman, is the "best buddy" of the crook, tax evader, and porn-star-fornicator, Donald Trump?! Their open or concealed support for the Assad tyranny, the barbarous war against the Yemeni people or the cold-blood murder of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi are straightforward proof of their completely villainous character!

"Ideological" pronouncements aside, these capitalist "Muslim" governments and Chinese imperialism jointly enjoy a plethora of commercial and geostrategic interests. And this is what counts in a world dominated by capitalism and the rule of profit! In order to improve their business opportunities, the "Muslim" capitalists have no problem in selling out their Uyghur brothers and sisters.

Erdoğan joins the list of whitewashers

While Turkey, home of a sizeable Uyghur Diaspora, did not sign the letter of shame, one must point out that Erdoğan has also joined the list of whitewashers of China's policy of oppression against the Uyghur people. In 2009, the Turkish President condemned China's crackdown on the Uyghurs as a *"kind of genocide"*. However, by 2019 he had changed his tune. Today, Turkey is stuck in a deep financial crisis and wants to join the main global project of Chinese imperialism – the so-called *Belt and Road Initiative*.⁷

As a result, Erdoğan is now praising the Beijing regime's

policy in East Turkestan. “Turkey stays committed to the one-China policy, Erdogan said, “stressing that residents of various ethnicities living happily in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region thanks to China’s prosperity is a hard fact, and Turkey will not allow anyone to drive a wedge in its relations with China,” Xinhua reported.”⁸

So, we see, the Uyghurs have been unceremoniously dumped by Erdoğan for better prospects on the auction block of global capitalism. Shame is evidently a word missing from the man’s vocabulary.

There is an additional ancient and famous English proverb asserting that “blood is thicker than water.” Inverting this, we are compelled to update the shifting sentiment by observing that for these types “religious beliefs (and principles) are great but money... is even better”. Better yet, the pursuit of money is their underlying, baseline principle and nothing else even comes close.

Lessons

As sad as this letter of shame is, it also contains crucial lessons. Most importantly, it demonstrates once more what the RCIT has emphasized again and again: one must not judge political forces by their self-proclaimed ideologies and religious beliefs. Stalin claimed to be a communist but oppressed the people, killed hundreds of thousands of oppositional communists, and deported ethnic minorities like the Crimean Tatars and Chechens. China is headed by a “Communist” party and, at the same time, is home to the largest number of capitalist corporations and billionaires in the world. Shamefully, this regime continues to be hailed by numerous Stalinists and Castro-Chavistas globally.⁹

Likewise, Saudi Arabia is allegedly based on the conservative moral doctrines of Wahhabism and, at the same time, is headed by an utterly decadent and corrupt monarchy that counts among its friends Trump, Putin, and Israel.

No, one must not judge any regime or political force by their words but by their deeds, by their concrete positions in the liberation struggles of workers and oppressed people. And here, we see that these “socialist” and “Muslim” regimes are uniformly on the side of the exploiters and oppressors!

We conclude by repeating that the RCIT has always denounced the Stalinist-capitalist regime in China and its national oppression of the Muslim Uyghur people.¹⁰ Contrary to the cynical denunciations of the Stalinists, the Muslim Uyghurs are waging a just struggle against Han Chinese chauvinism originating in Beijing. We stand in unconditional solidarity with the Muslim Uyghurs and their struggle for national self-determination. We support the struggle of all oppressed nations in China for freedom including the right to form their own nation state.¹¹

We also repeat our warning against any illusions in Western imperialism. Washington and Brussels want to exploit China’s domestic problems – similar to attempts of Moscow and Beijing to interfere in the domestic issues of rival Western countries. But the Western Great Powers, equally, have blood on their collective hands – just remember their brutal occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq or Israel’s ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people!

The workers and oppressed around the world must fight for liberation without relying on any of these Great Powers! All Great Powers are complicit as they strive to oppress and exploit the working people – both domestically as well as abroad.

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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

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

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

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

25 years.

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

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

Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

The only way forward is to organize all liberation fighters in a revolutionary party based on a program of independent and international class struggle. Such a struggle must aim for the revolutionary overthrow of all ruling classes and for the creation of a world without classes, without oppression, and without exploitation. We call such a world “socialism”. Join us in the struggle for that just and honest future!

Footnotes

- 1 Excerpts of the letter are quoted in Tom Miles: Saudi Arabia and Russia among 37 states backing China’s Xinjiang policy, July 12, 2019 / <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-rights/saudi-arabia-and-russia-among-37-states-backing-chinas-xinjiang-policy-idUSKCN1U721X>; Muslim countries defend Chinese ‘concentration camps’, 12 July, 2019 <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2019/7/12/muslim-countries-defend-chinese-concentration-camps>; Patrick Goodenough: China Thanks 37 Countries, Including Islamic States, for Praising Its Uighur Policies, July 15, 2019, <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/china-thanks-37-countries-including-islamic-states-praising-its>
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- 3 On the RCIT’s assessment of the regime in North Korea see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Has Capitalist Restoration in North Korea Crossed the Rubicon or Not? 15 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/has-capitalist-restoration-in-north-korea-crossed-the-rubicon-or-not/> (see also the RCIT’s literature in the footnotes); on Cuba see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Cuba’s Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cuba-s-revolution-sold-out/>; on Venezuela see e.g. RCIT: Attempted Coup D’etat in Venezuela: Defeat Guaidó and Trump! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/attempted-coup-d-etat-in-venezuela-defeat-guaido-trump/> (see also the RCIT’s literature in the appendix).
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- 5 On China’s role in Africa see e.g. RCIT: Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa, 13 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/africa-theses/> (Part II).
- 6 For the RCIT’s analysis of China as an imperialist Great Power

er we refer readers to the literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. In particular we refer to Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left’s Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, January 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; Michael Pröbsting: The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences. What are the background and the nature of the tensions between China and India in the Sikkim border region? What should be the tactical conclusions for Socialists and Activists of the Liberation Movements? 18 August 2017, Revolutionary Communism No. 71, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-india-rivalry/>; Michael Pröbsting: The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, December 2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-csr-pco-on-china/>; Michael Pröbsting: China’s transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>.

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9 See on this e.g. chapter “VIII. Revisionist Whitewashing: Stalinist and Bolivarian Admirers of Beijing’s “Socialism”” in “Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry”.

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On the Donbass Uprising in Spring 2014

A necessary correction of our assessment of the early phase of the “anti-fascist” Uprising in the Eastern Ukraine

by Petr Sedov, RCIT Russia, July 2019

Introduction of the RCIT's International Secretariat, 13 July 2019

The following article of our Russian comrade Petr Sedov elaborates the nature of the civil war in the Donbass region in Eastern Ukraine in the very early phase. It provides valuable information which has led the RCIT to correct its position.

Until now, the RCIT considered the uprising in Donbass in the first few months until summer 2014 as a primarily spontaneous popular movement against the threatening discrimination by the pro-Maidan government in Kiev. Hence the RCIT lent critical support to this movement in the first few months – until the Russian imperialist state intervened openly on the side of the Donbass rebels from summer 2014 onwards. From that moment on the RCIT considered the civil war as reactionary on both sides and took a defeatist position on both sides. (We have elaborated this position in a number of statements as well as a pamphlet “*The Uprising in East Ukraine and Russian Imperialism*”, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/ukraine-and-russian-imperialism/>)

However, as comrade Petr Sedov demonstrates, we lacked at that time important information which led us to a one-sided view. While the Putin government and the Russian army orchestrated from the beginning the annexation of the Crimea, Moscow indeed wavered until summer 2014 and preferred an “autonomy” solution for the Donbass within the Ukrainian state. However, there was an ultra-reactionary faction of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie (represented by the Oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, the GRU officer Igor Girkin/Strelkov and the ideologue of the semi-fascist Eurasian movement, Aleksandr Dugin) which strongly pushed from the very first moment for a military intervention of Russia in Donbass. While the RCIT was aware of this extremely aggressive faction of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, it under-estimated the degree of control it exercised over the movement in Donbass from the beginning. In fact, the spontaneous popular character of the rebellion was rather a subordinated element.

Therefore the RCIT corrects its position in retrospect and concludes that Marxists could not have provided any critical support at any moment neither for the annexation of the Crimea nor for the “rebellion” in Donbass.

Finally, we want to express our appreciation of the fruitful discussion which has been initiated by our Russian comrades and which has helped us to improve our understanding of the Ukraine Civil War. It is an example showing the importance of building an international organization which enables mutual enrichments of understanding and a collective improvement of our experience.

Until now, the RCIT has considered the uprising in Donbass in the first few months until summer 2014 as a primarily spontaneous popular movement against the threatening discrimination by the pro-Maidan government in Kyiv. Hence, the RCIT lent critical support to this movement in the first few months – until the Russian imperialist state intervened openly on the side of the Donbass rebels from summer 2014 onwards.

Contrary to some claims of pro-Russian social-imperialist “leftists”, the RCIT's change of position in autumn 2014 was not an opportunist adaption to the NATO offensive. It was rather the result of a Marxist methodological approach. We can see this in a statement dating to April of 2014 that RCIT explicitly states criteria to abandon support of “supposed” spontaneous rebellion.

“12. The democratic uprising in the east is another validation of RCIT's position that every democratic and national movement has to be thoroughly studied, and must not automatically be viewed simply as a proxy in the intensifying inter-imperialist rivalry. In a world dominated by imperialist monopolies and states, it is unavoidable that these great powers will try to utilize national and democratic struggles to advance their influence. However, one has to analyze concretely whether or not a given movement has become totally subordinate to and a proxy of an imperialist power. Given that the development of movements is determined by the living laws of class struggle, they can naturally also change their character. If, for example, Russian troops would invade the Eastern Ukraine, the local uprising would lose its popular character and become a proxy of Russian imperialism. In such a situation, revolutionaries could no longer support the rebellion.” [1, our emphasize]

It is true that any movement shall be looked at the totality of all forces which are involved in a given struggle and identify the dominant forces or nature of their politics. For instance, a petty-bourgeois force in a semi-colonial country can lead a just war against an imperialist power by using military assistance of foreign forces, including instructors or sending arms. Trotsky explicitly stated it. Nevertheless, if there is a political subordination of such petty-bourgeois movements to an imperialist power, it becomes a proxy force and the “liberation” struggle becomes transformed into a reactionary, imperialist war. Under such circumstances, Marxists can no longer support such a petty-bourgeois force. Otherwise, we would support a reactionary war of one imperialist power vs. another.

Thus, the RCIT published a lengthy document in October 2014 which recognized that by summer the civil war had become as reactionary on both sides. Consequently, it changed its tactics and took a defeatist position on both sides.

While the Putin government and the Russian army orchestrated from the beginning the annexation of the Crimea, Moscow indeed wavered until summer 2014 and preferred an “autonomy” solution for the Donbass within the Ukrainian state, which was pointed out even in RCIT materials. [2] Later Girkin himself confirmed it in his illus-

trative interview with Starikov (another reactionary pro-Russian politician). [3]

"As we have already explained, the uprising in east Ukraine was a spontaneous process. Later, numerous politicians and hundreds or even thousands of volunteers arrived from Russia. Were they all under the command of Putin? No, we don't believe that this is the correct explanation, as could be seen in various incidents. For example, on 7 May President Putin called for a de-escalation of the Ukrainian crisis and announced that he will ask the representatives of Southeast Ukraine [who] support federalization to delay the referendum planned for May 11, to create conditions for a dialogue." However, the leader of the People's Republics replied on the same day that they, with "all due respect," rejected Putin's "advice" to postpone the referendum or begin any "dialogue with Kiev." [2, our emphasize]

Or: "Another obvious proof of their not simply being Putin's tools is the permanent lack of unity in the policies adopted by the republics' leaderships, constituting in fact a chaotic lack of centralization. Instead of unity we repeatedly witnessed open rivalry between different leaders and militias. All this has led to repeated resignations, arrests, and new appointments. In addition, there have been numerous reports about incompetent militia leaders who caused many soldiers' death. This is clear proof that the Peoples' Republics were not being centrally managed by Moscow." [2]

The Role of Strelkov/Girkin

However, there was an ultra-reactionary faction of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie (represented by the Oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, the GRU officer Igor Girkin/Strelkov and the ideologue of the semi-fascist Eurasian movement, Aleksandr Dugin) which strongly pushed from the very first moment for a military intervention of Russia in Donbass. Animated by the imperialist spirit of Tsarist Russia glory, Strelkov pushed for extensive war with Ukraine and proclaimed its importance to avoid another 1905. It is a genuinely insane spirit, which shocked even such reactionaries like Starikov and Mironov during their discussion with Girkin. [3, 4]

While the RCIT was aware of this extremely aggressive faction of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie [1,2], it underestimated the degree of control it exercised over the movement in Donbass from the beginning while the spontaneous popular character of the rebellion was instead a subordinated element[3,4]. Girkin openly stated that without him, such escalation would not be possible. [5]

"If our unit hadn't crossed the border, everything would have fizzled out — like in [the Ukrainian city of] Kharkiv, like in Odessa," Strelkov, who uses that nom-de-guerre meaning "Shooter" to replace his last name Girkin, was quoted as saying.

"There would have been several dozen killed, burned, detained. And that would have been the end of it. But the flywheel of the war, which is continuing to this day, was spun by our unit. We mixed up all the cards on the table," he said.»

On Borotba and its relations with the Kremlin

We must also correct our assessment of Borotba. While it is correct to oppose the oppression by the bourgeoisie, we shall point out that we have made a mistake by not recognizing their reactionary role as well.

"It is therefore urgent for socialists — including Borotba — to draw the necessary conclusions from this and to fight on two fronts: against the reactionary right-wing regime in Kiev which is a puppet of US and EU imperialism and against the right-wing Great Russian chauvinist leadership of the Donbass republics which is a puppet of Russian imperialism." [6]

It was revealed that Borotba did receive money from Surkov (Putin's right-hand man) and some of their leading "comrades" publicly stated that he had no problems with it. [7,8] Albu, deputy leader of Borotba in Odessa, expressed his support for a Russian intervention and later joined the «Prizrak» Battalion, which despite whitewashing by Stalinists, was led by insane pro-Russian nationalist Alexei Mozgovoi as pointed in our recently published book *"Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry"*. [9, 10] Thus, we shall correct ourselves and proclaim that Borotba was an active agent of Kremlin under left disguise and not a «socialist» organization.

Therefore the RCIT adjusts its position in retrospect and concludes that Marxist could not have provided any critical support at any moment neither for the annexation of the Crimea nor the "rebellion" in Donbass.

Footnotes

[1] <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/mass-resistance-in-ukraine/>

[2] <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/ukraine-and-russian-imperialism/>

[3] И.Стрелков vs Н.Стариков «ЦЕНТРСИЛЫ / СИ-ЛАЦЕНТРА», Нейромир-ТВ, 22.01.2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G04tXnvKx8Y>

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India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes

Essay on the social and national contradictions of Indian capitalism and the rise of Hindutva chauvinism

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 16 August 2019

Modi's barbarous attack on the fundamental rights of the people in Jammu and Kashmir has transformed the region into a hot spot of the world situation. The ultra-reactionary government of India has transformed Kashmir into a huge concentration camp. It plans to subjugate and expel the native population of Kashmir with methods similar to the Zionist aggression in Palestine.

There can be no doubt that this will provoke a new upsurge of mass popular resistance in Kashmir and a wave of solidarity activities throughout the world and in particular in the Muslim countries. Furthermore, the drastic aggravation of the situation will also provoke the danger of another military conflict with Pakistan.

The RCIT and its comrades in South Asia have always sided with the national liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people. We support the struggle for independence and combine it with the perspective of a workers and peasant republic as part of a socialist federation of South Asia.¹

An important aspect of the liberation struggle in Kashmir is to build an international solidarity movement of workers and popular organizations. In particular, it is urgent to build links with progressive, anti-chauvinist forces in India. Likewise, it is crucial for Marxists in India to make support for the national rights of the Kashmiri people – including the right to secede – a priority in their political work.

Finally, it is obvious that the political situation and the perspectives for class struggle in India are of paramount importance not only for the South Asian sub-continent but for the world situation given the fact that India, with currently more than 1.37 billion people, is about to become the largest country with the highest population in the world within the next years.

In order to fight the class enemy it is necessary to analyze it and to identify its strength and weaknesses. In this context it seems important to us to deal in more detail with the question what are the motives of the Modi government for its brutal attack on Kashmir and why did it launch it right now.

Without pretending to provide a complete and exhaustive explanation we think it is necessary to consider both fundamental, strategic aspects as well as more short-term and tactical motives.

Capitalist Backwardness

At this point we will only provide a short summary of India's peculiar and contradictory socio-economic class character. For a more detailed elaboration we refer readers to a special pamphlet which we have published two years ago.²

India – like the whole South Asian sub-continent – is characterized by its history of centuries of colonial occupation by the British Empire. This traumatic experience has resulted in long-term social and economic deformations. According to respected economic historians the colonial occupation opened a period of sustained stagnation and super-exploitation. According to Angus Maddison, "India's per capita income in 1750 was probably similar to that in 1950" (i.e. when India became formally independent).³ A study by the economic historians Clingingsmith and Williamson calculates that India's share in world manufacturing output collapsed from 24.5% (1750) in the pre-colonial era to only 2.4% in 1938.⁴

To worsen matters, British imperialism managed to split the continent in several states when it was forced to formally accept independence in 1947 as result of decades of

The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power

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heroic independence struggle of the people on the sub-continent. This process in itself provoked one of the worst genocides of the 20th century. More than fifteen million people were uprooted, and between one and two million were killed. On the basis of this tragedy the country became partitioned between Hindu-dominated India and Muslim-dominated Pakistan.⁵

Since then India has become a capitalist semi-colony. It is true that some modern sectors have emerged in India's economy – e.g., IT software development or Indian firms like Cipla and Ranbaxy in the pharmaceutical industry. However, the economy as a whole is by and large still relatively backward, not only compared with imperialist countries but also compared with advanced industrialized semi-colonies like Turkey or Mexico. Only 340 out of 1,155 million people, i.e., 29.4% of India's population, lived in urban areas in 2008.⁶ In China the share of the urban population was 50.1% in 2010.⁷

According to the *International Labour Office* India is one of the countries with the largest informal sector. About 2/3 of all wage employees are casual workers.⁸ According to an OECD report published in 2015, the share of informal laborers in total employment reaches 80% in India.⁹

It is therefore hardly surprising that nearly half of India's population lives in utter poverty. About 42% of its population has to survive on less than \$US 1.25 per day.¹⁰ According to *Millennium Development Goals 2014* report issued by the UN, 32.9%, i.e., one third, of the world's 1.2 billion poorest people, live in India.¹¹

At the same time, India has developed in the past decades into one of the most unequal countries in the world. As we can see in Figure 1, the top 10% of the population concentrate 55% of national income in their hands – a share higher than in any other region in the world (except the Middle East).

This leaves the middle 40% of the population with 32% of total income and the bottom 50%, with around half of that, at just over 16%.¹³ In Figure 2 we can see the dramatic increase of inequality since the beginning of the neoliberal reforms in the early 1980s.

Inequality and backwardness is particularly obvious in the rural areas, where more than 900 out of 1,300 million people live. Again we see a massive concentration of

wealth in the hands of big landowners. According to the official governmental census, no more than 4.9% of farmers control 32% of India's farmland. A "large" farmer in India has 45 times more land than the "marginal" farmer. 101.4 million - or 56.4 per cent - of rural households own no agricultural land at all.¹⁵

As we have pointed out somewhere else, India's capitalist class also possess some multinational corporations which operate on the world market. Likewise, India does play a role in regional and world politics given its huge size. However, viewed in its totality (the "*rich totality of many determinations and relations*" as Marx said¹⁶), we have come to the conclusion in our works that India, as a result of its backwardness, did not become an imperialist Great Power. It is more precise to characterize it as a semi-colonial Intermediate Power.¹⁷

National, ethnic and religious divisions

India is characterized not only by massive social inequality and economic backwardness but also by deep national, ethnic and religious divisions. Contrary to the myth nurtured by bourgeois secularists and Stalinists who advocate "*national unity and integrity*", India is not a nation state and never has been so. The extremely uneven process of modernization and economic reinforcement in some areas while remaining backward and poverty-stricken in many others, is a result of the long history of colonialism as well as of the more recent semi-colonial capitalism. In short, capitalist backwardness, caused by imperialist domination and bourgeois bigotry made the creation of a united and homogenous Indian nation impossible.

Today India is riven by numerous national, ethnic and religious divisions. The constitution's Eighth Schedule, as amended by Parliament in 1992, listed eighteen official or Scheduled Languages. They are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.¹⁸ Since then four more languages have been added to this list.

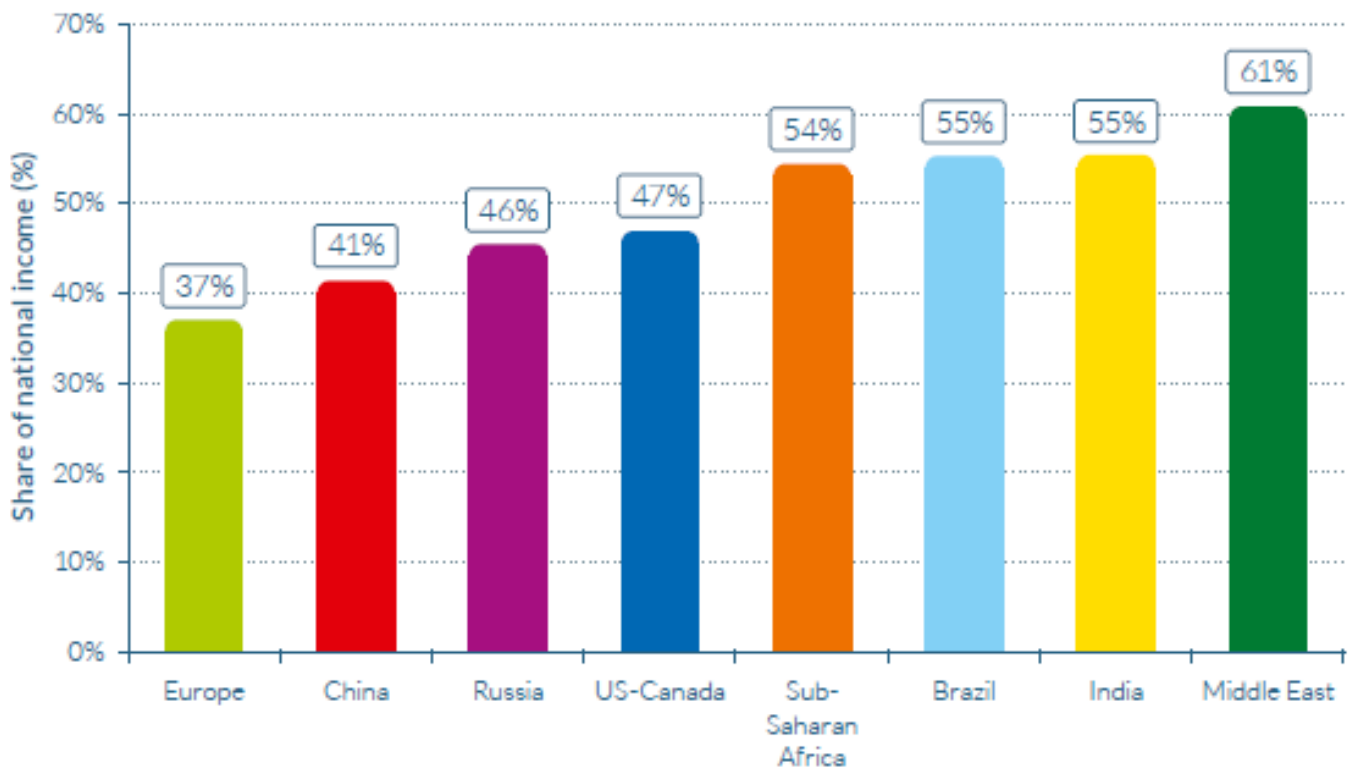
According to official statistics about 43 percent of the population speaks Hindi as their mother tongue. Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, and Tamil rank next, each the mother

Table 1. Official languages in India¹⁹

Language	Number	Percentage	Language	Number	Percentage
Hindi	52,83,47,193	43.63	Assamese	1,53,11,351	1.26
Bengali	9,72,37,669	8.03	Maithili	1,35,83,464	1.12
Marathi	8,30,26,680	6.86	Santali	73,68,192	0.61
Telugu	8,11,27,740	6.70	Kashmiri	67,97,587	0.56
Tamil	6,90,26,881	5.70	Nepali	29,26,168	0.24
Gujarati	5,54,92,554	4.58	Sindhi	27,72,264	0.23
Urdu	5,07,72,631	4.19	Dogri	25,96,767	0.21
Kannada	4,37,06,512	3.61	Konkani	22,56,502	0.19
Odia	3,75,21,324	3.10	Manipuri	17,61,079	0.15
Malayalam	3,48,38,819	2.88	Bodo	14,82,929	0.12
Punjabi	3,31,24,726	2.74			

Figure 1. Top 10% Income Shares across the World, 2016 ¹²

Top 10% income shares across the world, 2016

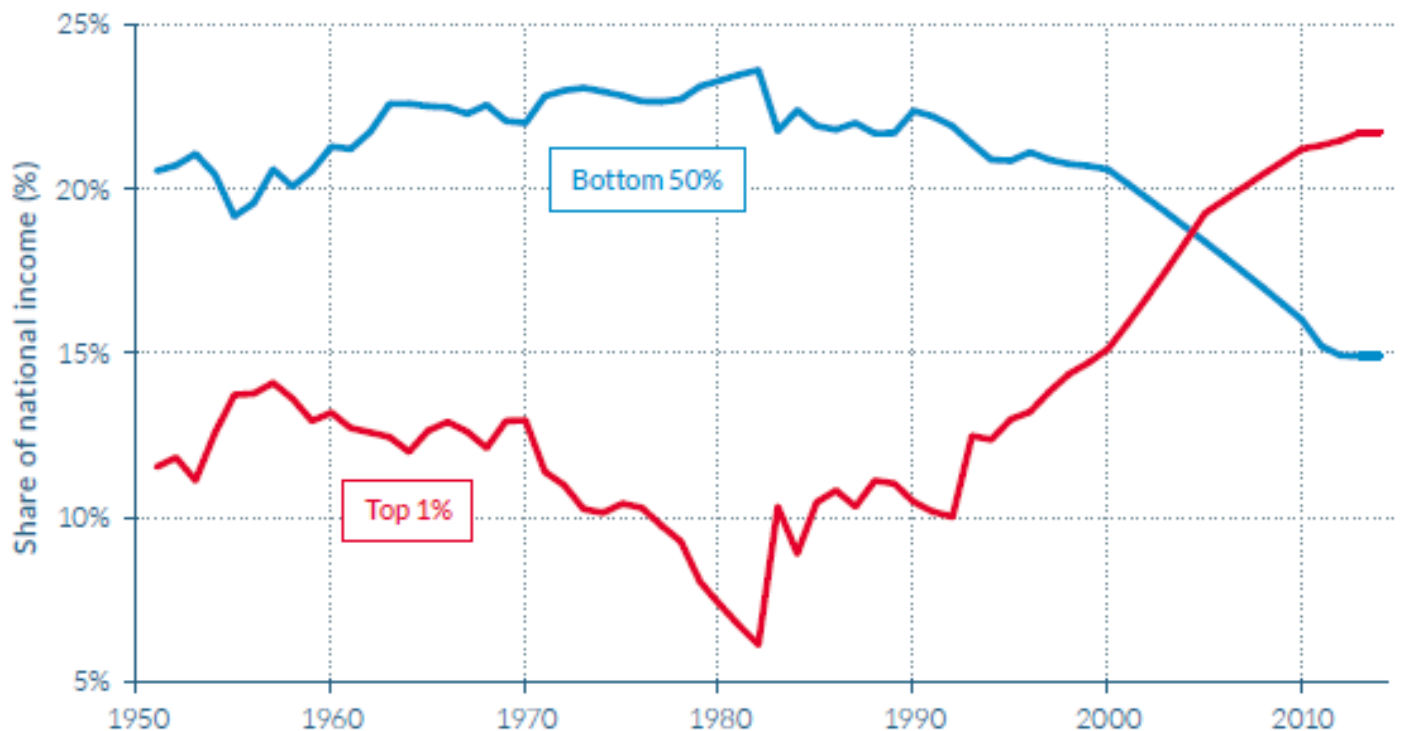


Source: WID.world (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for data series and notes.

In 2016, 37% of national income was received by the Top 10% in Europe against 61% in the Middle-East.

Figure 2. Top 1% and Bottom 50% Income Shares in India, 1951–2014 ¹⁴

Top 1% and Bottom 50% income shares in India, 1951–2014



Source: Chancel & Piketty (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for data series and notes.

In 2014, the Bottom 50% national income share was 15%.

tongue of about 5 to 8 percent. Gujarati, Urdu, Kannada and Odia are the mother tongue of about 3 to 5 percent. Malayalam, Punjabi, Assamese and Maithili are mother tongue of about 1 to 3 percent and other languages are spoken by less than one percent each. (See Table 1)

In terms of religion Hindus represent 80.5% of the population, Muslims 13.4%, Christians 2.3%, Sikhs 1.9% and other religious groups with less than one percent each. (See Table 2)

Another important division is the notorious caste system. While this is primarily relevant for the Hindu population, it has to a certain degree also infiltrated Sikhism, and even Christianity. There are four large caste groups (*varna*) – the *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, and *Sudra* – as well as the so-called *Untouchables*, the *Dalits*. However, more relevant are the *jatis*, the mostly regionally based sub-castes. There are estimated to be 2000–3000 *jatis* in India today, the size of each ranging between 5000 and 15,000.²¹

According to the latest official census, the so-called *Scheduled Castes* (which consist mostly of Dalits) represent 16.6% of the total population. (See Table 3)

Another severely discriminated group are the *Adivasi*, the indigenous peoples. In the official language they are called *Scheduled Tribes*. According to the latest census in 2011 they represent about 8.6% of the total population. (See Table 4)

The so-called *Backward Classes* – an official category which includes members of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other low-ranking and disadvantaged groups (sometimes referred to as *Other Backward Classes*) – are officially recognized in India's constitution.²⁴ There are disputes about the exact number of these layers. However, according to a report of the *Mandal Commission* – a government-appointed commission (officially the *Second Backwards Classes Commission*) – in 1980, the *Backward Hindu Castes*, the *Scheduled Castes*, the *Scheduled Tribes* and the *Non-Hindu Communities* (mostly Muslims) constituted altogether more than 82%. (See Table 5)

In summary, India's capitalist society is riven by deep national, ethnic, religious and caste division. The Indian state is not only a capitalist state organizing the exploitation of surplus value of the working class. In addition, it is also a *"prison house of nations and lower castes"* which ensures the brutal oppression of large sectors of the population.

When we add to this the massive social and economic backwardness mentioned above, it is evident that India constitutes a *colossus on clay feet*. It is inevitable that such contradictions are potentially explosive in a period of capitalist decay characterized by increasing domestic and foreign political tensions.

Hindutva chauvinism: the reactionary response of the ruling class

The *Hindutva* ("Hinduness") chauvinism is the ultra-reactionary response of extreme right-wing forces to the contradictions of the Indian society. This concept is the ideological core of the so-called *Sangh Parivar* (the Sangh family) of which Modi's *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) is the main political party. Historically, the nucleus of this current has been the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS). This organization has been founded in 1925 and advocates an extremely right-wing, if not semi-fascist, ideology. Its goal is an Indian capitalist state in which the *Hindu Rashtra*

("Hindu nation") fully dominates and subjugates all other groups. To make things clear: Hindutva chauvinism is an unashamed form of Hindu supremacism. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, a founder of this ideological current, once said: *"I want all Hindus to get themselves re-activated and re-born into a martial race"*.²⁶ Such an ideology of drunken militarism is the instrument with which these reactionary forces hope to cloak the inner contradiction of India.²⁷

Since Kashmir has always been India's only Muslim-majority state, the RSS/BJP has made this region an important issue of its chauvinist policy from early on.²⁸ Hence, the abolition of Article 370 has long been a staple of the BJP's political platform. It has put forward this demand in numerous election manifestos including the last one for the 2019 elections.²⁹

It is in the spirit of such a reactionary chauvinist ideology that BJP supporters hail Modi's move as "liberation". Fanatic BJP activists have chanted slogans like *"Kashmir azaad ho gaya aaj"* ("Kashmir has been freed today") and *"Aab Hindu Rashtra banega"* ("We will now build a Hindu nation") at rallies after 5 August. An Indian journalist quotes the gleeful reaction of a sympathizer of the BJP: *"Now the Muslims will become Hindu out of fear or they will go to Pakistan or they will face..."*³⁰

Modi himself said in a speech defending the abolition of Article 370: *"I have complete faith, under this new system we all will be able to free Jammu and Kashmir of terrorism and separatism."*³¹

To *"free Jammu and Kashmir of terrorism and separatism"* can not mean anything else than to "free" the region from most of its population. Everyone with a minimum knowledge of history knows that Kashmir was incorporated into India in 1947 without consulting its people. They were promised that a referendum would be held in which they could express their will about being part of India. Unsurprisingly such a referendum was denied until this very day for one simple reason: everyone knew the outcome! The huge majority of the people in Kashmir never wanted nor will they ever desire to be part of India!

This is why the Indian state had to transform Kashmir – which has a population of not more than 8 million people – in one of the most militarized regions of the world with about 750,000 soldiers and police. As the Malaysian journalist Karim Raslan aptly formulated, *"the colonised have become colonisers."*³²

Modi's phrase of *"freeing Kashmir of terrorism and separatism"* effectively is the cover for the RSS/BJP's longstanding plan of the *Hinduization* of Kashmir. The government wants to silence, humiliate, subjugate and finally expel the Muslim population from the region. Let us not forget the chauvinist slogan of the BJP: *"Hindustan mein rehna hai to hindu ban kar rehna hoga"* ("If you want to live in India, you have to be a Hindu").³³

Economic and foreign policy problems

Such whipping-up of fanatical chauvinism does not only serve Modi's plans for Kashmir itself. It is also necessary because the Indian bourgeoisie faces a number of urgent problems. As we have pointed out somewhere else, the capitalist world economy is on the verge of another Great Recession.³⁴ Such an economic crisis could hit India particularly hard given the backward nature of its economy.

It is true that India has been hailed in the past years as an economic success story. But one should bear in mind that the official growth figures of India’s GDP have been massively exaggerated by the government – according to Modi’s former chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian by about 50%!³⁵ Furthermore, most of the economic gains has been appropriated by the super-rich for mostly parasitic and speculative goals instead of a widely spread process of productive capital accumulation in order to modernize the society and its economic fundament.

This year has been marked by a significant decline of growth. Official GDP growth is at a five-year low while unemployment is at a multi-year high. Business investment has stalled, consumers are reining in spending while bank and non-bank lending to companies and households slowed to a crawl. In order to avoid a recession the Reserve Bank of India has cut interest-rates already four times this year.³⁶

The government’s room for manoeuvre is limited because India’s public debt is already high. While the official budget deficit amounts to 3.39% of GDP this year, this has been achieved only by “creative accounting” as the euphemism goes. According to the economist Jairaj Devadiga, the real deficit is at least at 4% of annual output if not much more. India’s public debt is officially around 70%. But, again, real figures are much higher.³⁷

In addition, India’s economic problems have been worsened by Trump’s aggressive sanctions and war-mongering against Iran. New Delhi has been one of Iran’s biggest oil buyers, importing 23.5 million tonnes over the past year. However, due to Washington’s sanctions, they had to cut off this to a large degree.³⁸

However, this did not help India to escape Trump’s aggressive policy of punitive tariffs. Washington recently removed India from its so-called “Generalized System of

Preferences” program which will clearly have negative effects of the South Asian economy. In retaliation, New Delhi imposed tariffs on almonds and 27 other American products, including apples and walnuts.³⁹

These developments point out to a more fundamental development which is of decisive importance for India. Since the end of the Cold War between the US and the USSR, New Delhi has looked for a rapprochement with Washington. This was met with certain success and India has played in recent years a prominent role in the plans of U.S. imperialism in the region. As a result there have been joint military exercises and plans for an Indo-US strategic partnership. This has been particularly relevant when India and China came close to a war in the Sikkim border region in summer 2017.⁴⁰

However, as the RCIT has repeatedly pointed out, the present historic period that began in 2008 has been characterized by a dramatic acceleration of global tensions.⁴¹ We have recognized for some time now the onset decline of U.S. imperialism, the rise of China as a new imperialist power, and the consequential, accelerating Great Power rivalry.⁴²

Against this background, the hopes of Modi’s government for a closer alliance with the Western imperialist powers against China experienced huge obstacles. The rapid decline of the U.S., a process which has been accelerated without doubt by its erratic and dumb President, as well as the rise of China has forced India to defend itself against the partly aggressive and partly unstable policy of Washington and, at the same time, to look for a *modus vivendi* with Beijing. Such diplomatic maneuvering has been symbolically reflected by the fact that Modi participated in two trilateral meetings at the G20 summit in Osaka – one with Japan and the United States, the other with China and Russia.⁴³

Table 2. Religions of India and key social indices of the major religious groups²⁰

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Proportion</i>
Hindus	80.5
Muslims	13.4
Christians	2.3
Sikhs	1.9
Buddhists	0.8
Jains	0.4
Others	0.6

Table 3. Percentage of Scheduled Castes Population²²

	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total	14.8	15.7	16.5	16.2	16.6
Rural	16.4	17.3	18.0	17.9	18.5
Urban	8.8	10.6	12.0	11.8	12.6

Table 4. Percentage of Scheduled Tribes Population²³

1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
6.9	6.9	7.8	8.1	8.2	8.6

Table 5. The Mandal Commission: Caste groups as a percentage of India’s population²⁵

<i>Caste groups</i>	<i>% of India’s population</i>
Forward Hindu Castes and Communities	17.58%
Backward Hindu Castes and Communities	43.70%
Scheduled Castes	15.05%
Scheduled Tribes	7.51%
Non-Hindu Communities	16.16%

Chauvinism and war-mongering as deliberate distraction

All these economic and foreign policy problems provoke huge challenges for the Modi government, despite its landslide victory at the recent elections. One must not forget that the BJP won mass popular support at the elections not so much with his Hindu supremacist fantasies – this is rather crucial for the fanatic hard-core supporter base – but rather with promises of rapid growth and increasing income. Faced with such economic difficulties, the BJP government will not be able to deliver its promises.

This is another important reason why the Modi government has struck against Kashmir right now. The provocation of a domestic political crisis with the well-known accompaniment of “threats of attacks of jihadi terrorists” as well as the threat of war with Pakistan is a deliberate distraction from the looming social and economic crisis in India. We note as an aside that the racist wave of lynching in the name of cow protection or the new exclusionary citizenships serve exactly the same purpose.

Modi was forced to resort to such military provocations in February this year when he threatened to attack Pakistan. The resulting chauvinist hysteria was a crucial factor for the BJP to avoid electoral defeat.

In the current situation, the BJP government calculates that the climate of such a chauvinist hysteria could serve as a fig-leaf for neoliberal austerity attacks of the Modi government against the Indian working class and poor peasants.

In addition, provoking the danger of war and terror could be also used by the Modi government as a pretext to attack democratic rights and to create an authoritarian regime with Bonapartist features.

In summary, Modi’s barbarous attack against the people in Kashmir is caused both by short-term problems of the Indian ruling class as well as more fundamental contradictions of backwardness of Indian capitalism. Such backwardness and contradictions determine the extremely reactionary character of the chauvinism of the ruling class. At the same time it is the only way to mobilize a reactionary segment of the society in order to cloak the increasing contradictions.

The Hindutva chauvinists of the BJP are determined to serve the interests of the capitalists in such a situation by launching massive social and democratic attacks against the Indian working class as well as against national minorities under the monstrous fig-leaf of building the *Hindu Rashtra*.

However, such a strategy comes at a high price. First, a permanent domestic civil war against national, ethnic and religious minorities as well as against the working class inevitable provokes political tensions, sharp class struggles and armed resistance. It will furthermore provoke military conflicts with powerful states.

Second, as contradictory as it might sound, Modi’s aggressive chauvinist policy is in reality a highly defensive conception. Due to its backwardness and its inner contradictions, India’s ruling class is forced to focus all its resources to consolidate its domestic rule. A strategy of civil war from above against national and social minorities will only increase this. Against such a background, any hope for India’s bourgeoisie to transform the country into an

imperialist power is completely doomed. India can not overcome its status as a semi-colonial Intermediate Power.

We think that a revolutionary strategy for Marxists in South Asia has to take into account these multiple features of India’s capitalism which we have outlined in this brief analysis. They constitute the basis for the application of Trotsky’s program of Permanent Revolution in the current period. Trotsky, Lenin’s most important collaborator in organizing the socialist October Revolution and later the founder of the Fourth International, emphasized that the democratic tasks – such as the oppression of nations and lower castes – can only be resolved by the revolutionary struggle of the popular masses under the leadership of the working class vanguard which results in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers and poor peasant republic.

*“With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.”*⁴⁴

Indeed, only a broad alliance of the workers, poor peasants and oppressed nations fighting for the socialist revolution can ensure the destruction of India as a “prison house of nations and lower castes”!

The RCIT and its comrades in South Asia look forward to collaborate with other revolutionaries in order to elaborate such a program and to build a party in India as well as internationally. Because without such a party, the workers and popular masses cannot organize a socialist revolution and liberate themselves from the shackles of exploitation and oppression!

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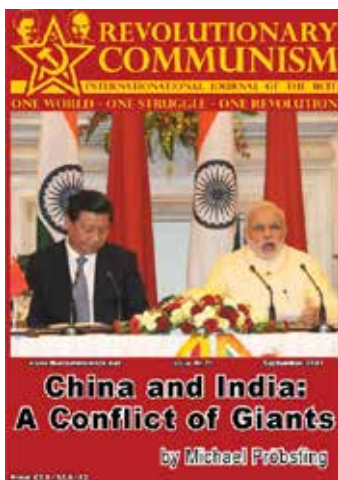
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43 Suyash Desai: Approaches to Indo-Pacific: India and US, 2019-07-22 <https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/07/opinion/approaches-to-indo-pacific-india-and-us/>; Rupakjyoti Borah: Not the US, not China. India holds the cards in the Indo-Pacific, 12 Jul, 2019 <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3018184/not-us-not-china-india-holds-cards-indo-pacific>; Pepe Escobar: Russia-India-China share a room with a view. 2019-06-29 <https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/06/article/russia-india-china-share-a-room-with-a-view/>

44 Leon Trotsky: The Permanent Revolution (1929), Pathfinder Press, New York 1969, pp. 276

Thomas Spence (1750-1814): A Utopian Communist

By Joseph Adams, August 2019

Thomas Spence was born in Newcastle before the emergence of trade unions and the working class movement. Spence advocated a revolutionary socialist society. His writings on land reform and a planned socialist society marked him out as a revolutionary who sought to transfer the wealth of society from the rich to the labouring poor.

Spence followed the traditions of Gerrard Winstanley's Digger movement during the Cromwellian revolution of the 17th century. "Like Winstanley and the diggers Spence and his followers took radical ideology into the world of Socialism". [1]

Spenceans and Spensonia

The Spenceans, as Spence's followers were called, were active during the Napoleonic years in France. "Quite explicitly Spence saw himself as a spokesman for the common people. When speaking of them he referred to either the poor or the Labouring poor in particular". [2]

In all his writings on common ownership of production and land reform Spence argued that "such land would all be taken into common ownership and let the real rent varying not only with the quality but also with the quality of land". [3]

Spence's philosophy was referred to as Spensonia. He advocated a form of parish self-government. "Providing educational and cultural facilities such as a library, school and assembly rooms". [4]

Spence was opposed to private property and like Winstanley and Munzer before him advocated communal ownership of land and possessions. "Private property in the land was not only the fountainhead of tyranny but also the monstrous hydra of corruption". [5]

In much of his writings Spence pushed for revolutionary action. "Spence envisaged a process of permanent revolutionary upheaval until society had been restructured on the right principles". [6]

Spence and his followers echoing the views of Winstanley vehemently opposed any return to a Private property system of poor artisans and small businessman as the Levelers had argued for. For Spence and his followers on the other hand the private property system (established by conquest) was the cause of inequality and poverty". [7]

Thomas Evans and the Spenceans

Edward Thompson in his book "The Making of the Working Class" identifies Spence and his followers with the growing protests amongst artisans and the labouring poor. Thomas Evans was the first to advocate Spence's agrarian socialism. Evans was one of the secretaries of the growing London corresponding societies which were to be the germ of Trade Unions in the early 19th century.

Oppression in the 1800's led to starvation and destitution for the Labouring poor. This was the period of the parish work house which Charles Dickens so eloquently

Books of the RCIT

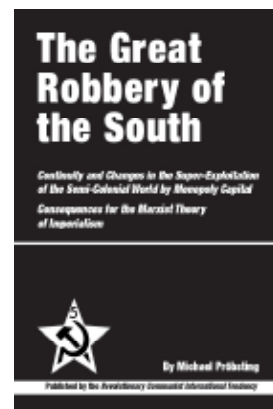
Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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)



described in his writings. The combination acts were introduced by government to prevent workers organising together to form societies in a common struggle against poverty and death.

Strike movements were developing in the working class mainly amongst cotton workers and Weavers who feared the introduction of the new machines leading to hardship for workers who were thrown out of work through recession and slump. This was when the Luddites formed secret societies and organised individual assassinations of employers. It was referred to as 'Captain Swing'. These weavers and cotton workers fought to create disorder by arming themselves and forming insurrectionary movements against the ruling class.

"Spenceans were believed to have instigated bread riots in 1800 and 1801. In 1817 once again a secret committee of the House (of commons) detected a conspiracy by the society of Spencean Philanthropists". [8]

"The Spencean advocates had won much support amongst the trade clubs especially amongst shoemakers that all feudality or lordship in the soil be abolished and the territory declared to be the people's common farm". [9]

The Spenceans after Spence's death were more active amongst the local societies and trade clubs and were winning support amongst tradesman and artisans. Evans was now the acknowledged leader of the Spenceans. "Evans was without doubt a disciple of Spence and he and his son were pursued with exceptional vindictiveness by the authorities because he had the courage to advocate in print the expropriations of the Landowners". [10]

The bourgeoisie was seriously worried about the Spenceans and their activities for the overthrow of Capitalism through some putsch. "A traitorous conspiracy has been formed in the metropolis for the purpose of overthrowing by means of a general insurrection the established government, laws and constitution of this Kingdom". [11]

Many of the middle class reformers like Place and Cobbett capitulated and wanted to work with the government. This showed their opposition to real change and the weakness of these so called petit-bourgeois reformers.

Robert Owen

Robert Owen, a social reformer and joint owner of the enterprise *New Lanark Mills* in Scotland, was denounced by Evans and his comrades because Owen refused to engage in direct political activity leading to insurrection. Owen, a utopian socialist much admired by Frederick Engels and Karl Marx the founders of scientific socialism, wanted to

practise his views with the cooperation of government. The Rochdale pioneers, the founders of the cooperative movement, would take as their inspiration both of Owen's enterprises *New Lanark Mills* and *New Harmony* in the United States.

As Thompson comments. *The Spenceans and radicals of 1817 proved to be wrong in their estimation of Owen and Spence's and Evans's preoccupation with agrarian socialism was inadequate for industrial England but the Spenceans were at least willing to pose the problems of ownership and class power*". [12].

The weakness of Spence and his followers was their reliance on Babeuf conspiratorial politics of secret societies and oath taking and the use of individual terror that both the Luddites and others used against capitalists. They were mainly fighting for the small artisan and shopkeeper. They failed to see what Robert Owen and the great chartist leaders saw that you needed to build a unified political working class movement and a revolutionary workers party. Both Engels and Marx knew this when they built the First International as a revolutionary international working class party. Many chartists were active in it like Brontere O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor. Owen in his later years would found the *Grand Consolidated Trade Union*.

Spence was the forerunner of trade unionism and the great working class movement of Chartism that would develop in the 1840's and 1850's. Robert Owen, Brontere O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor would dominate in this period. Both Karl Marx and Frederick Engels paid great attention to these developments in Britain. In future articles I will consider the contribution of Robert Owen and the Chartist movement.

Footnotes

- 1) Thomas Spence: Pigs Meat. Selected writings of Thomas Spence, Radical and Pioneer Land Reformer, edited by GI Gallop: Spokesman Books Socialist Classics No 2, p. 12
- 2) Ibid, p. 21
- 3) Ibid, p. 22
- 4) Ibid, p. 29
- 5) Ibid, p. 30
- 6) Ibid, p. 42
- 7) Ibid, p. 51
- 8) E.P. Thompson: The Making of the English Working Class: Vintage Books, p. 497
- 9) Ibid, p. 614
- 10) Ibid, p. 615
- 11) Ibid, p. 639
- 12) Ibid, p. 806



Publications of the RCIT

The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:
Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

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!

