



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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November 2019

## 30 Years Ago: The Massacre on Tiananmen Square

PLUS: Revolutionary Platform for Russia \* Robert Owen (1771-1858)

China No.1 in Global Business Ranking \* Global Income Inequality

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Picture on the cover: Clashes in Hong Kong at the Tsuen Wan March on 25.8.2019; Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hong\\_Kong\\_20190825\\_Tsuen\\_Wan\\_March\\_%E8%8D%83%E8%91%B5%E9%9D%92%E9%81%8A%E8%A1%8C%E5%8F%8D%E9%80%81%E4%B8%AD%E9%81%8A%E8%A1%8C\\_\(48635664402\)\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hong_Kong_20190825_Tsuen_Wan_March_%E8%8D%83%E8%91%B5%E9%9D%92%E9%81%8A%E8%A1%8C%E5%8F%8D%E9%80%81%E4%B8%AD%E9%81%8A%E8%A1%8C_(48635664402)_(cropped).jpg)

*Revolutionary Communism* is the monthly English-language journal published by the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT). The RCIT has sections and activists in Nigeria, Kenya, South Korea, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, Britain, Germany, and Austria.

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# Income Inequality Within the Working Class: Globally & in China

## New data from the ILO report confirms the Marxist thesis on the labor aristocracy

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 13 July 2019

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has recently published a comprehensive study on the development of global labor income between the years 2004 and 2017. <sup>1</sup> The ILO data confirms that the global labor share – i.e. labor’s share of total income – has declined. The authors report “that, globally, the share of national income going to workers is falling, from 53.7 per cent in 2004 to 51.4 per cent in 2017.” In other words, despite the fact that laborers constitute the huge majority of the global population, they receive barely half of total income!

These findings confirm the thesis of Marxists that the exploitation of the working class has intensified and, as a result, the capitalists have continued to increase their surplus value (reflected in the rise of their share of all income). <sup>2</sup>

The study also reveals that inequality within the working class has increased. <sup>3</sup> “Looking at the average pay distribution across countries, it finds that the share going to the middle class (the middle 60 per cent of workers) declined between 2004 and 2017, from 44.8 per cent to 43 per cent. At the same time, the share earned by the top 20 per cent of earners increased, from 51.3 per cent to 53.5 per cent.”

This confirms another Marxist thesis that the RCIT has repeatedly emphasized in its extensive research on imperialist capitalism. We have pointed out that the working class is not a homogenous unit but, rather, consists of multiple layers. In contrast to the broad mass of the proletariat – the lower and middle strata – there also exists a top, more privileged layer. Marxists call this uppermost part of the working class the *labor aristocracy*. This is a layer that consists, primarily, of sections of the better compensated, skilled workers. This section of the proletariat is, in effect, bribed by the bourgeoisie with a better standard of living. In the imperialist countries, this layer constitutes a much larger proportion of the working class than it does among the semi-colonial proletariat. <sup>4</sup>

The financial resources to corrupt the labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries, and thereby undermine working class solidarity, are derived precisely from the extra prof-

its that the monopoly capitalists readily obtain by super-exploiting the working class in the semi-colonial countries as well as those that have migrated to the imperialist metropolises. Monopoly capital uses a portion of these extra profits to enlist the support of sectors of the working class in the metropolitan centers, for it is at home that the capitalists need stability first and foremost. <sup>5</sup>

The labor bureaucracy – along with its direct constituency, the labor aristocracy, play a dominate role in both the trade unions and the reformist parties in the imperialist countries. This explains why these forces play such a conservative and pacifying role and operate as a brake on the class struggle.

We find empirical evidence for this division within the working class in the latest publication of the ILO that we reproduce in the tables below. Let us give a few examples. In the U.S. the lower 3/5 (60%) of the workers earn a combined share of only 29% of the total labor income in 2017. This is less than the income of the top decile (10%), which earns 33.12%!

The figures for Japan and Germany, as the tables below demonstrate, are slightly less drastic but the general tendency remains the same.

The figures for China are also highly revealing. The lower 3/5 of the laborers earn a combined share of less than 28.7% of the total labor income in 2017. On the other hand, the top decile earns 42.62% - more than the combined share of the mass of the proletariat! And, as we can see from the table below, the income share of the lower eight deciles of the laborers has even slightly declined in the years between 2004 and 2017, in contrast to the top two deciles.

These findings of the ILO are not surprising. They confirm what the RCIT has stated in a number of documents. <sup>6</sup> Based on the dramatic rise of China, after the restoration of capitalism in the early 1990s, the “Middle Kingdom” has become an imperialist Great Power. As we have demonstrated in our works, this rise has resulted in China becoming one of the largest capitalist economies, the largest commercial power, a leading country in terms of numbers

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of multinational corporations as well as of billionaires, etc. Clearly, this rise has provided the Chinese monopoly bourgeoisie with the material resources to bribe the privileged top strata of the working class.

We have no doubt that the Stalinists, Castro-Chavistas and other friends of Beijing will ignore this latest evidence. They will surely continue to parrot unashamed praise for China as a “socialist”, an “anti-imperialist”, or at least a somehow “progressive” state supposedly deserving the support of the international workers movement. Like the hypocritical “Christian” defenders of the Catholic Inquisition in the Middle Age who served the very earthly interests of the corrupt and decadent popes and kings, these “socialists” offer themselves as enthusiastic, social-imperialist servants of the monopoly bourgeoisie of China and Russia.

It is impossible to understand the dynamics of the current world situation without acknowledging the obvious rise of China as an imperialist power, and with that, the related acceleration of Great Power rivalry. Authentic socialists must oppose *all* Great Powers – the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and the EU - and champion an independent, revolutionary path for the international working class.

#### Footnotes

1 See: *The Global Labour Income Share and Distribution. Key Findings and The Global Labour Income Share and Distribution. Methodological description.* In addition the ILO has issued a comprehensive Excel file with data for all countries. All documents were issued by the Data Production and Analysis Unit, ILO Department of Statistics in July 2019. These documents can be found at [https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/publications/WCMS\\_712232/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/publications/WCMS_712232/lang-en/index.htm) and <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/labour-income/>. See also ILO: Labour Income Share and Distribution: Just 10 per cent of workers receive nearly half of global pay, 04 July 2019 [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_712234/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_712234/lang-en/index.htm)

2 On the RCIT's analysis of the intensifying offensive of the ruling class against the background of the decay of capitalism see e.g. Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contra-

ditions Mark the Opening of a New Political Phase. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries (January 2016), Chapter II, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/>.

3 Of course, one has to be aware that the ILO category of “workers” also includes layers which are not part of the working class like e.g. the employed middle layers which formally receive a wage. However, this does not affect the accuracy of the general trend of growing income inequality within the working class as identified by the authors.

4 See on this e.g. chapter III in Michael Pröbsting: *Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today. The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the present Period*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/book-united-front/>.

5 See on this e.g. 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*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>

6 For the RCIT's analysis of China as an imperialist Great Power 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>.

**Table 1. China, Share of Labor Income (%), 2004-2017**

Deciles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2004	0,47	1,19	2,11	3,32	4,71	6,47	8,91	12,51	18,18	42,12
2017	0,44	1,11	2,02	3,24	4,62	6,38	8,84	12,49	18,24	42,62

**Table 2. Japan, Share of Labor Income (%), 2004-2017**

Deciles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2004	1,07	2,46	3,84	5,30	6,76	8,65	10,96	14,00	18,39	28,56
2017	1,10	2,53	3,94	5,42	6,89	8,79	11,09	14,13	18,47	27,64

**Table 3. USA, Share of Labor Income (%), 2004-2017**

Deciles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2004	1,41	3,07	4,41	5,66	6,95	8,37	10,05	12,33	16,03	31,73
2017	1,41	3,04	4,28	5,46	6,70	8,12	9,78	12,14	15,95	33,12

**Table 4. Germany, Share of Labor Income (%), 2004-2017**

Deciles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2004	1,10	2,77	4,81	6,55	8,30	9,83	11,36	13,27	16,09	25,92
2017	1,13	2,77	4,68	6,33	7,94	9,46	11,09	13,11	16,18	27,32

## China: Two Telling Trends

### New data from the OECD verifies once again the imperialist character of China's economy

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 April 2019

We have published a number of articles, studies, and books in the recent period demonstrating that China has not only regressed into capitalist property relations but has emerged as an imperialist rival to the other Great Powers. We have specifically examined the rise of China's share of global capitalist value production, capital export, military expenditures, its share the world's select population of billionaires, its *Belt and Road Initiative* project, its increasing dominance in various African and Asian countries, etc. (1)

In this article we do not intend to repeat that analysis. We, instead, draw the reader's attention to two telling sets of figures recently published by the OECD – the authoritative imperialist economic organization that regularly publishes comprehensive studies delineating the state of the world economy. Both graphs (available in the appendix below) outline the arc of China's rise as a major capitalist power.

Figure 1 shows the development, broken down by each of the world's leading national economies, of the specific share these economies have had in the *global gross fixed capital formation* for the years 1960-2015. "Gross fixed capital formation" is a bourgeois economic category that reflects the process of capital accumulation. As the graph illustrates, the US – the postwar, global hegemonic imperialist power – enjoyed, by far, the largest share until the early 2000s. (This leading position was briefly but unsuccessfully challenged by Japan in the early 1990s.)

However, since the restoration of capitalism in the 1990s, China rapidly caught up to the United States. While its share of global investments was about 6% in the year 2000, this rose to exceed 26% of the world total by 2015. By 2011 China overtook the U.S. as the world's number one and the gap between these two biggest imperialist powers has only continued to increase. The fact that China has become the world's leading economy in terms of capital investment is further proof of the Marxist appreciation that this East Asian state has not only entered the ranks of imperialist Great Powers, but has quickly moved to the front of the pack.

A second, equally telling, graph generated by the OECD deals with international, corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&A). This category embraces cross-border capital investment. Figure 2 shows Chinese inward and outward cross-border mergers and acquisitions flows as a share of the world total for the years 2005-2016.

As one can see, China's share of global mergers and acquisitions flows has, as with *gross fixed capital formation*, only continued to increase. While it was about 1% in 2005, its share of the world total, by 2016, had increased to 11%!

It is also important to note that since the beginning of the present decade, China's outflow of M&A investment has overtaken the inflow. This reflects its transformation into a primarily capital exporting nation, i.e. an economy that invests more capital in other countries than other countries are investing in China. This is another benchmark of China's emergence as an imperialist power, exporting

huge sums of capital abroad in the unquenchable pursuit of expanding profits.

Our movement arrived at the conclusion that China had become an imperialist power, almost nine years ago, in summer 2010. This uniquely, farsighted assessment has only received deepening vindication in subsequent years. (2)

We close this article by repeating our additional, urgent conclusion that it is impossible to understand the dynamics of the current world situation without recognizing the rise of China as an imperialist power, and with that, the related acceleration of Great Power rivalry. (3) Only by recognizing this sea change in international relations is it possible to draw the correct conclusion that socialists must oppose *all* Great Powers – the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and the EU (4) - and champion an independent, revolutionary path for the international working class.

#### Footnotes

(1) Our documents which analyse China's capitalism and its rise to a new imperialist Great Power in detail are collected in a special section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. All publications can be read online or downloaded for free at these links.

(2) More on this in 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 (2012), <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>. This was our first major study on the issue of capitalist restoration in China and its transformation into an imperialist power.

(3) See on this e.g. our recently published book by 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/>.

(4) See on this, in addition to the above mentioned new book on Great Power rivalry: RCIT: *Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States. Resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*, 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>; RCIT: *Global Trade War: No to Great Power Jingoism in West and East! Neither Imperialist Globalization nor Imperialist Protectionism! For International Solidarity and Joint Struggle of the Working Class and Oppressed People!* 4 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-on-the-looming-global-trade-war/>

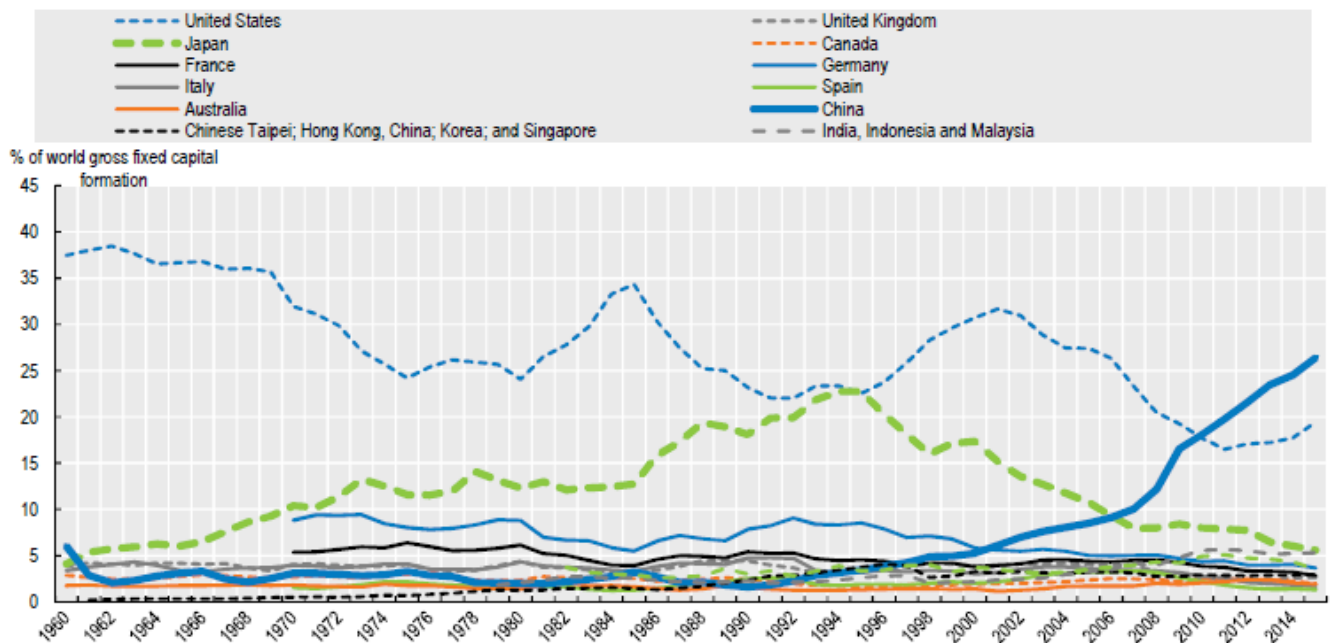
(5) OECD: *Business and Finance Outlook 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 35

(6) OECD: *Business and Finance Outlook 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 125



**Figure 1. Share of gross fixed capital formation of selected countries, 1960-2015 (Per cent of world total) (5)**

**Figure 2.4. Share of gross fixed capital formation of selected countries, 1960-2015 (Per cent of world total)**

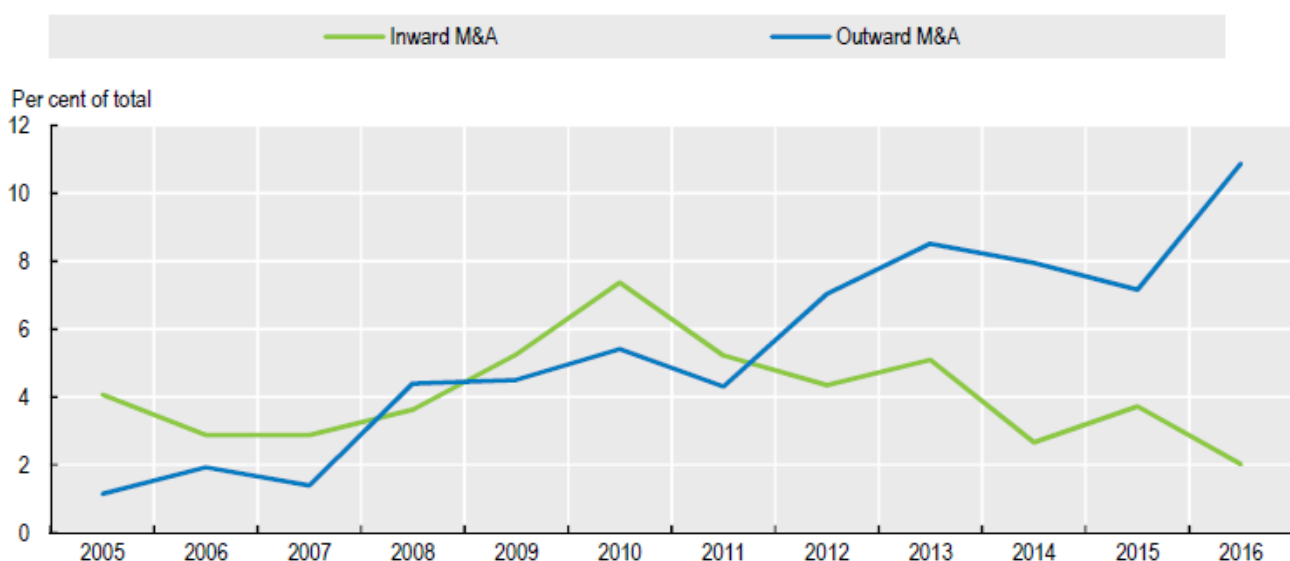


Source: The World Bank, OECD National Accounts, OECD calculations.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933476507>

**Figure 2. Chinese inward and outward cross-border mergers and acquisitions flows (Share of world totals) (6)**

**Figure 3.2. Chinese inward and outward cross-border mergers and acquisitions flows (Share of world totals)**



Source: Dealogic, OECD calculations

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933476814>

# Fight against Russian Capitalism and Imperialism!

*Provisional Platform of the Revolutionary Communists (Russian Federation), September 2019*

**W**e are the *Revolutionary Communists* in the Russian Federation fighting for building a vanguard party of the working class and oppressed to achieve liberation in Russia and internationally. We are fighting together with our sisters and brothers in the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* for the foundation of a Revolutionary World Party (which will be the 5<sup>th</sup> International).

Our struggle for the liberation of working-class and oppressed in Russia is organically connected with the class struggle around the globe. *Revolutionary Communists* are basing their principles not on a 'national-centered' perspective as various Stalinists and centrists do, but from the perspective of the whole *global* capitalist system and its inner contradictions.

*Revolutionary Communists* are characterizing the current period of capitalism as decaying, reactionary, and dangerous for the survival of the human race. Modern imperialism is characterized by the domination of a handful of global powers like the U.S., China, Japan, Russia, and E.U. All of them are striving for the worldwide domination and the oppression of the working class of all nations. None of them is 'progressive' or represents the struggle for the development of productive forces. Contrary, they are advocating chauvinist and sectarian hatred to spark a rivalry among oppressed masses to achieve their goals. Thus, *Revolutionary Communists* unconditionally stand for revolutionary defeatism, this mean that we call to transform imperialist conflicts into class war against the ruling class and combine such a perspective with the struggle for

the establishment of a global socialist federation of workers and peasant states.

The Russian Federation is an economically relatively weak imperialist power with an active military and huge monopolistic state sector in the economy. After the collapse of the USSR, the bureaucracy transformed themselves into a bourgeoisie and a layer of managers with income comparable to middle or high strata of capitalists as a result of the profound degeneration of Stalinists. The resulted process significantly destroyed productive forces and produced an unprecedented concentration of wealth in the hands of oligarchs in combination with high level of poverty. Approximately 94% of Russians have an income of less than 10,000\$ while the global mean is around 70%. The top 1% of Russians, represented by oligarchs, are controlling approximately one-third of the economy. At the same time the top 10% of middle capitalists, layer of workers aristocracy, the highest strata of petty bourgeoisie and the highest strata of state employees controls 90% of Russian national income. The RCIT Russia is calling for the radical redistribution of wealth via the expropriation of all commanding heights of the economy into the hands of a workers' government. *Revolutionary Communists* are also calling for the provision of cheap loans to organize cooperatives in agriculture and other sectors dominated by small enterprises and firms.

The state is playing a significant role not only in stabilizing the domestic political situation by propaganda and police force, but also in economics by various protectionist measures, financial diplomacy, aid, and other measures.

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today

#### The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today.

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – MARXISM AND THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC TODAY. The book's subtitle is: The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today. On the Application of the Marxist United Front Tactic in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the Present Period. It contains eight chapters plus an appendix (172 pages) and includes 9 tables and 5 figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

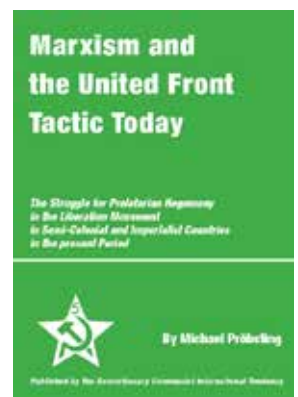
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

The united front tactic is a crucial instrument for revolutionaries under today's circumstances in which the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed are dominated by social democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois-populist forces.

The purpose of this document is both to summarize the main ideas of the Marxist united front tactic while at the same time explaining its development and modification which have become necessary due to political changes which have transpired in the

working class liberation movement since the tactic's original formulation.

In this book we initially summarize the main characteristics of the united front tactic and elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics to this issue. We then outline important social developments in the working class and the popular masses as well as in their political formations in recent decades. From there we will discuss how the united front tactic should be applied in light of a number of new developments (the rise of petty-bourgeois populist parties, the decline of the classic reformist parties, the role of national minorities and migrants in imperialist countries, etc.). The eight chapters of the book are accompanied by nine tables and five figures.



According to multiple estimates between 30% and 70% of the economy are controlled by the state with an employment of about at least 20 million persons, which is approximately 30-30% of all working population. The small number of the wealthy middle class is concentrated mostly in large cities, among them is a large number of state employees with significant pension and social benefits for military, police and other members of the state apparatus. The Bonapartist regime in Russia has an apparatus of the President and the bureaucracy with massive executive power which are residing "above the class struggle". The Bonapartist policies are also evident in the corrupted political culture where significant sectors of the "opposition" are bribed via state financial aid for parties like *Just Russia*, the Stalinist KPRF, and the LDPR. These parties might criticize this or that aspect of domestic policy but support the government completely in its foreign policy. As a result, a high level of corruption and nepotism is dominating Russia's economy and politics. We are calling to abandon all such corrupt practices. The wages of public servants (including deputies) must not be above those of skilled workers. The police should be replaced with worker's militia. Elected deputies as well as other public officeholders should be elected by their constituencies with the right to recall them.

Presidential bonapartism in Russia is continuously reducing democracy and limits the possibility for party and trade union building with imposing severe censorship of internet and mass media. The RCIT Russia calls to fight such developments by applying the united front tactic to fight for democracy and against bourgeoisie state repressions.

We are also fighting against conservative and chauvinist propaganda waged by the Russian Orthodox Church, which is a de facto mouthpiece of Russian reaction. The church is mostly focused on making profits and supporting various semi-fascists Cossacks or openly fascist forces like Sorok Sorokov. It is also introducing new subjects into school courses to spread religious propaganda. At the same time, other religious organization are either repressed and prohibited like *Jehovah's Witness* or chauvinis-

tically misrepresented and oppressed like Islam. The RCIT Russia is calling for the complete separation of state and religion. *Revolutionary Communists* oppose any repression of religious groups. *Revolutionary Communists* are calling to abandon any chauvinistic and sectarian propaganda by the regime as well as for the abolition of any repressive laws.

One-fifth of population of the Russian Federation is non-Russian. The majority of them experience imperialist and colonial chauvinism like the prohibition to change alphabet by Tatars or the denial of the right of national self-determination for oppressed peoples like those in the Caucasus. It is a result of Russian long-standing imperial legacy based on the continuation of a centuries-long oppressive policies. The RCIT Russia stands for the unconditional support for national liberation. We are also demanding to abolish state language and grant possibility for any person to receive documentation and education in their mother language.

Migrant Tajiks, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, and Moldavians workers are playing an essential role in the Russian economy. However, they are not only nationally oppressed, but they also have to pay significant fees for "the right" to work in Russia. We stand against any chauvinist propaganda and for the abolition of the reactionary patent system. We oppose immigration control by the reactionary Russian state and call for open borders. Almost all CIS countries are either victims of Russian policies like Ukraine or they are experiencing the constant threat of a Great Power which possesses about 15,000 tanks, hundreds of bombers and fighters as well as the *Iron Rain* from rocket artillery systems. In addition, the regime can put pressure on these countries with the possibility of price terror in the energy sector.

Russian imperialism is militaristic, chauvinistic and ultimately reactionary. Russia is a policeman of the Middle East and Africa and supporter of dictators like Assad, Hiftar, Sisi, the totalitarian theocratic monarchy in Saudi Arabia as well as the Iranian regime. Russian imperialism is supporting the reactionary oppression of the Uyghurs in China. Russia is also a central partner of Modi and his

## The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power

**\* Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire**

**\* Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and Russia's Rise as a Great Power**

*Two Pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)*

*Order the pamphlet via our contact address: [rcit@thecommunists.net](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net)*



reactionary policies against the people in Kashmir and the whole of India. The Russian state is not 'progressive' and openly makes deals with Israel, the regime in Iraq, and is sending arms to Saudi Arabia to preserve the current status quo for its own benefits.

Russia is an instrumental imperialist actor in crushing the Great Arabian Intifada and a major player in the New Scramble for Africa. China and Russia are both powers which are seeking to exploit the national wealth of the peoples in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Only open social-chauvinistic Stalinists and centrists can describe their policies as "progressive". The RCIT Russia advocates the intransigent fight against Russian, Chinese, U.S. and E.U. imperialism and the unconditional support for the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of the South. *Revolutionary Communists* are also against reactionary protectionist policies of Russia. We are calling to transform the *Imperialist Trade War* in the *Anti-Imperialist Class War* to combat the threat of global imperialist war before it erupts into the disaster for the whole humanity.

The *Revolutionary Communists* fight for:

1. *Against imperialism! Against Russian imperialist policies! For revolutionary defeatism against all imperialist powers with the unconditional support of national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples!*
2. *For the right for self-determination including separation for oppressed peoples! Abolition of state language!*
3. *Against any chauvinism! Equal pay for equal work! Abolition of the patent system for migrants! For open borders policies!*

4. *Abolition of all reactionary, anti-democratic laws! Fight for democracy! Against the law to impose a state of emergency! For imposing strict limitation for elected deputies income!*

5. *For the expropriation of large enterprises and the commanding heights in hand of a workers government! For the establishment of a monopoly on foreign trade!*

6. *Fight against women's oppression! Equal rights, equal pay! For a popular campaign to stop violence against women!*

7. *Stop religious repressions! For a secular state with the right to practice any religion without any aid or interference from the state!*

8. *Support revolutionary struggles around the globe! Boycott trade with Israel and arms shipments for Saudi Arabia, Sisi, Hiftar and Assad! No support for the military junta in Sudan! No support to reactionary policies of Modi in Kashmir!*

9. *No to Trade War! Oppose any sanctions on oppressed nations! No to reactionary imperialist protectionism!*

10. *For radical infrastructure program to improve and build roads, schools, hospitals! For national broad planning program for rubbish recycling with the gradual abolition of landfills! For organizing people committees to produce and control urbanistic planning with the right to call independent specialists!*

11. *For a workers government based on councils and militias!*

12. *For worker's state control on finance with the introduction of flexible policies for the development of cooperatives in agriculture and sectors dominated with small size enterprises!*

13. *Join RCIT to fight for the building of a Revolutionary World Party around the globe!*

## Books of the RCIT

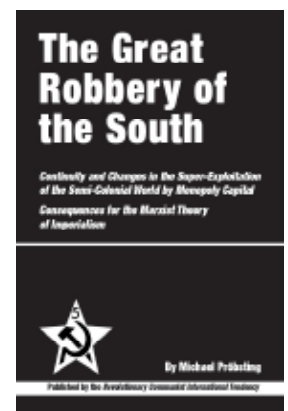
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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)



## 30 Years Ago:

# The Chinese Stalinist's Tiananmen Square Massacre

**Note of the Editor:** Below we reprint two resolutions on the Chinese Stalinist's Tiananmen Square Massacre in June 1989. They have been adopted and published by the RCIT's predecessor organization *Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International* in June 1989. They express the Trotskyist position to this crucial event which was a defeated political revolution by China's workers and students.

This massacre, in which the Stalinist bureaucracy killed several thousands of workers and students who were protesting for democratic rights, was a crucial event in the recent history of China. It paved the way for a capitalist restoration process which ended in China's transformation into an emerging imperialist power as we have shown in various writings. (1)

In one of our documents we have explained why the Tiananmen Square Massacre was a key reason for China's much more successful capitalist restoration than Russia's: *"The Russians also tried to become an imperialist power and indeed they did succeed around the turn of the century. However despite the fact that the USSR was much more industrialized than China, possessed much a more developed machinery park, technology and skilled labor forces, despite all these advantages China today is the much more powerful imperialist state. What is the reason for this? (...) The answer can only be found in the form of the capitalist restoration process. Both in China and in Russia capitalism was restored in the early 1990s. Hence in both cases we saw social counter-revolutions. But the forms were very different. In China the Stalinist bureaucracy managed to brutally smash the working class and the youth with the massacre at the Tiananmen Square on 4th of June 1989 where they killed thousands of activists. After succeeding in this they could subjugate the working class, force on it the worst possible labor discipline (remember the draconic hukou- system), and hence squeeze out of it for many years without any interruptions massive volumes of capitalist value."*

### Footnote

(1) See 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*, 2013, Chapter 10, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>; Chapter 10 is an enlarged and updated version of the following document: 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 (2012), <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4/>; We have also published a summary of these documents in: Michael Pröbsting: Russia and China as Great Imperialist Powers. A Summary of the RCIT's Analysis, 28 March 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-china-and-russia/>

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### China: Revolution and Repression

China has just passed through a profound political revolutionary crisis. It was a crisis which objectively posed the possibility of the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling bureaucracy. Faced with mass opposition in the cities the bureaucratic regime was paralysed. Industry ground to a halt. The bureaucracy's control of its armed forces was shaken. In that crisis decisive action by the working class could have overthrown the regime. The potential for political revolution could have been turned into the reality of proletarian political revolution itself.

The Beijing massacre will be remembered throughout the international workers' movement as one of the decisive moments of twentieth century history. Like the slaughter of the Communards in 1871, or Bloody Sunday, 1905, this will be remembered not only as a testimony to the barbarity of reaction or even the heroism of those who fight it, but as a lesson which, when learned, will hasten both vengeance and the eradication of the social orders which can produce such monstrous inhumanities.

The political revolutionary crisis in China was yet one more example of the deep crisis that is afflicting Stalinism globally. One by one the ruling bureaucracies are attempting to solve the problems of their stagnating planned economies by embracing elements of the market mechanism and retreating before imperialism. The events in China are a portent of the crisis looming for the ruling bureaucracies throughout the degenerate(d) workers' states. All of the ruling castes are capable of attempting to unleash such bloody repression should workers' struggles threaten their rule.

The crisis has also served to accelerate further the process of disintegration of world Stalinism as a monolithic tendency and the deep polarisations in its ranks. Fearful for their own political stability the ruling bureaucracies of Cuba, the GDR, CSSR and Bulgaria have openly supported the massacre of "counter-revolutionaries". The ruling Hungarian party and the Eurocommunists have condemned it. Others, like the Chilean party, were struck silent by events.

In the USSR, Gorbachev has taken great pains not to condemn the massacre in the name of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of other states. He needs to keep a free hand to use repression at home should his perestroika so require it. He wants to establish a precedent should he decide to follow that path. He is also keen to prevent a deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations which he was attempting to normalise at precisely the time the crisis erupted. However, mindful of his relations with imperialism, he has been careful not to appear to openly endorse the massacre. Within the Soviet bureaucracy as a whole the Chinese events will serve to strengthen the resolve of those who, like their East German, Czech and Cuban counterparts, will take them as evidence that the relaxation of bureaucratic planning and political control will surely lead to the destabilising of the regimes themselves.

### China: a degenerate workers' state

Although capitalism was overthrown in China between 1951 and 1953 this was not done by a revolutionary working class which was then able to assert its own control over the economy and establish a system of planning that could mobilise the creativity and energy of the workers. On the contrary, the expropriation—in many cases, by taxation—was carried through by bureaucratic means. This left the state, controlled by the CCP, with ownership of a very backward and distorted economy which was inadequate to the needs both of the population and of the state. Since that time there have been divisions within the ruling bureaucracy over the methods to be used to develop the economy, all that has united them is a commitment to maintaining their own caste rule against all opposition. Throughout the many changes of policy the basic structure of the industrial economy has remained that copied from the Soviet Union during the first Five Year Plan: central planning agencies have laid down quantitative targets to be met by production units and this has been consistently more successful in heavy industry than in light industry.

This form of planning, in the context of a fully satiated economy, was able to achieve a significant increase in production and to re-establish a nationally integrated economy. This enabled China to overcome the systematic poverty and national disintegration which she had suffered under capitalism. Nonetheless, the inadequacies of bureaucratic planning were unable to raise production qualitatively above that needed to raise the population above a minimum standard of living. Average incomes and living standards have changed little since the 1950s.

The planned property relations in China represent a historic gain that must be defended. They represent the aboli-

tion of capitalism which is a prerequisite of the transition to socialism and communism. However, in the hands of the bureaucracy these planned property relations are not used to create an ever more classless and egalitarian society. The necessary lifeblood of a planned economy—the democracy of the producers themselves—is systematically repressed. As a result, the planned economies stagnate and inequalities and privilege abound.

The reaction of the ruling bureaucracies, first in Yugoslavia, later in China, and now in the USSR, is to try to solve the problem through closer co-operation with imperialism and, most crucially, through the importation of market mechanisms. But by their nature market mechanisms tend to subvert the centralised political control of the bureaucracy. They create their own disequilibria. For that reason, the Stalinists have, to a greater or lesser extent, tried to marry elements of marketisation with their continued control over production expressed through centralised planning. Objectively this only serves to exacerbate the crisis of their rule. The impact of marketisation serves to hamper centralised planning and control even further. Attempts at centralised planning, in turn, hamper the functioning of the market.

### Plan versus market

In China, as elsewhere, this tension is reflected within the bureaucracy itself between those who wish to maintain, or restrengthen, centralised planning and those who wish to push further down the road of marketisation, a section of whom favour the restoration of capitalism itself. These strategic poles within the bureaucracy cannot be simplistically reduced to representing a division between an authoritarian and a liberalising wing within the bureau-

## Books of the RCIT

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

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

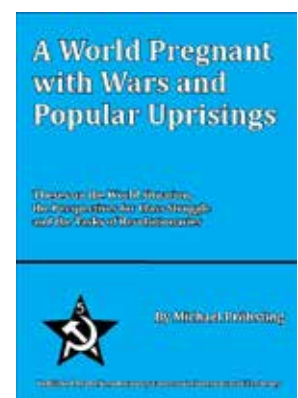
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists' analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic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

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

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

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

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cracy. It is true that the advocates of centralised planning and control oppose any significant relaxation of the bureaucracy's politically repressive rule. But so too do the marketeers. That Deng Xiaoping could order the bloody massacre in Beijing while reaffirming his intention to press ahead with market reforms and further openings for foreign capital is proof of this.

Where the so called "liberalisers" in the bureaucracy do call for a relaxation of political control they mean this only to apply to the managerial and technocratic layers of society for whom freedom to discuss the future course of political and economic development is a necessity. None of the bureaucratic factions are genuinely committed to removal of the dictatorial regime over the mass of Chinese workers and peasants.

The present crisis cannot be separated off from the sequence of factional struggles which have centred on this problem of economic growth since the mid-1950s. The "Great Leap Forward", an attempt by Mao to solve the problem voluntaristically, led to a huge drop in output in all sectors. The consequent famine was overcome by allowing a considerable degree of privatised production in agriculture and a return to centralised planning in industry. In an attempt to reverse the social and political consequences of this "capitalist road" the Mao faction resorted to controlled mass mobilisation against their opponents in the mis-named "Proletarian Cultural Revolution". The scale of the factional dispute can be judged by the willingness of the Maoists to allow three years of increasingly independent student and working class activity in a movement which destabilised much of the state administration. Nonetheless, when those mobilisations threatened to go beyond the control of the Mao faction the army was used to restore order. In the aftermath, as the factions fought

behind closed doors, the economy stagnated under the increasingly authoritarian rule of the ageing Mao and the "Gang of Four".

### Factional divisions

After the death of Mao in 1976, the faction led by Deng Xiaoping fought to regain the leadership. Within the bureaucracy they reassembled many of the leaders who had been attacked during the Cultural Revolution but, at the same time they encouraged the development of the "Democracy Wall" movement which came to a head in 1978-79. With considerable precision, Deng utilised these two forces first to remove Hua Guofeng and then to repress the democracy movement itself.

The very existence of long term factional polarities within the Chinese bureaucracy made it necessary, as well as possible, for Deng to fashion his own distinct form of Bonapartist rule over the bureaucracy. With close links to the Army High Command through the military commission that he chairs, and through the Standing Committee, he has fashioned the means of exercising his own rule over the party and state bureaucracy and for playing its component groups, including regional groupings within it, against one another when necessary. Control of the armed and security forces—the decisive levers of political repression—has enabled Deng to defeat his rivals and order the massacre on the streets of Beijing.

### Roots of the present crisis

In December 1978, the new leadership embarked on its strategy of overcoming the inefficiencies and rigidities of bureaucratic planning by the re-introduction of the mar-

# 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.

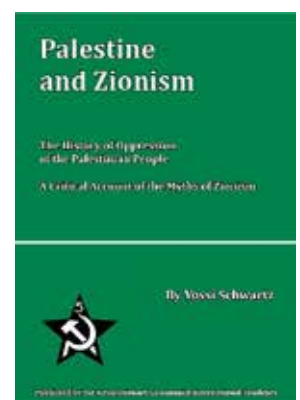
Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership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

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ket. Privatisation of the communes led, initially, to a sharp increase in production. This success encouraged a similar policy in industry where, although state ownership was retained, individual enterprises were given greater freedom to trade and threatened with closure if they did not become profitable. Foreign capital was introduced extensively into China both by state borrowing and direct investment in the "Special Economic Zones". In industry, too, increases in production were registered in the first years of this programme.

However, these policies bore within them the seeds of the insoluble contradictions which have led to the present crisis. As well as opening the economy to the market, the bureaucracy has to retain a central sector under its own control. Without that the bureaucracy has no base in society and no means of enforcing its rule. Parts of the bureaucracy are more immediately related to, or dependent upon, this state economic sector and this is the material basis for the main factional divisions. However, a further element is supplied by the position of the army High Command which, for historic reasons, is closely integrated into the political leadership and also strongly regionalised. Deng's strategy, which involves major concessions to the market but the retention of a powerful state controlled sector, involves distinct regional implications because the coastal provinces are to be more "marketised" than the hinterland. In sum his strategic objective, "Two Systems, One Country" is a utopia. The same state cannot defend both capitalist and post-capitalist property relations.

The demands of the state sector conflict with the priorities of the "marketised sector" in industry, the procurement prices in agriculture are set below those of the market and this encourages corruption. Peasant production of industrial crops replaces food production for the domestic market. Accumulation of capital in the countryside leads to social class differentiation amongst the peasantry and the emergence of a kulak class. Rapid capital investment and incentive bonuses stimulate the highest rate of inflation since the revolution and, at the same time, the "iron rice bowl", the guarantee of employment to workers which applies to over 96% of the industrial workforce, sets limits to the productivity targets of the market sector. Commitments to overseas trade lead to shortages and bottlenecks

in domestic production.

Throughout the Chinese economy, all attempts to carry out the market-strategy lead directly to conflict with the bureaucracy's political and economic imperatives. This expresses itself in the demands, by those most closely identified with the market both within the bureaucracy and industry, for further relaxation of state and party controls, for the separation of the party from the state and for the introduction of political pluralism, by which is meant openly restorationist parties. As early as 1986, these had led to a renewal of the "Democracy Movement" amongst professionals and students. The General Secretary of the Party, Hu Yaobang was identified with this movement and, in January 1987, Hu was ousted and replaced by Zhao Ziyang—also a protege of Deng.

The factional struggle, however, did not abate. By the Thirteenth Congress of the CCP, October 1987, the faction in favour of further liberalisation was in the ascendant. It was backed by Deng who insisted that the campaign against the Democracy Movement had to be limited to the political sphere and should not be allowed to affect economic policy. Nonetheless, throughout 1988 the economic problems of the regime multiplied and with them the depth of factional divisions in the highest ranks of the bureaucracy. This culminated in the September 1988 Party Plenum which was so evenly balanced as to be paralysed and unable to ratify the politburo's proposals for radical price reform.

It was this political vacuum which ensured the re-emergence of the Democracy Movement. This was at first restricted to specialised publications, where coded arguments about the economy fuelled discussion and debate within the managerial strata and the intelligentsia. The death of Hu Yaobang (15 April, 1989) provided the pretext for this underground movement to break into the light of day.

#### **The Democracy Movement in crisis**

For decades faction fights within the CCP have been accompanied by bureaucratically controlled mass mobilisations and by attempts to manipulate spontaneous movements. The student demonstrations at the time of Hu's

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funeral were called by the Democracy Movement under slogans calculated to avoid charges of political disloyalty and with the hope of pressurising elements of the leading caste.

As the movement grew, sections of the bureaucracy no doubt hoped to try and use it to further their factional ends. However, the strength of the movement and the enthusiastic support of the people of Beijing, meant that there was never any possibility of the movement remaining within limits imposed from above.

Although *The People's Daily* condemned the students for conspiracy against the party and the socialist system this did not prevent their central demands—for a free press, against corruption and recognition of unofficial student organisations—from being taken up by students throughout China. By 4 May, the anniversary of the first revolutionary nationalist movement, the movement was able to march tens of thousands of students into Tiananmen Square without opposition from the state. These demonstrations were cheered by thousands of onlookers. In response to this, Zhao Ziyang announced that many of the ideas of the students “coincided with those of the party”. This was interpreted to mean that Zhao, unlike Deng, was willing to tolerate the Democracy Movement. At the same time, after 4 May, the movement subsided. Apart from Beida, most universities were re-opened the following day.

This, however, proved to be a lull in the movement, not an end to it. Having taken stock of what they had achieved, the Beijing students decided to go further and to organise mass demonstrations at the time of the visit of Gorbachev on 15 May. This resulted in huge demonstrations during Gorbachev's visit. The Chinese bureaucracy was forced to change schedules time and again because of the sheer scale of the mobilisations, which now included large numbers of workers and also protesting journalists who demanded the right to report accurately what was happening. It was in this context that the student hunger strike began and Tiananmen Square became permanently occupied by tens of thousands of students.

In response to this, the Standing Committee of the Politburo met on 18 May to discuss a proposal from Zhao that concessions be made to the students. The proposal was defeated. Zhao signalled his dissent by visiting the students in Tiananmen Square. This act broke the discipline of the bureaucratic caste and led to the downfall of Zhao. Li Peng, the premier declared martial law in Beijing the following morning. Within hours an estimated one million people had occupied central Beijing. When troops tried to

enter the centre they were forced back. On the same day, as strikes paralysed the capital, the Autonomous Workers' Organisation was founded in Beijing.

### From stalemate to repression

For the next two weeks a stalemate existed between the students in Tiananmen Square and the deeply divided bureaucracy. Increasing fraternisation between troops and protesters led to the removal of the troops from central Beijing. Rumours abounded of splits in both the army and the bureaucracy as strikes spread throughout China. By the weekend of 27-28 May, the student occupation of Tiananmen Square was beginning to subside and it appeared that a possible compromise had been reached between Beijing student leaders and the bureaucracy: the troops would not be used if the students wound down the demonstrations and ended the hunger strike. However, the arrival of provincial students and the increasing involvement of workers in Tiananmen Square revived the movement within a few days. It was this latter development in particular that concentrated the minds of the ruling bureaucracy and determined it to take decisive repressive action.

On 31 May, leaders of the Autonomous Workers' Organisation were arrested in Beijing and workers were publicly threatened and ordered not to support the Tiananmen occupation. Strikes to protest at this took place and several thousand protesters demonstrated outside the Interior Ministry. The following day troops appeared throughout central Beijing. They were unarmed but located at strategic intersections and buildings. On 2 June, thousands of unarmed troops were marched into central Beijing but mass demonstrations prevented their progress and most returned to their garrisons.

### Bureaucratic terror

The scale of the opposition to troop mobilisations in Beijing, coupled with the increasingly nationwide nature of the democracy movement, convinced the core of the bureaucracy, the security services and the army under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the “paramount leader”, of the necessity for a ruthless attack on their opponents. On 3 and 4 June this took the form of the Beijing massacre, in which the majority of victims were from the working class of the city who went to the defence of the students and workers in Tiananmen Square. In the days that followed this was extended across the country as general strikes



## 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



and barricades expressed the outrage and the solidarity of the workers of China.

Although factional disagreements must have contributed to both the delay in imposing this barbarous repression and provided a material substance for the rumours of actual armed conflict between different army groups, there is no evidence of consciously directed armed actions of this sort. The decision to act nationally, and to utilise inexperienced troops from every section of the regionally-based army, contributed to the barbarism but, ultimately, demonstrated the agreement of the bureaucratic factions to the bloody suppression of the opponents of their dictatorship. Those factions who initially opposed this strategy were rendered powerless by the determination of the Deng faction, to oppose that could only have meant civil war and this would have implied a choice between siding with an insurgent working class or, longer term, with agents of capitalist restoration in, for example, Taiwan. There was no group willing or able to make either of these choices.

### The political revolutionary crisis

The mass mobilisations in China had a clear and indisputable political revolutionary potential. This was most sharply expressed by those components of it that gave mass voice to egalitarian, anti-corruption and anti-privilege demands. It represented a mighty struggle against the deeply privileged and secluded bureaucratic leader-

ship and, very noticeably, against their offspring. Note the charges aimed at Li Peng as the adopted son of Zhou Enlai, and at the opulent business career of Deng Xiaoping's son.

Trotsky predicted that the political revolutionary struggle would take the initial form of precisely such a struggle against bureaucratic privilege and also against bureaucratic political oppression. As in all revolutionary crises, the mass mobilisations and the organisations which they created, were far from being politically homogenous or of a nationally uniform character. This was reflected in the political ambiguity of many of the slogans and demands raised by the movement. Nonetheless, the demands for, "democracy" and against corruption expressed, fundamentally, a deep hatred of political oppression and of their own political expropriation on the part of the urban masses. In giving voice to their hatred of the bureaucracy's material privileges they were also voicing their own anger at the extreme hardship of life for the overwhelming majority of the Chinese proletariat.

The political revolutionary potential of the movement was graphically demonstrated by the fact that it mobilised the mighty Chinese working class itself into mass resistance to the bureaucracy through mass strikes and the formation of independent working class organisations. One of the most important features of the entire crisis was the remarkable uniformity of the working class response to the Beijing massacre throughout the major cities of China. In addition, and very importantly, we also saw the forma-



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

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tion of joint worker-student organisations of an open, and later after the repression, an underground character.

For these reasons we recognise the politically revolutionary potential of the events themselves. From the point of view of the future they have given the Chinese working class a taste of its own potential strength and its collective identity after years of repression and profound atomisation at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy. It has created a river of blood between the Chinese workers and their murderous Stalinist rulers. For that reason it has the potential of playing, for the Chinese working class, the role that the 1905 Revolution in Russia played, despite its eventual defeat, in forging the independent class and political consciousness of the Russian working class.

However, the movement also displayed profound weaknesses and contradictions that precisely prevented the revolutionary potential of the mobilisations being realised and allowed the bureaucracy to ruthlessly reassert its power. These weaknesses were manifested in several different ways.

Firstly, in the initial social composition of the movement itself. As a movement of the students and the intelligentsia it had neither the social nor political weight to mount a challenge to the bureaucracy that could destroy its armed might and fundamentally challenge its political rule. Its non-proletarian character also meant that its initial focus was on an abstract demand for "democracy" and on pacifist tactics supposed to realise that objective.

"Democracy" was posed in a manner that was capable of having several meanings. On the one hand it involved demands to remove the existing inner clique of the bureaucratic leadership and replace it with one that was supposedly more democratic and less corrupt. This allowed sections of the initial student movement to pose their demands in the form of a homage to Hu Yaobang against the existing leadership that had ousted him. And it allowed them later to concretise their demands in terms of support for Zhao against Li Peng. At certain key junctures this opened the road for Zhao to attempt to, or even perhaps to succeed in, mobilising broad sections of the movement behind one particular wing in the bureaucratic faction fight.

The "democracy" that placed its hopes in bureaucratic reformers and expressed illusions in them had equally crippling illusions in the Peoples Liberation Army itself. This was expressed in a naïve and ultimately calamitous belief that the PLA, as the "people's army", would never attack the "people".

Much of this reflected not only the social composition of the original leadership of the movement, (i.e. students) but also the influence of Aquino type notions of "people's power". The latter was conceived and articulated in terms of the ousting of the present party leadership through the moral pressure of the display of "people's power" in Tiananmen Square.

This was to take the form of a passive occupation of the Square, followed by the hunger strike to which the population in general, as the "people", were asked to give their visible, but still passive, moral support. Only when the movement faced stalemate and the hunger strike failed to achieve its goals and was abandoned, did the leadership of the movement begin to recognise, in a limited way, the potential strength of the working class.

But even then, the working class was still seen only as

an auxiliary, although extremely powerful, support to the movement. Despite its massive strength and preparedness to struggle, the leaders of the Chinese Democracy Movement looked to the general strike of the working class as an adjunct to their protests not as the only force that could effectively destabilise bureaucratic rule prior to its insurrectionary overthrow.

While the "democratic movement" called on the working class to give it support as it became increasingly evident that the ruling bureaucracy was refusing to budge, it remained the case that the dominant trends in that movement remained trapped in pacifist, abstract and ultimately profoundly incoherent notions of democratism. This was symbolised both by their enthusiasm for Gorbachev and the construction of a "Statue of Liberty" in Tiananmen Square.

For some sections of that movement, demands for democracy were also combined with demands for further marketisation and the ultimate restoration of capitalism in China. The very policies of Deng himself in the economic sphere and the pressure of imperialism and Chinese capitalism outside mainland China served to strengthen the pressure on sections of the movement to conceive of the realisation of their democratic demands also in terms of hastening the restoration of capitalism in China.

On the other hand, the foundation of the Autonomous Workers' Organisations on 21 May, starting in Beijing, was an important step forward for the Chinese working class and represented the awakening of genuine independent class organisation even though its founding statements did not clearly express its own class (social and economic) interests.

### The road to power

In truth, therefore, the movement was fundamentally inadequate to the task objectively posed, the overthrow of bureaucratic rule. The armed forces remained fundamentally at the disposal of the ruling bureaucratic regime, within whose top ranks the PLA generals are closely integrated; against that armed might, and the determination of the ruling bureaucracy to hold on to power, the tactics of passive protest, in its variety of forms, was absolutely bound to fail. There was not, and could not have been, any section of the ruling bureaucracy prepared to lead a mass struggle to put an end to bureaucratic oppression and material privileges. Equally, the economic programmes of rival wings within the bureaucracy are neither capable of ending, nor intended to end the material hardship and inequalities suffered by the masses of China.

This is not to say that the victory of the bureaucracy was inevitable or that lessons cannot be learned from this round of struggle that can ensure victory in the next round of struggle.

The key to victory lay in mobilising the working class as an independent force that, far from being subordinate to the democratic movement, was hegemonic in the struggle to overthrow the bureaucracy. The strike wave of the working class could have been, and in future must be, the basis for the forging of workers' councils (soviets) in all the industrial centres. Such councils would bring together delegates from all major workplaces as well as from the workers' districts of the cities and would take on the tasks,

not only of co-ordinating strikes and demonstrations, but also imposing working class control over production and distribution, transport, broadcasting and publishing, as well as the arming of the working class to defend itself. Such is the determination of the ruling bureaucracy to hold on to power that it was, and will always be, necessary for the working class to arm itself in organised workers' militias. Those militias must be trained and prepared for direct military confrontation with the Stalinist regime in order to defend their organisations and destroy the ability of the ruling bureaucracy to deploy its armed bodies of men.

However, the working class has other weapons at its disposal to break up the primarily peasant PLA. It has the weapon of physical force to concentrate the minds of the armed forces as to which side they are on. It has the weapon of fraternisation to attempt to actively win the troops to its side. To focus its campaign to win over the rank and file soldiers the working class needs to commit itself to support for the formation of soldiers' councils with the right to take their place alongside the workers in the soviets. Those soldiers' councils will become an active component in breaking the power of the central bureaucracy, in arming the workers and in actively assisting the armed insurrection that alone can put an end to bureaucratic rule.

The successful political revolution in China requires that the working class takes up as its own, and hegemonises, the struggles of key non-proletarian sectors of society and that it gives a proletarian class content to such demands as equality, democracy and political freedom. Against corruption it must demand, and impose, workers' inspection of all public, industrial and financial dealings and appointments. Against inflation it must demand a sliding scale of

wages calculated by working class organisations. Against economic dislocation and sabotage it must fight for workers' control.

It must take up in its programme the rights of Chinese youth and all sectors of society to an education system, a press and a media that is freed from the stranglehold of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Equally vital to working class unity and strength is the need to champion all measures which liberate women from inequality and oppression and which socialise domestic toil.

To counteract attempts at "divide and rule" tactics, the working class must champion the granting of genuine equal and democratic rights to national minorities.

Of vital importance in China will be the linking of proletarian struggles with those of the increasingly impoverished poor and middle peasants against the emerging kulak and rural capitalist class, patronised and enriched by the policies of Deng Xiaoping. Because of the historical circumstances in which the CCP was able to seize power, the peasantry has always been its major point of social stability. Indeed, Deng justified taking the risk of attacking Tiananmen Square by declaring that, "the countryside is behind us". To destroy that solid support, the proletariat must advance a land programme that will exploit the differentiation caused by marketisation.

This will, necessarily, vary in detail from region to region but its central component will be demands for state support for the poor farmers, for expropriation of kulak land and mechanical equipment, turned over for use by co-operatives, for public works to employ the rural unemployed and the creation of worker-peasant commissions to oversee prices and deliveries to the cities.

Only in this way can a class alliance be cemented which,

## 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



after the victory of the political revolution, can make real the introduction of planning and more advanced techniques without either disadvantaging or antagonising the mass of the rural population.

In order to win the working class to such a programme it is necessary to build a revolutionary party in conditions that, while they will be ripe in terms of the potential for thousands of workers to be persuaded on the basis of experience, will also be extremely hazardous given the scale of brutality the bureaucracy is inflicting on working class militants in particular. However, such is the popular hatred of the regime and such was the mass scale of the movement against it, that the bureaucracy can be challenged by a popularly protected underground revolutionary party. That party must steel the proletarian vanguard ready for the inevitable struggles ahead. Workers must be won to see the need to be organised independently and ready to lead. The best young intellectuals must be won to this argument, to strengthening their links with the workers as their political priority and to the recognition that their programme must be one that is based on the needs and the struggles of the workers.

The alternative, particularly amongst the intelligentsia, is that pro-capitalist ideas will strengthen as the intelligentsia despairs of winning any democratic liberties except in conjunction with imperialism and its agents who are, no doubt, already active in the fertile conditions created by Deng's policies. Against this it is vital that the reformed revolutionary communist party defends planned property relations as the prerequisite of developing China's productive forces in a rounded way sufficient to benefit all the masses and to ensure ever greater equality and put an end to bureaucratic privilege.

The bloody terror with which the bureaucracy reasserted its rule has solved none of the fundamental issues that led to the crisis of its rule. A retreat into autarchy, national isolation and further state control of the economy offers no way out. It will meet with the apathy or resistance of the Chinese workers, as will the attempt to step up production by bureaucratic decree. Even if this were accompanied by a rapprochement with the USSR, involving greater trade, it would still not haul China out of its present stagnation.

On the other hand, if the "open door" policy is reaffirmed and deepened this would lead to further disproportions and dislocations in the economy as has been experienced throughout the 1980s. If the "open door" policy were to eventually allow the "capitalist roaders"—in alliance with the Chinese capitalists abroad—to undermine and overthrow the Bonapartist leaders, then the Chinese masses will learn to their cost that capitalism in China will not lead to prosperity for them.

China, back under the yoke of world imperialism, would not for one moment enjoy the democratic liberties and living standards of the advanced, imperialist, nations. On the contrary she would rapidly be plunged back into the desperate poverty, starvation and national disintegration that she suffered in the 1920s and 1930s. Her present population, a quarter of humanity, could not survive a free market and an open door for the goods of the imperialists.

It is the experience of, for example, the Latin American countries under "liberal economics" that would await her, not that of North America or Western Europe. Similarly, aspirations towards political freedom and "democratic

rights" will never be fulfilled by a return to unbridled capitalism. In China, the masses would find themselves denied virtually all rights as is the case throughout most of the semi-colonial world. The only road to political and social emancipation is the road of overthrowing the bureaucracy, the road of political revolution.

### Solidarity work

The immediate task of solidarity work is for the working class movements throughout the world to take whatever action they can in solidarity with the Chinese students and workers. Cancel all trade union visits and exchanges with the Chinese bureaucrats, fight for unions and federations to send aid and assistance to any autonomous workers' and students' organisations still functioning. Organise demonstrations against the continuing repression. In the present period of active repression of workers and students we are for immediate workers' sanctions to turn back Chinese ships and trade. We reject all popular frontist/class collaborationist solidarity actions. We do not participate in any joint action with any bourgeois administration or any bourgeois figures or parties. We fight in the solidarity movements against any illusions that the imperialist governments will aid the students' and workers' struggles in China. Their interests at the moment lie with Deng Xiaoping not the masses. We fight against any anti-communist tendencies which argue for an imperialist blockade of China as a means of restoring capitalism.

For the right of every student from China to have automatic right of abode in the country in which they are studying if they request it. For the right of every citizen of Hong Kong to enter any foreign country if they so wish.

### Solidarity with Chinese workers and students!

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\* \* \* \* \*

## Down with Stalinist butchery in Beijing! For political revolution in China!

Words are too weak to express the horror and outrage at events in Beijing on 3 and 4 June. A brutal and pitiless army was let loose on the unarmed students and workers of the capital with the clear and deliberate intention of drowning in blood the movement for democratic reform.

The mighty heroism of the young people of Beijing in the face of this carnage has moved the whole world. Any regime that has to resort to this to sustain its hold on power is condemned by history and doomed to destruction.

Yet events in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and in Kampuchea (1975) indicate that this monstrous crime is neither unique nor a special Chinese phenomenon. No, it is a crime of Stalinism. It is a product of the deadly inner contradictions of the rule of the bureaucratic caste which usurped political power from the working class and peasantry.

Although capitalism was overthrown and imperialism excluded in China by 1953, the Chinese Stalinists then and now act to block the road to socialism and maintain their power and privileges over the masses.

Isolated in a single country—even one so vast as China—socialist construction is impossible. The CCP was never a force for world revolution, that is, for the spreading of the proletarian revolution to other countries. Despite the initial advances which were the product of excluding the imperialist plunderers, crushing the capitalists and setting up a centralised command economy, China has writhed in the contradictions of the bureaucracy's inability to direct that plan due to the fact that the Chinese masses are excluded from participation in the determination of their needs.

In 1978 the bureaucracy elevated Deng Xiaoping to the

role of supreme leader on a programme of opening China to world capitalist forces, restoring private ownership in the countryside and using imperialist capital to discipline China's workers through unemployment and rising prices.

Yet the bureaucratic caste and its upper clique still had enormous internal divisions. The long term existence of this caste is bound up with the existence of the planned property relations. Any unreversible process of their disintegration spells doom for this caste.

On the other hand since the bureaucracy's power and privileges cannot allow them to submit themselves to the democracy of the workers and poor peasants, they cannot solve the crisis of their system by utilising the conscious creativity of these classes. Indeed, they had to suppress even public discussion of the existence of economic crisis.

The bureaucracy is polarised between factions who wish to make repeated concessions to capitalism and to allow a certain democratisation and those who see in this the danger that their caste dictatorship will come under a mass challenge as a result.

Deng Xiaoping and his clique have balanced between these factions, favouring repeated and far reaching concessions to capitalism but determined to give the workers no democratic scope to oppose the effects of these concessions. Deng precisely reflects the contradictions of bureaucratic rule.

The student movement of recent years represents an attempt by sections of the "liberalising" bureaucrats to mobilise mass pressure to pursue a Gorbachev style policy of glasnost as a necessary condition for economic liberalisation.

Yet this faction fight in the bureaucracy opened the way for the participation of the masses; students at first and then increasingly the workers. The intransigence of Deng

## RCIT Publications on Kashmir & India

- \* **“Azadi Kashmir”: Marxists and the independence of Kashmir**
- \* **The Kashmir Question and the Indian Left Today**
- \* **India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes**
- \* **India: A Peculiar Semi-Colony in the Role of a Regional Power**

*Written by Michael Pröbsting  
(International Secretary of the RCIT)*

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and Li Peng obliged the student leaders to broaden their movement. Initially unwilling to draw in the workers, self-defence made them do so. Yet the main student leaders believed that involving the working class was a last resort and concentrated their attention on pursuing the hunger strike to force changes in the actions of the CCP leadership.

Deng decided in favour of the “conservative”, pro-repression faction and rallied the army commanders of the rural hinterland of China. Having restored unfettered private ownership to China’s peasants and allowed for the growth of a rich peasant class, Deng sought to use the indifference and even hostility of the countryside to crush the workers and intelligentsia.

The first phase of the movement has been ended by the bloody carnage of Tienanmen Square. Now Canton students are reported as saying there is a need for a General Strike. This is the right instinct. Peaceful pressure on the bureaucracy, submission to its “liberal” faction is a disastrous policy. Only the working class can paralyse the repression with an all-China General Strike. Only this working class action can lay the basis for winning over the poor peasants in the countryside and the workers and poor peasants in army uniform.

The students and the workers who have formed autonomous trade unions however must go beyond calls for democracy in the abstract. In reality this means to identify with bourgeois, capitalist democracy which will mean unemployment, poverty and renewed imperialist exploitation for China’s millions.

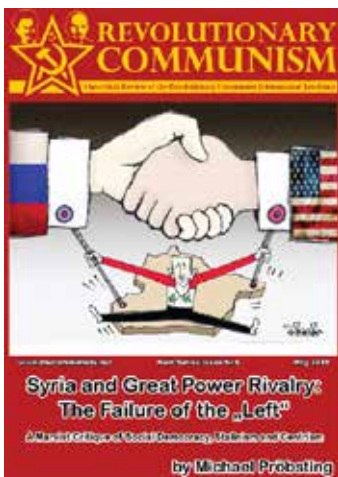
A new political force—a revolutionary party—must arise which openly stands for the maintenance of the nationalised industry of China and its subjection to the control and planning of the toilers not the dictates of the bureaucracy. Such a party must stand for workers democracy in

China.

In the struggle to smash the murderers of the people, in the fight to co-ordinate a powerful strike movement, to win over the troops and reach out to the peasantry, strike committees and councils must be formed. These bodies can be the organs of democracy and political power for the workers.

This strategy for victory means total and unreserved identification with the interests of the working class and a total break with the pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist forces in China and beyond it. Dangers exist in the students’ fight for an abstract form of democracy which can lead to a reactionary bloc with pro-capitalist forces. But the use of the Red Flag, their singing of the Internationale and their turn to the working class are all evidence that the movement is not, as the Stalinist slanderers claim, a movement for restoring capitalism in China.

- *Down with the murderers, the parasitic bureaucracy! For proletarian political revolution in China!*
- *For the revolutionary re-unification of all China including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao under workers’ democracy!*
- *Down with the hypocrisy of the imperialist bourgeoisie who will only take action when they have identified where their own interests lie!*
- *Down with the cant of the British government who dare to speak of democracy even as they maintain their garrison in undemocratic Hong Kong. Chinese workers and students abroad: do not appeal to Thatcher and Bush but to the working class for international class solidarity!*
- *Workers throughout the world must take action to boycott or embargo Chinese trade and transport whilst the slaughter and the strike wave continues!*
- *Force the imperialist governments to recognise the right of students to have political refugee status! No enforced repatriations!*



## *Publications of the RCIT*

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

*By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018*

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

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

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format*



## Robert Owen (1771-1858)

### An Utopian Communist and Revolutionary Social Reformer

By Joseph Adams, August 2019

Robert Owen was born in Newtown Wales in 1771 to a prosperous middle class family. At an early age Owen was sent to London to learn a trade and he became a shop assistant. He stayed in London with a family called McGuffog who had a paternal interest in Robert. *"There thanks to McGuffog's recommendation he was taken on as shop assistant with Flint and Palmer an old established and respectable firm of Haberdashers"*. [1]

Robert was quick to learn and an avid reader. He had an apt head for figures and technical information and very soon he was to start his own business as a Mill manager and machine maker. This was the period of rapid development in industrial progress with several inventions in the cotton industry which Owen was to excel at as a leading industrialist and capitalist. Owen was to leave London in 1788 for Manchester, a growing town which would become a thriving city of workers and the oppressed. Frederick Engels, who together with Karl Marx was the founders of scientific socialism, wrote about the terrible degradation suffered by the working class in his book about the conditions of the working class.

*"Much of the town's growth historically was explained by textiles, major innovations in spinning technology notably Hargreave's spinning Jenny Arkwright's water frame and Crompton's mule, had already begun to demonstrate the potential for mass production, particularly where those inventions could be harnessed up to water wheels or steam engines"*. [2]

#### Mill Manager and Machine Maker in Manchester

Owen easily with his technical knowledge and foresight recognised the possibilities and started to become a major capitalist and master in Cotton weaving which was the major industry in 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain at this time. Owen teamed up with a partner called Jones.

*"He and his partner agreed to rent a large machine workshop also containing some rooms for cotton spinners and specially constructed for them by a local builder. Soon they had 40 men at work. Their business was duly advertised in the issues of the Manchester Mercury for 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 1791"*. [3]

Another opportunity opened up for the promising business man and Owen made the acquaintance of Drinkwater, a major Industrialist in Manchester. Owen made himself known to Drinkwater and discovered that there was a vacancy for a Superintendent for his factory. It meant of course that Owen would now have to give up his business if he wanted to become the new Superintendent.

*"A condition of Owen's employment that he cease trading and devote all his time to managing Drinkwater's Mill. But if he just happened to be in the right place at the right time it paid off and as he later observed the circumstances made a lasting impression because they led to important future consequences"*. [4].

The importance of the position that Owen took at Drinkwater's mill would show that Boulton, Arkwright and Watt's inventions were all fitted at Drinkwater's mill giving Owen further technical advantage over his competitors. Still only a young man, Robert Owen was establish-

ing himself as a major force amongst the Manchester elite. In 1794 Owen left Drinkwater and with other partners joined the Chorlton Twist Company. Owen was becoming known in literary circles and had started developing ideas about social questions particularly the hours and conditions of the workforce.

*"Nor is it surprising that the successful young factory manager with a nascent in social conditions and a questioning mind in the matter of religion should attract the attention of like-minded individuals who formed the intellectual core of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical society"*. [5]

#### New Lanark

On a visit to Scotland on a business trip for the Chorlton twist company Owen met Caroline Dale, the daughter of David Dale who was the owner of the New Lanark Mill. He and his partners would buy New Lanark and Owen would marry Caroline. This is where his development as a social reformer would come into his own. It would be at New Lanark and at Harmony in the United States where Owen would practise his communist experiment.

*"New Lanark came to play a vital role in Owen's ambitious plans for a new system of society and had a significant impact on later community experiences and Owenite activities"*. [6]

In 1814 Owen put his plan into operation at New Lanark to improve conditions at New Lanark establish a communist village with education, less hours of work, improved conditions with no child labour or long hours of work.

*"At 7 o'clock at night children were not only taught reading and writing but also the polite accomplishments. Dale evidently employed singing masters and dancing masters to teach the factory girls and boys to dance. Apart from instituting day schools to accommodate children under 10 who were no longer employed in the mills"*. [7]

Robert Owen published his new view of society for changes to how society was run especially the barbaric conditions of laizzez faire capitalism with its exploitation of workers, children and women in degrading and appalling situations, the eradication of the workhouse and all that entailed. His system as expounded in his essays was put into effect at New Lanark.

*"But the new system now embraced character formation, popular education, poor relief and the community plan"*. [8]

#### Owen's Communist Experience

Frederick Engels in *Anti-Duhring* explains that Owen was a revolutionary who put forward plans for a future communist society within the orbit of capitalism.

*"He saw in it the opportunity of putting into practice his favourite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than five hundred men in a Manchester factory. From 1800 to 1829, he directed the great cotton-mill at New Lanark, in Scotland, as managing partner, along the same lines, but with greater freedom of action and with a success that made him a European rep-*

utation. A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralised elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, lawsuits, poor laws, charity, were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced them first at New Lanark. At the age of two the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely be got home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people thirteen or fourteen hours a day, in New Lanark the working-day was only ten and a half hours. When a crisis in cotton stopped work for four months, his workers received their full wages all the time. And with all this the business more than doubled in value, and to the last yielded large profits to its proprietors". [9]

"Owen's communism was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculation. Throughout, it maintained this practical character His advance in the direction of communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honour, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his communist theory that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property, religion, the present form of marriage. He knew what confronted him if he attacked these — outlawry, excommunication from official society, and the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened. Banished from official society, with a conspiracy of silence against him in the press, ruined by his unsuccessful communist experiments in America His advance in the direction of communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honour, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his communist theory that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property,

religion, the present form of marriage. He knew what confronted him if he attacked these — outlawry, excommunication from official society, and the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened". [10]

As Engels had commented Owen's communism was translated into the cooperative movement with the formation of the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844.

"However, the idea of the co-operative movement did not die completely, for in 1844 the Rochdale Pioneers started a co-operative venture in Lancashire which eventually grew into the modern Co-operative Movement". [11].

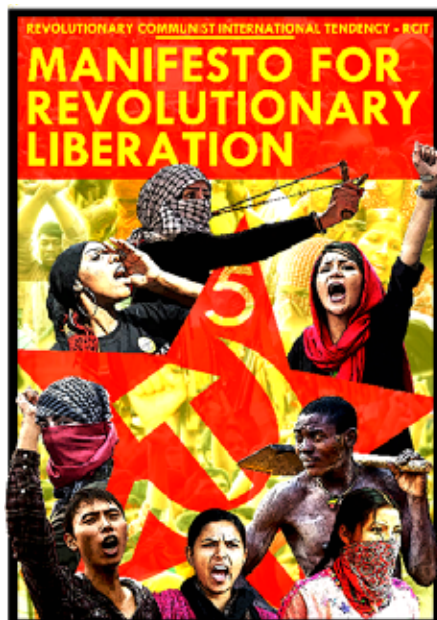
In 1832 Robert Owen founded the *Grand National Consolidated Trade Union*. Owen's turn to the working class proved that Owenism was the most important development for socialism before the great working class struggles of the 1850's and the emergence of Chartism. Owen was a true revolutionary who developed socialism within the limits of a capitalist society. Without the emergence of a developed working class the true ideas of communism could not develop. It would be left to the founders of Marxism to put it on a proper materialist understanding.

"In 1832 he proposed that the unions should unite and in 1834 the *Grand National Consolidated Trade Union* was formed. Within a week it had over half a million members and the government were alarmed by this new mass labour movement". [12]

Although it did not last it would lead to Chartism the big working class movement which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels had an enormous influence in promoting and fighting for Chartist revolutionary demands. I will consider this in a future article.

#### Footnotes

- 1) Ian Donnachie: Robert Owen Social Visionary: John Donald, p.30
- 2) Ibid Pg. 32
- 3) Ibid Pg.37
- 4) Ibid, p.43
- 5) Ibid, p.59
- 6) Ibid, p.113
- 7) Ibid, p. 108
- 8) Ibid, p.178
- 9) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1877/anti-duhring/ch23.htm>
- 10) Ibid
- 11) [http://robert-owen-museum.org.uk/Robert\\_Owen\\_1771\\_1858/trade\\_union](http://robert-owen-museum.org.uk/Robert_Owen_1771_1858/trade_union)
- 12) Ibid



### Program of the RCIT

## Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

Adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress of the RCIT in October 2016

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# What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*



