



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



[www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net)

New Series Issue Nr.40

July 2020

## The Popular Uprising against Racism & Police Violence in the U.S.

Analysis of the Pre-Revolutionary Situation in the U.S.  
Revolutionary Strategy and Tactics

## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.40, July 2019

USA: Justice for George Floyd!	p.3
A Pre-Revolutionary Situation Has Opened Up in the U.S.	p.5
United States: Is a Bloody Counterrevolution Looming?	p.7
Why We Speak about a Pre-Revolutionary Situation in the U.S.	p.9
Arming of the Popular Masses or Reforming the Police?	p.13
What the RCIT Stands for	p.23

*Picture on the cover: Mass protests in Philadelphia on 2 June 2020 (Source: Wikipedia, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/53/Civil\\_Unrest\\_2020\\_5C2A6287R.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/53/Civil_Unrest_2020_5C2A6287R.jpg))*

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

**[www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net) - [rcit@thecommunists.net](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net)  
Tel/SMS/WhatsApp/Telegram: +43-650-4068314**

# USA: Justice for George Floyd!

**Workers and youth of all color: unite in struggle!**

**For self-defense committees against the police! Organize a general strike now!**

*Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 30 May 2020*

1. Darnella Frazier, a 17-year-old(!), Afro-American woman showed incredible bravery when she not only filmed but also published a video of the brutal killing of our brother, George Floyd. Darnella Frazier received many threats and insults since the publication of the video and it is the highest duty of every revolutionary to defend and protect her against any attacks. However, it is her bravery that allowed the world to see the truth behind the events of the 25<sup>th</sup> May. It is her bravery that sparked a new wave of protests against the racial violence of the police forces.

2. George Floyd, a 46-year-old Afro-American, was killed by the white police officer Derek Chauvin who knelt on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. George Floyd said repeatedly that he can not breathe and that he will not resist the arrest. The last 2 minutes and 53 seconds it was obvious that he has lost consciousness. Bystanders pointed out to Derek Chauvin and the three other police officers (Thomas K. Lane, Tou Thao and J. Alexander Kueng) who helped fixating George Floyd that he is not responsive and demanded from the police officers to check his pulse. The Minneapolis officers finally called the ambulance and unsurprisingly George Floyd was declared dead at the hospital. The official reason for the arrest was the allegation by a deli-employee that George used a 20 Dollar bill that was counterfeit money. In the police report written by the four killers in uniform it is claimed that George Floyd was drunk, aggressive and that he resisted the arrest. It is only because of Darnella Frazier's video that in this specific case of yet another murder by racist police violence, irrefutable evidence exists which also make Derek Chauvin and all the other three killers out to be liars.

3. In most cases police reports are seen as the truth by all authorities irrespective of what testimonies of eyewitnesses, recorded audio and other evidence is saying. This is especially the case if the eyewitnesses themselves are Afro-American. We should not forget that our sister Breonna Taylor, an Emergency Medical Technician was killed on the 13<sup>th</sup> March this year in her own home by police officers while she was sleeping. However, no video exists on this killing and the authorities have tried to keep information about the brutal murder of our sister (like in so many other cases) under lock and key. It is highly urgent that all cases in which our brothers and sisters were injured respectively killed while dealing with police officers become easily accessible for the public immediately.

4. The killing of George Floyd is just another brutal murder in the very long history of police violence against our brothers and sisters. Aiyana Mo'Nay Stanley-Jones (7-years old), Tamir Rice (12y), Kendra James (21y), Michael Brown (18y), Rekia Boyd (22y), Timothy Thomas (19y), Gabriella Nevarez (22y), Oscar Grant (22y), Korrin Gaines (23y), Sylville K. Smith (23y), Breonna Taylor (26y), Freddie Gray (25y), Sandra Bland (28y), Eric Garner (43y), Atatiana Jefferson (28y), Keith Lamont Scott (43y), Kathryn Johnston (92y) are just some of the known cases of murder by brutal police force. We, as the *Revolutionary*

*Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* stand in full solidarity with all victims of racist police violence and their families, friends and colleagues.

5. It is of ridiculous irony that the ruling classes all around the world have enforced lockdown methods during the COVID-19 pandemic with the claim to protect lives while its repression apparatus was and is *killing* our brothers and sisters. Even in Minneapolis a curfew at 8pm was enforced which is rightly ignored by activists. No wonder that with the release of the video which shows the brutal murder of George Floyd, massive protests have resurged in Minneapolis and all around the United States.

6. The protests in the wake of the brutal murder of George Floyd are plenty and become more and more militant. Atlanta, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles and Louisville have seen the biggest rallies so far. Police vehicles and even police buildings were set on fire. This is mostly a reaction to aggressive police force which is directed even against peaceful demonstrations. Even Omar Jimenez, an Afro-American CNN reporter and his film crew were arrested by the Minneapolis officers while they tried to report on the arrest of an activist. Associated Press published quotes by three different anonymous sources that the Pentagon ordered the army to prepare military police units to head to Minneapolis if the clown with the orange hair who answers to the name of Donald Trump gives his order. The quick developments have brought Minneapolis and other cities on the verge of a dual power situation and revived the mass mobilizations in the United States.

7. It is the combination of many factors that creates an extraordinary situation: Trump's Administration as one of the most incompetent bourgeois leaderships in the history of the United States, the experiences of the *Black Lives Matter* Movement, the bonapartist oppression during the COVID-19 pandemic in combination with the highest death tolls, the crisis of the U.S. health system and last but not least the worst economic slump since 1929. The Capitol in Michigan was stormed by armed Anti-Lockdown protesters a month ago who have proven again the world's strongest, but declining, imperialist power faces a dramatic domestic political crisis. Against the background of these developments, both progressive and reactionary forces are mobilizing and it is only a matter of time before they clash. A 19-year-old activist at the current Black Lives Matter rallies was already killed by an anonymous attacker who shot at the protesters from his van.

8. The RCIT calls all militants and all progressive organizations to participate in the current spontaneous protests and to organize further solidarity actions. It is crucial to transform the current spontaneous local protests spread over the whole country into an organized national struggle. The goal must be to organize a general strike and to drive the police out of the communities wherever this is possible. For this, it is essential to hold mass meetings and assemblies in workplaces and neighborhoods to

discuss and to plan how to evolve these spontaneous protests into an organized movement. Such meetings should also organize armed self-defense units in order to protect the protests against attacks by the police, army or racist respectively fascist forces. These self-defense units must consist of workers and oppressed who are trusted by their communities and who can be replaced if necessary. It is of highest importance to reject any demobilization of this movement, may it be in the name of peace, security or the fight against the pandemic. Quite the contrary, activists should demand from community organizations, trade unions and all progressive forces that the support such a plan of struggle!

9. We demand justice for George Floyd and all other victims of police violence. But we also demand justice for all of our brothers and sisters who were killed by white supremacists like Ahmaud Arbery, Meshon Cooper, Trayvon Martin and many others. We demand justice for all our brothers and sisters who experienced violence because of their skin color. Cases like the one of the police officer Daniel Holtzclaw, who raped at least 13 women while on duty (most of them Afro-American women) show that the life of our brothers and sisters is permanently put under danger. As long as these offenders expect that the racist law will acquit them of a charge if they face any charge at all, they will keep attacking us. The RCIT demands that all cases of violence (including murder) against Afro-American people and people of color in general must be reviewed and renegotiated by a jury appointed by the labor movement and the communities. Such a jury must consist

of Afro-Americans and other people of color, it must consist of women and youth. Only an organ of our people is able to judge.

10. Finally, it is obvious that the oppression of black people does not begin with police violence and racist attacks. It is the capitalist system that incorporates racism resulting in super-exploitation of Afro-American labor. Our brothers and sisters receive lower wages for the same work. Although they make a big part of the so-called essential workers, they are in bigger danger to become ill because of cheap food with little to no nutritional value, huge stress at work and little to no access to health care. Even wealthy Afro-Americans receive worse medical care than white people. The capitalist-racist system is not only responsible for the regular killing of our brothers and sisters by white supremacists and police. It is also responsible for many deaths of Afro-Americans because of health issues they developed, the poverty they faced, the maltreatment they received and the stress they were put under. The RCIT says: the only road to black liberation is to annihilate racism by smashing the underlying capitalist system. This can be only achieved via a socialist revolution of the working class and the oppressed. We call activists in the U.S. and all over the world to join us in building a revolutionary party dedicated to achieve this goal!

*The RCIT calls all militants and progressive force to demand justice for our killed brothers and sisters – NOW!*

*International Bureau of the RCIT*

# Books of the RCIT

## Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution

What It Is and How to Fight It

A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle

In *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* Michael Pröbsting analyses the dramatic events in spring 2020 which have opened a new historic era. A triple crisis has shocked the world. The Third Depression has begun, characterized by a devastating economic slump of the capitalist world economy which is certainly no less dramatic than the crisis which started in 1929.

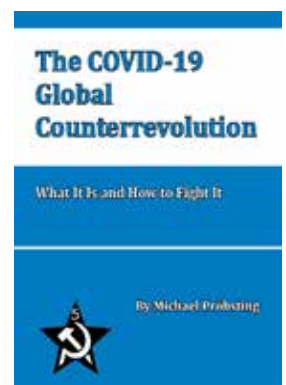
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

And finally, the world faces COVID-19 – a pandemic which endangers many lives and which is exploited by the ruling classes in order to spread fear, to deflect attention from the capitalist causes of the economic crisis and to justify the turn towards chauvinist state bonapartism.

*The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* also shows that large sectors of the reformist workers movement and the

so-called left fail to understand the meaning of this triple crisis. Similar to the situation in 1914 after the beginning of World War I we can observe a gigantic wave of opportunist capitulation by many self-proclaimed socialists as they support or at least do not denounce the global lockdown and the suppression of democratic rights which the ruling classes are imposing in the name of combat against the pandemic. *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* offers a Marxist analysis of this historic crisis and elaborates a revolutionary perspective for the struggles ahead.

The book contains an introduction and 6 chapters plus an appendix (176 pages) and includes 5 figures and a diagram.



## A Pre-Revolutionary Situation Has Opened Up in the U.S.

Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 31 May 2020

1. Unprecedented developments are shaking the U.S. and the world. The brutal murder of George Floyd by the U.S. police has triggered a wave of mass protests in all major cities. In the course of the last five days these protests have transformed into a popular uprising. People are chanting “No Justice, No Peace!” and there are popular slogans directed against the police like “The Enemy is Blue!”. Many demonstrators are not afraid to confront the police, reflecting that people are losing pacifist illusions. They are burning police cars and even torched a Minneapolis police station. In addition, mass anger and poverty as a result of the worst economic slump since 1929 have provoked a series of lootings.

2. It is a key characteristic of this uprising that it is not only black people demonstrating but people of all color including many white youth. This reflects that while protest against racism and police violence are the immediate causes of this uprising, there can be no doubt that the dramatic impoverishment (36 million people are currently unemployed) and the ultra-reactionary and equally ultra-incompetent Trump Administration are crucial underlying reasons for the current events.

3. The authorities try to crackdown the mass demonstrations with utmost brutality. Several demonstrators have been already killed, police vans drive recklessly into demonstrations, journalists are attacked, shot at or arrested, etc. Curfews have been imposed in all major cities which

however fail to stop the protests. The National Guard and the Military Police have been put on short notice so that they can intervene within hours. And President Trump has already threatened to send federal troops in order to smash the popular uprising. Such a move would without doubt provoke an open civil war. All these developments confirm the RCIT’s thesis that there has been a global shift towards authoritarianism and state bonapartism. In such a political environment, the police – and the capitalist state apparatus in general – is emboldened to viciously attack the popular masses and even the media.

4. At the same time, the power of this uprising has resulted in what seems to be cracks within the repressive state apparatus. There have been spectacular scenes in Flint (Michigan), Camden (New Jersey), Santa Cruz (California), Kansas City (Missouri), Fargo (North Dakota) and Ferguson (Missouri) where police either joined the protests, hold banners in solidarity (“End Police Brutality”[!], “Standing in Solidarity”) or kneel in Floyd’s memory. While it would be criminal to have any illusions in the possibility to reform the capitalist police, such individual acts are important signs of demoralizations within the ranks of the enemy. Revolutionaries should call individual police to refuse orders directed against the popular uprising.

5. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) repeats that the most important tactics now are the *organizing of popular assemblies and the formation of*

## Books of the RCIT

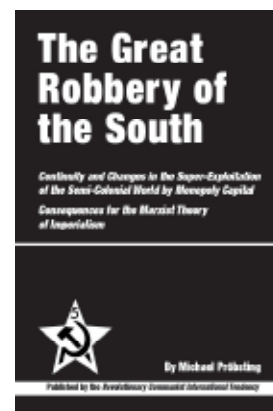
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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)



*committees of action in workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and universities.* Such committees should decide about the demands and the course of action. They should also elect delegates so that there can be a regional and national coordination. They should also demand from community and popular organizations, trade unions, the DSA etc. to unconditionally support the movement. Such assemblies should also form *armed self-defense committees* in order to defend the communities against the enemy in blue and to drive the police as much as possible out of the communities. Most importantly, the movement should orientate towards organizing a *general strike*.

6. In the RCIT statement published yesterday we already pointed to dramatic character of this popular uprising. We wrote that the *"quick developments have brought Minneapolis and other cities on the verge of a dual power situation"*. However, the spectacular events in the last 30 hours have resulted in a profound escalation of this explosive crisis so that we can state now that a *pre-revolutionary situation* has opened up in the U.S. Any further escalation, e.g. Trump ordering federal troops to impose a bloody crackdown could immediately open revolutionary situation and a civil war.

7. It is needless to say that these events have a profound significance not only for the U.S. but for the whole world. This is already reflected in the fact that thousands of people march in solidarity in London, Berlin, Copenhagen and many other cities. However, since the U.S. is a decaying but still the most powerful imperialist state, a pre-revolutionary development in the heart of the imperialist world order has by its very nature a profound global character. The next days and weeks will allow a more precise analysis. But what we can already say now is the following: after the global counter-revolutionary shock-and-awe offensive of the ruling class in the past 2-3 months under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen already a renewed popular uprising in Lebanon and Hong Kong. However, the current events in the U.S. are by far *the most significant strike of the masses against the global counter-revolutionary offensive*. This development is not surprising since this global counter-revolutionary offensive takes place within a *historic revolutionary period* characterized by the decline of capitalism and the acceleration of the contradictions between the states and classes. In such a period, sudden turns in the world situation are inevitable and reactionary attacks only prepare future political explosions. We have no doubt that the current events in the U.S. are not the last example for this development.

8. The RCIT has emphasized from the beginning of the current counter-revolutionary offensive that the lockdown in fact is not directed against the pandemic but rather as a preventive anti-democratic attack of the ruling class. We said that in order to fight a pandemic the popular masses do not need state repression but a serious health program (protective equipment, mass testing, free hospitalization, free mass testing, expansion of the public health sector under workers and popular control, etc.) We denounced the treacherous Lockdown Left which supported the lockdown and the anti-democratic banning of public assemblies and demonstrations. What we see now is a powerful confirmation of our analysis. Wherever the workers and oppressed want to fight for their rights, they have to break the lockdown regime and the so-called "so-

cial distancing" rules. This has been the case in Lebanon, Iraq, Hong Kong and the U.S. It is evident that the fighting masses are much more progressive than the opportunist Lockdown Left which adapts to the pressure of the liberal middle class and the reformist labor bureaucracy (which in turn adapts to sectors of the ruling class). The developments of the past 2-3 months are a powerful lesson: the Lockdown Left supports the counter-revolutionary offensive under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic. The militant sectors of the masses break and ignore the lockdown regime! The RCIT and all authentic revolutionaries are on the side of the fighting workers and oppressed and denounce the treacherous Lockdown Left.

9. Furthermore, the current events are also a powerful confirmation of the RCIT's slogan which we have elaborated in our documents. We said that given the dramatic shift of the ruling class towards repression and state bonapartism, the key slogan will be the *transformation of the state of emergency into a popular uprising*. The events of the past weeks in Lebanon Hong Kong and now the U.S. are a powerful confirmation that this slogan reflects the objective dynamic of the current period. Finally, we also point out that the mass protests in the U.S. (as well as in Hong Kong) confirm the RCIT's thesis that the democratic question is a key feature of the current class struggles. Naturally, such struggles are often connected – directly or indirectly – with economic issues.

10. Comrades, brothers and sisters! Two months ago, we published an Open Letter with the title *"Act Now because History is Happening Now!"* Can anyone doubt that this has been an accurate characterization of the current world situation and the corresponding tasks?! We call revolutionaries to unite and to join us in the most important task to build a Revolutionary World Party. Only such a party can finally organize an international socialist revolution and the liberation of humanity from exploitation and oppression! We desperately need such a party because, as we have seen, the majority of the so-called left opportunistically adapts to state bonapartism or to one or the other imperialist power (e.g. China, Russia, EU). We need an international organization, free from such opportunism, social-bonapartism and social-imperialism. And we need it NOW. Comrades, brothers and sisters, let us join hands in working for such a historic tasks! Join the RCIT!

*International Bureau of the RCIT*

# United States: Is a Bloody Counterrevolution Looming?

## For a general strike and self-defense committee to defend the popular uprising against a police-military crackdown!

*Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 2 June 2020*

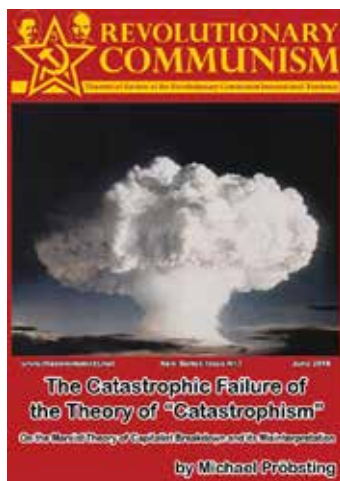
1. Events are moving fast. The popular uprising after the murder of George Floyd continues to spread throughout the U.S. Hundreds of thousands of people are marching in all major cities (as well as in many smaller towns) to protest against racism and police violence. There have been a number of shootings at demonstrations with several people killed. According to reports, four police officers in St Louis were also hit by gunfire. As a significant sign of cracks within the state apparatus, an increasing number of police officers are showing sympathy with the protests. Houston police chief Art Acevedo even told the President in an interview with CNN to “keep your mouth shut if you can’t be constructive. (...) This is not Hollywood but real life.” To a certain degree, the authorities have lost control over the situation, i.e. there exists a dual power situation. This is why the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* characterizes the current situation in the U.S. as *pre-revolutionary*.

2. The depth of the crisis is symbolized by the fact that the mass protests even take place close to the White House in Washington where a highly nervous Trump and his staff can hear the chants of the demonstrators. At one occasion, Secret Service agents rushed the President to a bunker which was designed for use in emergencies like terrorist attacks. When Trump wanted to visit a church near to the White House for a photo op with a bible in

his hand, police and National Guard soldiers had first to attack and disperse hundreds of protesters near the White House. As Trump spoke, tear gas canisters could be heard exploding.

3. Under these circumstances, the authorities try to clamp down the protests. Curfews have been imposed in more than 40 cities. The National Guard has been deployed in 23 states and Washington, D.C. However, this has not been enough to curb the protests until now. Trump has lambasted the governors for their “failure”. In addition, he announced: “As we speak, I am dispatching thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults and the wanton destruction of property. (...) If a city or state refuses to take the actions that are necessary to defend the life and property of their residents, then I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them.” It is said that Trump considers invoking the so-called *Insurrection Act*, an archaic law from 1807 that would allow Trump to deploy active-duty U.S. troops to crack down the nation-wide uprising.

4. The intervention of U.S. troops on the streets of New York, Los Angeles and Chicago against tens of thousands of demonstrators would be nothing but the opening of a nation-wide state of emergency resulting in an unprecedented massacre, a civil war from above. It would



### NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

## The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of “Catastrophism”

*By Michael Pröbsting, May 2018*

*On the Marxist Theory of Capitalist Breakdown and its Misinterpretation*

*by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its*

*“Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International”*

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

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format*

constitute a de-facto coup d'état by a widely detested and despised President. There can be no doubt that such a decision would provoke massive response, including armed resistance. Furthermore, it is a highly risky strategy since large sectors of the ruling class, and of the state apparatus in general, are opposed to this. This is partly because these sectors of the bourgeoisie fear the resulting civil war and partly because they are aware that Trump would utilize such a situation in order to safeguard his doomed presidency. Trump considers, not without reason, that a police-military de-facto coup might be the only chance to stay in power given the economic depression, mass unemployment, and his incompetent and reckless handling of the COVID-19 pandemic (as well as of many other issues). In short, setting the country on fire might be his only chance to politically survive and this modern version of the insane Emperor Nero might be determined to go ahead.

5. It would be utterly wrong to have any illusions in the Democratic Party. Let us not forget that the murder of George Floyd happened in Minnesota, a traditional Democratic heartland with a long history of police violence. And let us also not forget that thousands of black brothers and sisters have been killed also before Trump came to power. The Democratic Party is, like the Republicans, a party of the rich elite. It represents one faction of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Any vote for it at elections is utterly impermissible for progressive workers and oppressed.

6. Faced with an ongoing uprising and a looming police-military crackdown, the RCIT reiterates its proposals to activists that they demand from the community and popular organizations, trade unions, the DSA etc. to join the movement and to support the *Black Lives Matter* move-

ment. They should pressurize these organizations to support several key actions which are crucial in order to stop the looming counterrevolution. Such tactics are in particular:

a) *Organizing of popular assemblies and the formation of committees of action in workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and universities.* Such committees should decide about the demands and the course of action. They should also elect delegates so that there can be a regional and national coordination.

b) *Building of armed self-defense committees* in order to defend the communities against the enemy in blue and to drive the police as much as possible out of the communities.

c) *Organizing of a general strike.*

7. In addition, we consider it as important to intensify agitation among police, National Guard members and federal troops so that they refuse order to suppress the protests. Finally, it is urgent to organize a massive international solidarity movement, something which has already started spontaneously.

8. We call revolutionaries to join forces on the basis of a program of struggle. Let us build together a Revolutionary World Party which fights for the overthrow of the capitalist exploiter system which is the basis of racism and police violence. Such a party must be free from all opportunistic trends among the so-called left, like the support for state bonapartism (like the Lockdown policy) and the reactionary support for any imperialist Great Powers (e.g. China, Russia, EU). Comrades, brothers and sisters, let us join hands in working for such a historic tasks! Join the RCIT!

## Books of the RCIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

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



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International of Workers



# Why We Speak about a Pre-Revolutionary Situation in the U.S.

## A Discussion with American Comrades

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 4 June 2020

The popular uprising in the U.S. after the cold-blooded murder of George Floyd by the police is currently the key event of the world situation. Day for day, the masses are demonstrating on the streets, fighting the police, ignoring curfews imposed by the governors,... in short, the workers, youth and oppressed have set the country on fire. A growing number of police and National Guards show sympathy for the protestors and kneel with them. In response, governors in at least 29 states have already mobilized 20,000 members of the National Guard without, however, succeeding in clamping down the protests. A desperate Trump Administration threatens to use the 1807 Insurrection Act and to deploy the U.S. army in order to smash the uprising.

The RCIT has published several statements in the past days analyzing the developing situation and elaborating the appropriate tactics for the mass struggle.<sup>1</sup> In response we have received correspondences from a number of socialists both from within as well as from outside of the U.S. While various comrades agreed with us, others also expressed criticism about our assessment on the current situation as *pre-revolutionary*. In this article we will not repeat our comprehensive analysis of the popular uprising but rather limit ourselves on discussing several objections of comrades.

### What are the criteria of a (pre-)revolutionary situation?

We will start with a brief summary of the Marxist definition of a (pre-)revolutionary situation and why such a characterization applies to the U.S. today. Basically, Lenin and Trotsky named three criteria to characterize a situation as (pre-)revolutionary.

- a) *"It is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change"*;
- b) *"The lower classes don't want to live in the old way"*;
- c) *"There is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses"*.<sup>2</sup>

We think that all these criteria apply to the current situation in the U.S. The ruling class is deeply divided. In fact such divisions started already at least four years ago when Trump came to power. The decay of world capitalism since the beginning of a new historic period in 2008 and the resulting decline of U.S. imperialism, the absolute and undisputed hegemon within the capitalist camp for nearly seven decades, has provoked a deep crisis within the American monopoly bourgeoisie. While the majority of the ruling class wishes to continue the old way, a minority faction, represented by Trump and the ultra-reactionary camp around figures like Steve Bannon, recognizes the inability of the U.S. to do so. As a result they advocate a retreat from the position as a global leader of the world order and a turn towards protectionism and aggressive militarism abroad and an ultra-reactionary, white-supremacist assault on the working class and the oppressed at home. While this course has certain logic from the point of view of the ruling class, it suffers, among others, from the embarrassment with the orange hair that personally

represents accurately the moral decay of U.S. imperialism, a kind of historical tragedy and farce combined in a single person.

### The deep crisis of the political order in the U.S.

This deep crisis within the ruling class has resulted in a kind of domestic Cold War between both factions of the U.S. bourgeoisie. This crisis has massively accelerated now, as the U.S. face the worst economic slump since 1929, the highest unemployment since many decades, a rapidly deteriorating Cold War with its most important imperialist rival China, the criminal incompetence of the Trump Administration in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, etc. These inner divisions within the ruling class are even more escalating as the majority wing recognizes that Trump wants to utilize the current situation in order to militarize the country and to win the approaching elections with the help of the army on the streets. We finish this brief summary by pointing out that even a President Biden would face similar problems and it is simply impossible for the U.S. ruling class to return to the pre-2016 situation because American capitalism has dramatically weakened in the recent past (while China has become much stronger).

It is equally obvious that the popular masses are not willing to continue living in the old way. 36 million people are currently unemployed, many families – particularly among the black and Latino communities – face impoverishment in addition to everyday repression by a chronic racist as well as brutal police force. This is why the huge majority of the U.S. working class and oppressed communities support the current protests. This is visible from so many symbols of solidarity from ordinary people on the sidewalks applauding the demonstrators. The fact that even sectors of the repression apparatus show some kind of sympathy or at least understanding underlines a broad popular support beyond doubt.

Even the bourgeois media are forced to acknowledge this. According to a Reuters poll *"64% of American adults were 'sympathetic to people who are out protesting right now,' while 27% said they were not and 9% were unsure. (...) Even in rural and suburban areas largely unaffected by the demonstrations, most people expressed support. A little more than half of rural residents said they were sympathetic to the protesters, while seven out of 10 suburbanites agreed."*<sup>3</sup>

Another poll arrived at similar conclusions. *"A Morning Consult poll conducted on May 31 and June 1 – several days after demonstrations began in protest over Floyd's killing at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer who held a knee to Floyd's neck for nearly 9 minutes – finds that 54 percent of Americans either strongly support or somewhat support the protests that are going on. Conversely, just 22 percent say they somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the demonstrations. (...) 55 percent in the Morning Consult poll saying police violence is a bigger problem than violence against the police. Just 30 percent hold the opposite opinion."*<sup>4</sup>

And Newsweek, a well-known magazine of the capitalist establishment, published a poll which did not only show

similar figures of popular support for the protests. It also reports that *“a majority of Americans, 54 percent, believe that burning down a Minneapolis police precinct building following the death of George Floyd was justified.”*<sup>5</sup>

Finally, it is also evident that there is *“a considerable increase in the activity of the masses”*. Hundreds of thousands are marching in hundreds of cities – despite police repression, 11 persons have been already killed, and a curfew in 40 cities. When has such a large scale national movement spreading even to small towns ever taken place in the history of the U.S.?!

One of the clearest signs of a pre-revolutionary situation is the cracks within the repression apparatus. There have been numerous examples of police kneeling with protests (a symbol introduced by the great Colin Kaepernick), joining demonstrators or even holding banners in solidarity.

Another highly significant development are reports from Veterans and GI rights organizations that a growing number of National Guard and active-duty GIs are refusing to deploy to U.S. cities rising up against police-perpetrated killings.<sup>6</sup> It is not surprising that under such circumstances a number of Generals, including the Secretary of Defense Esper, are not very enthusiastic in deploying the army in U.S. cities. Cracks within the ranks of the army and the police are a well-known sign of (pre-)revolutionary situations in history. In summary, we think that our characterization of the current situation in the U.S. as (pre-)revolutionary is pretty accurate.

### Where is the organized workers movement?

What are the main arguments of comrades who have criticized our characterization? First, comrades object that the organized working class, i.e. organizations of the workers movement like trade unions, has not joined the struggle. Another, related, objection is that the state of political and economic organization of the working class is very low.

Both observations are undoubtedly true. However, we think that this criticism does not invalidate our characterization of the current situation in the U.S. as pre-revolutionary. Why? First, the trade unions organize only a small minority of the workers in the U.S. In total, only 10.3% of the workers belong to a union. In the public sector the share is 33.6% but in the private sector it is only 6.2%.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the trade unions in the U.S. are particularly conservative and connected to the monopoly bourgeoisie – in particular the Democratic Party. Hence, it is not surprising at all that the union don't join a militant mass movement from the beginning.

History teaches us that this is not an exceptional development but has happened many times. In France in May 1968, the trade unions joined the struggle reluctantly only late in mid-May – after weeks of mass struggles and barricades. Nevertheless, the mass movement which was started by the youth had provoked a revolutionary situation already before the unions joined the struggle.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, we have seen the Arab Revolution in 2011 – and also the second wave in 2019 – where the trade unions mostly didn't play a significant role. Here too, the youth played a leading role. However, only the pro-Stalinist left denies the revolutionary character of these events.<sup>9</sup>

Let us also add the example of France in 2018/19 where the spontaneous movement of the Yellow Vest started tre-

mendous mass mobilizations resulting in numerous confrontations with the police. The CGT joined these struggles only belatedly and mostly only on a local level.<sup>10</sup>

In summary, the unions are often dominated by corrupt bureaucrats who are linked to the bosses and their parties. This does not deny the fact that these institutions are important and that revolutionaries have to work inside them in order to mobilize the rank and file members against the bureaucratic leadership. But to judge the revolutionary character of mass struggles by the participation of the unions betrays an utter conservative approach which is not useful for revolutionaries.

As a matter of fact it is a typical sign of any spontaneous mass movement that the youth are its most advance, most militant component.

An even more extreme version of such a conservative approach is the argument that the situation in the U.S. could not be characterized as pre-revolutionary because there exists nothing close to a workers party or even a revolutionary party. Again, we agree that building such a party is a crucial task and we have emphasized this again and again. However, history has shown repeatedly that the popular masses do not wait for others to build a party but enter the arena of class struggle when they can't bear any longer the exploitation and oppression.

This is particularly true in the current situation where large sectors of the opportunist left and the trade union leaderships have joined the reactionary bandwagon of state bonapartism and supported the anti-democratic Lockdown policy of large sectors of the ruling class. As the RCIT has explained in numerous documents this Lockdown policy is utterly reactionary as it forces large sectors of the working class and the oppressed to stay at home and as it bans the fundamental right to public assembly and to demonstrate. Hence, the Lockdown Left and the union bureaucrats did not call the masses to fight on the streets against the mass sacking, against the wage cuts, against the bosses and governments failure to provide people with protective equipment against the Corona Virus etc.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the current popular uprising in the U.S. – as well as those in Lebanon, Iraq<sup>12</sup> and Hong Kong<sup>13</sup> – they all are taking place against, in violation of the Lockdown and “social distancing” rules which the ruling classes have imposed in the past months! In other words, the advanced sectors of the working class and the youth understand much better and much earlier than the opportunist left and union bureaucrats that they must ignore, that they must break the rules of the reactionary Lockdown regime if they want to fight for their rights. The workers and youth today fight because they do the opposite of what the Lockdown Left all over the world told them to do in the past months: they don't *“Stay at Home”* but they *“March on the Streets”!* Undoubtedly, the masses are much more progressive than the Lockdown Left!<sup>14</sup>

Of course, we are aware – and have said so many times – that the construction of an authentic revolutionary party is crucial in order to transform a revolutionary situation into a successful revolution. However, revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situations can and often have emerged without the existence of a revolutionary party or even a workers party (see e.g. the Arab Revolutions in the past decade).

### On Looting

Finally, another objection which has been brought forward against our assessment on the current situation as pre-revolutionary is the fact that a number of lootings have taken place. Hence, there is the argument that “a serious criminal element is taking advantage of the movement in some of the major cities”. Again, we think that this objection is not valid.

Aspontaneous mass uprising often involves some elements of looting. We have seen a similar phenomenon in Britain in 2011 during the August Uprising.<sup>15</sup> Of course, looting is not something which revolutionaries advocate. However, one has to judge things concretely. First, we strongly deny that looting is a key characteristic of the current popular uprising (except for those who trust Fox News). No, this is a third-rank, hardly relevant feature of this mass movement. The main characteristics are huge mobilizations, the breaking of the curfew, the fighting against the police and the burning of police cars and headquarters, the fraternization of some elements of the police and the National Guards, the support of large sectors of the population, etc. Secondly, one has to differentiate. Looting of banks, betting shops or of malls is not the same like looting a small shop. The later harms one part of the community that has to be won over to support the protests. Thirdly, one has to understand that large sectors of the masses suffered terrible in the past months since the economic depression – worsened by the Lockdown so beloved by the opportunist left – produced deep poverty for many millions. It is not surprising if under such circumstances people hope to get something back by looting a shop.

Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar rightly emphasized in a op-ed for the *Los Angeles Times* that one must not lose a sense of proportion when criticizing some incidents of looting. He wrote that “Those who criticize the looting and fires, saying that those actions are hurting the protesters’ cause aren’t wrong, but they’re not right, either. (...) “The black community is used to the institutional racism inherent in education, the justice system and jobs. (...) So, maybe the black community’s main concern right now isn’t whether

protesters are standing three or six feet apart or whether a few desperate souls steal some T-shirts or even set a police station on fire, but whether their sons, husbands, brothers and fathers will be murdered by cops or wannabe cops just for going on a walk, a jog, a drive. Or whether being black means sheltering at home for the rest of their lives because the racism virus infecting the country is more deadly than COVID-19.”<sup>16</sup>

It seems to us that this basketball star has a better understanding of the situation than many so-called leftists! In any case, revolutionaries must not fall into the trap of underestimating the revolutionary potential of a mass uprising because of some incidents of looting.

### Agreement on tactics is decisive

We conclude by emphasizing the following. We think that our characterization of the current situation in the U.S. as pre-revolutionary is accurate. However, we don’t believe that for revolutionaries the main issue today should be the exact designation of the current situation. What is more important is the issue what should be the tactics of Marxists today.

The RCIT advocates in the current situation the following tactics as crucial in order to move the struggle to a higher stage.

a) *Organizing of popular assemblies and the formation of committees of action in workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and universities.* Such committees should decide about the demands and the course of action. They should also elect delegates so that there can be a regional and national coordination.

b) *Building of armed self-defense committees* in order to defend the communities against the enemy in blue and to drive the police as much as possible out of the communities.

c) *Organizing of a general strike.*

In addition, we consider it as important to intensify agitation among police, National Guard members and federal troops so that they refuse order to suppress the protests. Finally, it is urgent to organize a massive international solidarity movement, something which has already started

## 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)*

spontaneously.

For the RCIT, it is crucial to agree on the key tactics, not so much on the exact designation of the current situation. We think that large agreement of the main tactics is crucial in order to come closer and to elaborate a joint program of struggle for the current stage of the class struggle in the U.S. Revolutionaries in the U.S. as well as abroad should join forces in this historic situation in order to advance the building of a Revolutionary World Party fighting for the overthrow of the capitalist exploiter system. Such a party must be free from all opportunistic trends among the so-called left, like the support for state bonapartism (like the Lockdown policy) and the reactionary support for any imperialist Great Powers (e.g. China, Russia, EU). We appeal to all comrades to join hands in working for such a historic task!

### Footnotes

1 See the following RCIT statements: United States: Is a Bloody Counterrevolution Looming? For a general strike and self-defense committee to defend the popular uprising against a police-military crackdown! 2 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/is-a-bloody-counterrevolution-loom-ing-in-the-us/>; A Pre-Revolutionary Situation Has Opened Up in the U.S., 31 May 2020, <https://www.thecommu-nists.net/worldwide/north-america/a-pre-revolutionary-situa-tion-has-opened-up-in-the-u-s/>; USA: Justice for George Floyd! Workers and youth of all color: unite in struggle! For self-defense committees against the police! Organize a general strike now! 30 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/usa-justice-for-george-floyd/>

2 V. I. Lenin: The Collapse of the Second International (1915), in: LCW 21, pp. 213-214

3 Grant Smith, Joseph Ax, Chris Kahn: Exclusive: Most Americans sympathize with protests, disapprove of Trump's response - Reuters/Ipsos, June 3, 2020 / <https://www.reuters.com/ar-ticle/us-minneapolis-police-poll-exclusive/exclusive-most-amer-icans-sympathize-with-protests-disapprove-of-trumps-re-sponse-reuters-ipsos-idUSKBN239347>

4 Chris Walker: Majority of Americans Support Uprisings, Disagree With Trump, Poll Finds, Truthout, June 2, 2020 <https://truthout.org/articles/majority-of-americans-support-up-risings-disagree-with-trump-poll-finds/>

5 Matthew Impelli: 54 Percent of Americans Think Burning Down Minneapolis Police Precinct Was Justified After George Floyd's Death, 3 June 2020, <https://www.news-week.com/54-americans-think-burning-down-minneapolis-po-lice-precinct-was-justified-after-george-floyds-1508452>

6 Candice Bernd: As Trump Threatens to Send Military Into Cities, Some GIs Refuse to Comply, Truthout, June 3, 2020 <https://truthout.org/articles/as-trump-threatens-to-send-mili-tary-into-cities-some-gis-refuse-to-comply/>

7 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Union Members Summary, January 22, 2020 <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/un-ion2.nr0.htm>

8 See on this e.g. "Everything was possible" – France, May 1968, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/france-may-1968/>; see also: Ernest Mandel: The Lessons of May 1968, New Left Review I/52, November–December 1968, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/mandel/1968/07/lessons-may68.html>

9 The RCIT has published numerous booklets, statements, and articles on the Arab Revolution since 2011 which can be found on this sub-page of our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>. On our documents on the Syrian Revolution see the special sub-section of this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/af-rica-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolu-tion/>

10 Our latest statement on France is: For an Indefinite Gen-eral Strike in All Sectors! Stop the neoliberal pension "reform" and bring down the Macron government! 12 December 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/france-for-an-indefinite-general-strike-in-all-sectors/>

11 The RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 crisis extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February we have published nearly four dozen documents which are all collected at a special sub-page in our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/world-wide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes pro-voke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cov-er-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>; see also our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counter-revolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-glob-al-counterrevolution/>; see as well the essay by Michael Pröbsting: The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bona-partist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>.

12 See on this e.g. the latest RCIT statement: Lebanon and Iraq: Forward with the Popular Uprising! 12 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/forward-with-the-popular-uprising-in-lebanon-and-iraq/>

13 See on this e.g. the latest RCIT statement: China / Hong Kong: Down with the National Security Law! Organize and mobilize against the looming counter-revolutionary onslaught by the Stalinist-Capitalist regime! 23 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-hong-kong-down-with-the-national-security-law/>.

14 For a more detailed discussion of the failure of the Lockdown Left see e.g. chapter V in Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution; see also by the same author COVID-19 and the Lockdown Left: The Example of PO-DEMOS and Stalinism in Spain, 24 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-lockdown-left-podemos-and-stalinism-in-spain/>; Social-Bonapartism in Argentina. The Partido Obrero (Tendencia) of Jorge Altamira supports the State of Emergency, 29 April 2020, <https://www.thecommu-nists.net/worldwide/latin-america/social-bonapartism-in-argen-tina/>; When Ultra-Leftism marries Social-Bonapartism and Gives Birth to "Post-Marxist" Obscurantism. A reply to the CWG/ILTT, 5 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-when-ultra-leftism-marries-social-bonapartism/>

15 On the RCIT's analysis and tactics during the August Uprising in Britain in 2011 see: Nina Gunić and Michael Pröbsting: These are not "riots" – this is an uprising of the poor in the cities of Britain! The strategic task: From the uprising to the revolution!, 10.8.2011, <http://www.rkob.net/newenglish-lan-guage-site-1/uprising-of-the-poor-inbritain/>; Michael Pröbsting: The August uprising of the poor and nationally and racially oppressed in Britain: What would a revolutionary organisation have done?, 18.8.2011, <http://www.rkob.net/new-english-lan-guage-site-1/august-uprising-what-should-have-been-done/>; Bericht der RKO-Delegation über ihren Aufenthalt in London 2011, <http://www.rkob.net/international/berichteuprising-in-gb/>; Michael Pröbsting: Britain: "The left" and the August Uprising, 1 September 2011, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/brit-ain-left-and-the-uprising/>

16 Alicia Lee: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar defends protests and says racism is deadlier than Covid-19 in powerful op-ed, CNN, May 31, 2020 <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/31/us/kareem-ab-dul-jabbar-la-times-op-ed-trnd/index.html>

# Arming of the Popular Masses or Reforming the Police?

## A discussion of strategies like “Defund the Police”, “Community Control over the Police” and “Autonomous Zones” in the context of the current popular uprising

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19 June 2020

### Introduction

In the following essay we will discuss some key issues of the current popular uprising in the U.S. against racism and police violence. In particular we will deal with the question of the character of the capitalist police and if it can be reformed. Following from this, we will discuss several questions of strategy and tactic which are crucial for the struggle against the capitalist state apparatus.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) defends the Marxist position that the capitalist police are an organic part of the class society and, hence, that it can not be reformed. This does not mean that socialists should take an indifferent position on demands which call for concrete reforms. But it is a dangerous illusion to believe that there could be police within the capitalist society which does not serve the interests of the ruling class, i.e. which does not oppress the working class and the popular masses. Hence, the strategic goal must not be to advocate the illusion of a non-racist, non-oppressive police in a capitalist society. The task is rather to prepare and organize for the socialist revolution in which the working class and the oppressed will overthrow the bourgeoisie, destroy the repressive state apparatus and open the road towards a classless society.

From this follows the main conclusion that the key task of socialists has to be working towards the creation of mass organs of struggle in order to advance the struggle against the capitalist polity. This is why the RCIT advocates the formation of workers and popular assemblies in workplaces and neighborhoods as well as the creation of armed self-defense guards. It is only such organs under the control of the masses which can defend the interests of the masses. Most importantly, revolutionaries should unite on the basis of a program of action – for the U.S. as well as the international class struggle – and work towards the creation of a revolutionary party.

### Brief summary of our assessment of the current situation in the U.S.

The cold-blood murder of George Floyd by the police has provoked an unprecedented mass movement against racism and police violence. Since the end of May, the U.S. is hit by a popular uprising which has spread not only to all major cities but even to small towns and rural areas. These protests show no sign of ebbing, even less so since videos of another killing of a black man, Rayshard Brooks, by the police in Atlanta on 12 June, have become widely known and provoked additional outrage.

These mass protests have met a brutal response by the highly militarized police and President Trump continues threatening to send the army in order to “dominate the streets”, i.e. to smash the popular uprising with brute force. In response, sectors of the movement fight back and in some cases, police buildings and cars have been burnt.

There have been also some cases of looting. The popular outrage about police violence is so massive that there have been even a number of incidents where individual members of the police as well as the National Guard showed sympathy with the protests. Reflecting the highly volatile situation, 80% of registered voters say that things are out of control in the U.S. according to a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll. <sup>1</sup> This is without doubt the largest and most significant mass protest in the U.S. since 1968.

The RCIT has elaborated a number of statements and articles on this inspiring mass movement. <sup>2</sup> We concluded that by the end of May, a *pre-revolutionary situation* has opened up in the U.S. – a situation where the ruling class is deeply divided, the state apparatus fractured and the masses are no longer willing to tolerate the prevailing system of racism and police violence. This uprising has initiated a global wave of protests and is an important strike against the ongoing reactionary offensive of the ruling class under the cover of the COVID-19 crisis. <sup>3</sup>

In our documents, we argued for a number of tactics in order to advance the struggle. In particular we emphasized the necessity for the masses:

- a) *to organize in popular assemblies and committees of action in workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and universities.* Such committees should decide about the demands and the course of action. They should also elect delegates so that there can be a regional and national coordination;
- b) *to build armed self-defense guards* in order to defend the communities against the enemy in blue and to drive the police as much as possible out of the communities;
- c) *to organize a general strike.*

In addition, we consider it as important to intensify agitation among police, National Guard members and federal troops so that they refuse order to suppress the protests.

We are fully aware that there exist major obstacles for moving ahead in the struggle. The masses lack political experience and self-organization and, above all, an authentic workers party. In short, what is missing are mass organizations which are independent of any faction of the ruling class. As a result, the working class and the oppressed are dominated by organizations – the AFL-CIO, various community organizations, etc. – which are thoroughly bureaucratized and closely linked with the Democratic Party, one of the two major parties of America’s imperialist bourgeoisie.

Hence, the task of revolutionaries in the U.S. is to help the vanguard of the masses to learn the necessary lessons, to participate in the mass struggles, and to advance the formation of organs of popular self-organization. Most importantly, revolutionaries should advocate the formation of an independent workers party for which they should argue for a program of socialist revolution. In order to effectively fight for such a program, revolutionaries need to unite in an international Marxist organization and operate under a joint discipline. This is what the RCIT is fighting for.

## Growing mistrust against the militarized police

A crucial result of the current mass protests is a significant change in the attitude of sectors of the masses towards the police. While there has been traditionally a large public support for the police in the past, this has substantially dropped in the recent past. This is reflected in the huge support for the mass protests which has also led to a “moral crisis” among a number of police and members of the National Guards.

This process is also confirmed by actual polls. Unlike in the past, the majority of the U.S. population views the police as the major problem and not the “violent protestors”. According to a Morning Consult poll, “55 percent [say] police violence is a bigger problem than violence against the police. Just 30 percent hold the opposite opinion.”<sup>4</sup>

Another poll found that a majority of voters (51%) think that killings like those of George Floyd “are part of a broader problem”. Much less, 37% of voters, “think these killings are isolated incidents”.<sup>5</sup>

The same poll found also that “while a plurality of voters (48 percent) reported that the events of the past few days didn’t change their level of trust in the police, those who reported that they now trusted the police less (37 percent) was more than double those who said they now trusted the police more (16 percent).”

Related to this is a broad support to create a new non-police first responder agency, like emergency medical services or firefighters, to deal with issues related to addiction or mental illness.

In short, we see that there is a growing recognition among significant sectors of the masses that the problem is not a few “bad cops” but the current system of the police itself.

## Proposals for reforming the police

Against such a background of a developing mass consciousness which is critical of the police, some strategies have gained popularity in recent weeks. A particular popular conception is the demand to “defund the police”. This concept, advocated by progressive activists for years, calls local and state administrations to cut law enforcement budgets and to shift resources to funding of vital social and health services.

There are various strategies within this broad concept with some merely opposing police budget increases while others advocating mass reductions. More radical forces advocate full defunding as a step toward abolishing police forces. Some initiatives are tied to the fight to close prisons.

The popular demand to defund the police is a progressive reaction to the extraordinary expansion and militarization of the American police apparatus in past decades. According to data compiled by the *Urban Institute*, state and local governments spent \$115 billion on policing in 2017 – almost a tripling since 1977.<sup>6</sup> This is bigger than the military budget of nearly every other country in the world, as an observer noted.<sup>7</sup> In a number of major cities, the police budget dwarves those for education, housing, and other crucial services. According to a report from the *Center for Popular Democracy* published in 2017, the following cities spent a huge share of their general fund budget 2017 to the Police Department: Los Angeles (25.7%), At-

lanta (30%), Detroit (30%), Minneapolis (35.8%), Chicago (38.6%), and Oakland (41.2%).<sup>8</sup> An actual report indicates that these figures have increased even more since then. Los Angeles’s proposed police budget for 2021 is \$1.8 billion – more than half of the city’s total spending for the year. New York City’s annual police budget is a whopping \$6 billion, which is more than the city spends on health, homeless services, youth development, and workforce development combined.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the U.S. police forces have been massively militarized in the past two decades. Based on the so-called *1033 program*, the Pentagon transferred military equipment of over \$7.4 billion since the program’s inception in 1997 to more than 8,000 law enforcement agencies.<sup>10</sup> It is also well known that many police departments are trained by Israeli specialists who transmit their bloody counter-insurgency experience in suppressing the Palestinian people.<sup>11</sup>

Related to this, there has been a huge increase of using surveillance technologies – from facial recognition to military-grade drones – to identify and track protesters by local, state and federal law enforcement organizations. “Police use of these national security-style surveillance techniques – justified as cost-effective techniques that avoid human bias and error – has grown hand-in-hand with the increased militarization of law enforcement.”<sup>12</sup>

Given these extraordinary figures and the evident brutality of an over-confident police in terrorizing the oppressed masses, it is hardly surprising that people want a reduction of the police funding and a shift towards the social and health sector.

Unsurprisingly, Joe Biden and the whole Democratic establishment reject this demand.<sup>13</sup> The Democratic Party is an integral part of the U.S. ruling class and has always been so. It would be foolish to believe that it is only Trump or the Republican Party which stands for racism and police brutality.<sup>14</sup> Racial inequality, the killing of about 1,000 or more people by the police every year, the extraordinary over-representation of Afro-Americans among the prison population – all this started long before Trump and it will not end with him. It is an inseparable part of capitalism.

Even Bernie Sanders, the progressive figurehead of the bourgeois Democratic Party, does not endorse this slogan. Quite the opposite, demonstrating his pro-capitalist outlook disguised by some socialist phrases, Sanders supports a strong capitalist police.<sup>15</sup> “I think we want to redefine what police departments do, give them the support they need to make their jobs better defined. So I do believe that we need well-trained, well-educated, and well-paid professionals in police departments. Anyone who thinks that we should abolish all police departments in America, I don’t agree.”<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, the popular uprising puts enormous pressure on the ruling class – in particular on the local and state level where the mass protests are particularly strong. In Los Angeles, city officials have proposed cutting up to \$150 million from the police department’s budget. Mayor Eric Garcetti, a Democrat, promised to use such freed up money “so we can invest in jobs, in health, in education and in healing.”<sup>17</sup> New York City’s Mayor Bill de Blasio said that the city would move funding from the NYPD to youth initiatives and social services without giving details. Julia Salazar, a New York state senator and supporter of the reformist *Democratic Socialists of America* (DSA) expressed

optimism: *“To see legislators who aren’t even necessarily on the left supporting at least a significant decrease in New York police department funding is really very encouraging.”*

The most radical development has taken place in Minneapolis – the city where George Floyd was murdered and where the popular uprising started. In an attempt to pacify the mass protests, a majority of the members of the Minneapolis City Council voted to disband the city’s police department. *“It is clear that our system of policing is not keeping our communities safe,”* Lisa Bender, the council president, said. *“Our efforts at incremental reform have failed, period.”* Another city councilmember said in a tweet that the city would *“dramatically rethink how we approach public safety and emergency response.”*<sup>18</sup> We note in passing that a radical step like announcing the dissolution of the Minneapolis Police Department reflects the extremely volatile nature of the current phase – a profound confirmation of the RCIT’s assessment of the present situation as a *“pre-revolutionary”*.

An important result of the popular uprising is a movement in the education sector to stop collaboration with the police. In recent days, the school board in Minneapolis voted to end its contract with the police department. The University of Minnesota has also pledged to stop working with police.<sup>19</sup> Naturally, this is a highly encouraging development as it undermines social control of youth by the repression apparatus.

### Marxism and the capitalist police

How should Marxists approach initiatives like the increasingly popular campaign to *“defund the police”*? In our opinion, one should recognize both the progressive sentiment behind the popular support for this idea as well as the limitations of this campaign.

We need to start with assessing the fundamental character of the police. As everyone knows, police exists in all countries and, historically, have always existed within capitalist class societies. As we have elaborated somewhere else in more detail, the capitalist system of exploitation of the labor force could not exist without a state apparatus ensuring and enforcing the social and political framework conditions.<sup>20</sup>

Hence, the state in capitalism is not *“neutral”* and can not be such. Its purpose and, hence, its whole inner structure is designed according to the necessity to function as an instrument of the ruling class. This is why Karl Marx characterized the role of the state as a *“machinery of class domination”*.<sup>21</sup> Or to put it in the famous words of Lenin – the leader of the Russian Revolution in 1917: *“The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class.”*<sup>22</sup>

In other words, the objective role of the capitalist state does not depend on the specific parties and persons in government. As they say, Presidents come and go but the police, the army and the judiciary remain the same. This apparatus is inextricably linked with the capitalist class and particularly its top layer. Just look at the politicians who switch in their careers between political office, business, security and education sector (or who are closely connected via family and friends).

In summary, the capitalist state in the U.S. (as well as in all other imperialist countries) defends the interests of

the monopoly bourgeoisie both against its domestic enemies (i.e. the working class and the oppressed) as well as against its foreign enemies (Great Power rivals as well as oppressed people in the Global South).<sup>23</sup>

It is certainly true that the capitalist state in the U.S. has a brutal history (e.g. the genocide against the Native Americans, slavery and Apartheid against the black minority, it has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, etc.) It is also particularly violent today. In 2015, the British newspaper *The Guardian* calculated that the police in the U.S. killed more people in the first 24 days of that year than the police of England and Wales, combined, over the past 24 years!<sup>24</sup>

Likewise, police repression and criminalization is a key instrument of the ruling class in the U.S. to intimidate and control its population. At least 77 million U.S. adults have criminal records, including nearly 7 million currently in prison or jail or on probation or parole. This means that America now houses roughly the same number people with criminal records as it does four-year college graduates. Regardless of race or gender, researchers estimate that by age 23 nearly one in three Americans will have been arrested.<sup>25</sup>

However, it would be wrong to assume that this is some kind of American exceptionalism. Just look to other imperialist states like China (e.g. the barbaric oppression of the Muslim Uyghurs with special concentration camps or the ongoing police violence of the democratic movement in Hong Kong).<sup>26</sup> Or take Russia where the Chechen people have experienced two wars of extermination in 1994-96 and 1999-2009 and a bloody ongoing occupation since then.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the police and military in Latin America or Africa can hardly be called more *“human”* than their U.S. colleagues.

It is true that the police in the U.S. kill more people than in Western Europe. But the reason for this is not a particularly trigger-happy mentality of the Americans (just think about the barbarous history of the ruling class in Western Europe marked by colonialism and fascism with myriads of million victims). The reason is rather that the class contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the workers and oppressed in the U.S. is sharper, more explosive and less mitigated by reformist party and union bureaucrats.

The history of the U.S. also demonstrates that the oppressive role of the police, army and judiciary is unimpaired from the personal composition of the local, state or federal government. Centuries of slavery, extermination of Native Americans, strike-breaking operations of the police, military interventions of the U.S. abroad have proven this beyond doubt. Numerous studies on racial inequality in the past decades have also shown that racism is inextricably embedded in capitalism.

To give just one example we refer to a well-known study published by the *The Sentencing Project* some years ago: *“Racial minorities are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to face stiff sentences. African-American males are six times more likely to be incarcerated than white males and 2.5 times more likely than Hispanic males. If current trends continue, one of every three black American males born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime, as can one of every six Latino males – compared to one of every seventeen white males. Racial and ethnic disparities among women*

are less substantial than among men but remain prevalent.”<sup>28</sup>

In summary, Marxists characterize the capitalist state as organically repressive and racist in the service of the ruling class. It can not be reformed. It is not a neutral institution where one only needs to remove the “bad cops”. It is by its very nature repressive, anti-people and racist. Hence, it has to be smashed as the Marxist classics have always emphasized in contrast to various reformist ideologues. Lenin, for example, stated: “*The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine.*”<sup>29</sup>

Likewise, it is a fatal illusion to imagine that capitalism could be overcome by peaceful means. Just look how violent the police reacts already now when they are faced with peaceful mass demonstrations which only protest against the cold-blood killing of unarmed black people! What will they do if people demand more, if they want to take wealth from the super-rich in order to ensure decent living conditions for the masses, if they want to disarm the killer cops, and if they want to get rid of a ruling class which oppresses and exploits them?!

History has demonstrated this fundamental truth again and again. The American Revolution 1775-83, the French Revolution 1789-94, the revolutionary crisis in Europe in 1830 and 1848, the Taiping Rebellion in China 1851-64, the American civil war 1861-65, the Paris Commune in 1871, the Russian Revolutions in 1905 and 1917, the liberation of Latin America from the Spanish conquistadors, the anti-colonial struggle of the African and Asian peoples against the imperialist occupiers, etc. – no real progress has ever been achieved without a violent struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor!

It is only revisionist pseudo-Marxism – like the Stalinists, left social democrats or some self-proclaimed Trotskyists (e.g. CWI, ISA, IMT, etc.) – which preaches that a peaceful transformation to socialism would be possible. Ignoring the fundamental and irreversible class character of the state, these ideologues claim that the parliament and other institution of the bourgeois state apparatus could be utilized for the socialist transformation. Alan Woods, for example, the leading theoretician of the “*International Marxist Tendency*”, claims: “*A peaceful transformation of society would be entirely possible if the trade union and reformist leaders were prepared to use the colossal power in their hands to change society.*”<sup>30</sup> This is even more so because, according to Woods, bourgeois institutions of the capitalist state could become instruments of socialist transformation. Hence, in the dream world of the IMT, a revolution could even take place via parliamentary elections! “*Under these circumstances, there is not the slightest question, not only that the revolution in Portugal could have been carried out peacefully, but that it could have been done through parliament.*”<sup>31</sup>

In contrast, the RCIT defends the classic position of Marxism that a socialist transformation is only possible if the working class arms itself and smashes the bourgeois state machinery in a violent revolution. Or to put it in the words of Lenin: “*The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution.*”<sup>32</sup>

For these reasons we also reject the petty-bourgeois pacifist position opposing the people’s right to bear arms. This right – the so-called *Second Amendment* of the US Constitution – states that “*a well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and*

*bear arms shall not be infringed.*” Naturally, self-defence guards based on popular assemblies have the responsibility to make sure that reactionary muddleheads and violent wackos don’t possess any arms. But the pacifists’ opposition simply means that the police – i.e. the armed thugs of the ruling class – have the monopoly of force. And such a monopoly would be highly disadvantageous for the liberation struggle of the workers and oppressed.

### Are police “workers in uniform”?

Related to the assessment of the bourgeois state apparatus is the question of the class character of the police. In contrast to Marxists, various reformist and centrist tendencies consider the police as “*workers in uniform*”. As a consequence, these forces support demands improving the material conditions of the police (i.e. making them more effective). Likewise, they argue that trade unions of the repression apparatus (e.g. police, prison guards, army, etc.) should be part of the labor movement. As the quote above shows Bernie Sanders supports such demands for “*well-paid police*”. So does the DSA. The same is true for various pseudo-Trotskyist organizations like *Socialist Alternative* (SAI) with Seattle City Councilor Kshama Sawant as its highest profile public representative (it is the largest section of the *International Socialist Alternative*, which split from the CWI in summer 2019), the *Independent Socialist Group* (the U.S. section of the Britain-based CWI led by Peter Taffee) or the LIT-CI (whose most prominent section is the PSTU in Brazil).

Marxists strongly refuse the idea that police would be “*workers in uniform*”. The only purpose of the police is to control and oppress the working class and popular masses. Neither of them directly or indirectly creates or distributes value in any form. They are paid parasites and thugs of capitalism, i.e. anti-proletarian forces. They are part of the middle layers and not of the working class. It doesn’t matter if a police man or woman initially comes from the working class. Not the past but the present and the foreseeable future are decisive for the character of such forces. This is why the RCIT considers the idea that police would be “*workers in uniform*” as ridiculous and dangerous. Trotsky once rightly commented: “*The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers from among Social Democratic workers is absolutely meaningless. Consciousness is determined by environment even in this instance. The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker. Of late years these policemen have had to do much more fighting with revolutionary workers than with Nazi students. Such training does not fail to leave its effects. And above all: every policeman knows that though governments may change, the police remain.*”<sup>33</sup>

This is not a purely theoretical difference but has profound practical consequences. Revolutionaries strive to weaken the repressive apparatus. They do not support it and they don’t try to strengthen it. Strengthening the police only means strengthening the machinery which controls and kills black and other oppressed people. Of course, when there are signs that police or soldiers refuse to suppress the popular masses, we are not indifferent but welcome – and try to support – such developments. In fact, we have seen such developments in a number of cities in the course of the current uprising. Fraternalization with police or sol-



diers when they are willing to oppose anti-people violence is legitimate and useful. But as long as the police carry out the instructions by their commanders – which is always the case outside of revolutionary upheavals – they are an enemy of the working class and the oppressed.

Hence, revolutionaries also strongly oppose the presence of police, prison guards, or army unions in the ranks of the workers movement. These are reactionary forces as can be seen when such unions defend the “rights” of killer cops. Hence, the RCIT calls for the immediate expulsion of police, prison guards, or army unions from the AFL-CIO or any other trade union federation. Likewise, we refuse to support demands for higher wages, better equipment, etc. for the police.

Shamefully, various reformists and centrists advocate a pro-police line. The long-time leader of the Austin (Texas) branch of the DSA, was for years an organizer for a cop “union,” the *Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas* (CLEAT). CLEAT is Texas’s largest police union which represents 21,000 cops.<sup>34</sup> SALT’s Kshama Sawant voted in 2018 on the Seattle city council to confirm the new police chief Carmen Best.<sup>35</sup> The Socialist Party, the CWI’s leading section in England & Wales, has proudly announced for years that Brian Caton, the general secretary of POA – Britain’s prison guards’ “trade union” – is one of its members.<sup>36</sup>

#### Armed self-defense guards controlled by popular assemblies

Starting from the Marxist assessment of the bourgeois state in general and its police in particular socialists must have no illusion in a peaceful transformation of capitalism or the possibility to reform the police. Only a socialist

revolution via the armed insurrection of the working class and the oppressed will create a classless society without racism and police violence. Hence, the strategy of revolutionaries is focused not on illusionary hopes of a non-racist and non-violent police but rather on building mass organizations based in workplaces and neighborhoods which are capable to fight against the bosses and their police.

In fact, the oppressed have always spontaneously strived towards organizing and arming themselves when they rose up against the rulers. This has been the case in all revolutionary upheavals. In the U.S. itself the uprising of the black people in the 1960s resulted in the formation of the *Black Panther Party for Self-Defense*.

The task of revolutionaries is to explain the masses the necessity of building such popular assemblies and armed self-defense guards and to help them in the formation of such wherever it is possible. Socialists should agitate that the masses should not hope that “others” – “good” establishment politicians, “good” cops, etc. – save them but that they must rely only on their own efforts. As the old saying goes: “*God helps those who help themselves*”. The workers and oppressed can only advance their interests if they organize and fight themselves.

How could such a work start? It can begin with calling an assembly in a workplace, in a residential block or in a neighborhood. When progressive forces exist on the ground – a militant shop steward, a trade union branch, a local community organization, even a popular pastor, imam or rabbi – revolutionaries should approach them and ask them to help in organizing such initiatives. If such forces are not available, revolutionaries have to try without them. It can start with a single meeting and the plan to launch some activities – a local march, holding a public meeting, organizing a patrol in the neighborhood, etc.

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Greece - A Modern Semi-Colony

#### The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – *GREECE: A MODERN SEMI-COLONY*. The book’s subtitle is: *The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features*. It contains six chapters (144 pages) and includes 12 tables, 35 figures and 4 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

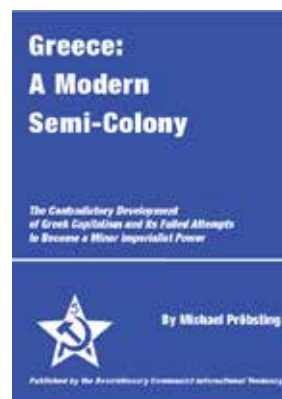
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

Greece is at the forefront both of the capitalist crisis in Europe as well as of the class struggle. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that what the Arab Revolution has been for the world in the past few years, Greece has been for Europe.

Subsequently, the question of the class character of Greece is of crucial importance both for the domestic as well as for the international workers movement: Is it an imperialist

state, a semi-colonial country or something else, and what are its specific features?

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Marxists’ theoretical conception of imperialist respectively semi-colonial states. In Chapter II we give a brief historical overview of the development of Greek capitalism. In Chapter III we deal with Greece’s failed attempt to become a minor imperialist power. In Chapter IV we outline the historic crisis of Greek capitalism from 2008 until today. In Chapter V we elaborate the most important programmatic conclusions and in the last Chapter we present a summary in the form of theses. The book contains 12 Tables, 35 Figures and 4 Maps. ■



If possible, such meetings should become regularly (depending on the circumstances and possibilities every day or every week) and result in the formation of a committee of action which organizes local work systematically.

Arming the masses can start with small steps. Organizing patrols with clubs can be a beginning. Such activities must be done not as a militaristic project imposed on the local population. It must be rather based on popular support. In fact, it can only exist if it has popular support since any such initiative will meet hostile response from local authorities and police who fear that their monopoly of power is put into question.

Revolutionaries must not have any contempt for local, limited activities. However, they must not be seen as a goal in itself. They are rather part of a larger project. Hence, revolutionaries need to combine such concrete activities with systematic agitation and propaganda in order to explain the masses the need to organize and to win them for a socialist program of mass struggle. Involvement in local activities and political agitation can and should be combined in that sense that the “small projects” in which revolutionaries are involved serve as a practical example of the revolutionary strategy.

Revolutionaries should strive to unite the most consciousness activists in a single organization based on a socialist program. This is particularly urgent since the struggle for socialist revolution can not be won within a day or even a year. It is rather a long-term project and it can only succeed if the vanguard of the working class and the oppressed is organized in a revolutionary party – nationally and internationally – which fights on the basis of a common program and discipline.

As we said above, revolutionaries must not look with contempt to “small projects” or to the struggle for reforms. However, such reforms and projects are subordinated to the strategic goal – raising the consciousness of the masses and organizing them for the revolutionary struggle. Only those “small projects” and reforms are legitimate which serve this goal. Those “small projects” and reforms which rather undermine the self-organization of the masses or which rather confuse and regress their consciousness are illegitimate and don’t deserve the support of Marxists. Let us now turn to discuss what this means concretely.

### Should socialists support “defunding the police”?

The slogan “defund the police” is gaining widespread support among progressive forces. As we said above it reflects a progressive desire among many activists. The DSA puts at the centre of its current campaigning demands: “Defund the police. Fund healthcare, unemployment benefits and PPE.”<sup>37</sup> The left-wing magazine *Jacobin* also supports the demand to “defund the police” and calls Bernie Sanders to “be an excellent spokesperson (...) for the demand to cut police spending and increase social spending.”<sup>38</sup>

Kshama Sawant’s Socialist Alternative (SAlt) also supports this slogan. Its branch in Minnesota, with Minneapolis at the state’s capital, calls for cutting the “MPD’s budget by half”. “Defund MPD – Community control over public safety – Tax the rich to invest in green jobs, social programs, public education, and permanently affordable social housing. Cut MPD’s budget by half. Fund alternative emergency response methods and hire workers in mental health services,

*additional specialists, and social workers – well paid with the right to a union.”*<sup>39</sup>

We in the RCIT believe that revolutionaries should deal cautiously and concretely with the issues related with such campaigns. First, it is urgent to warn against any illusion that it would be possible to transform the capitalist police into a non-racist and non-violent force. Neither budget cuts nor the change of personal can achieve this.

Secondly, it is important to point out that even if the budget of the police is cut, it still has a huge amount of money and weaponry. In other words, it remains a highly dangerous and deadly enemy. Hence, the working class and oppressed needs to organize and arm themselves instead of hoping for a “reformed”, “better” police.

Thirdly, as Max Rameau and Netfa Freeman from the *Black Agenda Report* correctly warn, less police does not necessarily mean less repressive forces. In a recently published article, they refer to the experience of South Africa where the ruling elite increasingly relies on private security firms in order to defend their power and wealth. “South Africa is a modern capitalist country that is mostly post-industrial and features pockets of development that mirror the wealthiest western nations. Yet, the government there does not spend anywhere near the amount of resources on police as the United States. So how do upscale malls, financial districts, wealthy white neighborhoods and other configurations of the ruling class protect themselves from the majority of residents living in poverty? They hire private security firms to enforce the rules of the establishment -- not the laws of the province or country.”<sup>40</sup>

It is worth pointing out that the private security sector is also thriving high in the U.S. and other countries. In many semi-colonial countries it is the army which is strongly involved in keeping domestic security in the interest of the ruling class as we could see during the global wave of reactionary lockdowns.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, it reflects an utter reformist and pacifist outlook if organizations like SAlt call for “defunding” or even the “dismantling” the police but, at the same time, they don’t raise a single word about the necessity to build armed self-defense guards. Being silent on this issue can only create the illusion among the masses that there would be an objective necessity for the existence of an (“improved”) capitalist police.

Our criticism does not mean that socialists should ignore the progressive potential behind the slogan “defund the police”. Any reduction of the police budget is to be welcome as it weakens and undermines the armed enemy of the working class and the oppressed. However, this must not mislead revolutionaries to spread any illusions that this would be a way towards a “better, more trustworthy” police. Neither must it mislead revolutionaries to vote for a police budget or to support any police commander (as SAlt’s Kshama Sawant did). It is in contradiction to the principles of socialism to vote for any budget of the police or the army. This has been always of the workers movement as it is expressed in the famous slogan: “Not One Man! Not One Penny!”

### Should socialists call for “community control of the police”?

Another popular slogan among some community organizations is the call for “*community control of the police*”. Where this slogan is raised by black activists, it often reflects a progressive mistrust in the police and a desire to get things under popular control. While we think that this slogan is mistaken, we understand and respect the motivation of black community organizations raising it.

We can not say the same about self-proclaimed “Trotskyist” organizations – like the CWI, the ISA (see e.g. the SALT quote above), or the IMT – which have raised similar slogans since many years. These people claim adherence to the principles of Marxism or even Trotskyists and pretend to have learned the lessons of two centuries of international class struggles. They have no excuse for such reformist nonsense.

The RCIT rejects the slogan for “*community control of the police*” because it creates the illusion that the capitalist police could be brought under the control of the people. This, however, is not possible and a contradiction in itself. The police are paid by the capitalist state, their commanders are appointed by the ruling class, and they are dominated by a cadre trained for many years in a bourgeois and racist outlook. You can not “control” a tiger to live as a vegetarian. Neither can you “control” the police to act as a pro-people’s force.

The way forward is not to put illusionary and misleading slogans like controlling an institution which is not controllable but to advocate the formation of our own armed institutions – self-defense guards which are appointed and controlled by popular assemblies. Of course, every police man and woman is welcome in such self-defense guards if they break with the Police Department, if they have not committed crimes against the people, if they have gained the people’s trust and if they agree to serve under the discipline of such popular guards. However, it is highly likely that such cases will be rather the exception. More importantly, we totally reject the dangerous illusion that the capitalist police as an institution can serve the people at any time or under any condition. No, revolutionaries can not call for “control” of the bourgeois repression apparatus but must rather call for *smashing* it.

#### Is creating “Autonomous Zones” the way forward?

Another project which has gained national attention is the creation of so-called “*autonomous zones*”. In Seattle, the police was forced to disband a police precinct building in the Capitol Hill after days of heavy street fighting with brutal police attacks against demonstrators. As a result, protesters took over control of several blocks and created the “*Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone*” – a barricaded zone without presence of police. Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best described the retreat of the police as an exercise in “*trust and de-escalation*.”<sup>42</sup>

This move has provoked hysteric reactions by President Trump who denounced the demonstrators as “*ugly Anarchists*” and “*domestic terrorists*”. He called the governor of Washington and the mayor of Seattle to “*take back*” the zone and threatened “*Take back your city NOW. If you don’t do it, I will.*” To this, Seattle’s mayor pointedly replied by

telling Trump to “*go back to your bunker*”.<sup>43</sup>

With certain similarities to the Zuccotti Park encampment during the Occupy Wall Street protests in autumn 2011, protesters have set up autonomous self-government structures in the area with offering free water, hand sanitizer, face masks, food and other supplies. There are teach-ins, street art installations and other activities.

It is certainly a very welcomed development if protestors succeed in expelling the police from certain areas. Such self-governing zones can serve as a point to organize and to educate for the struggle. The RCIT strongly supports this achievement and calls to defend it against any attack by the police or right-wing provocateurs.

However, we also warn against any illusionary concept of creating a long-term “left-wing island” within the capitalist world. It would be utterly wrong to view the CHAZ as anything else but a temporary area which provides better conditions to organize and educate. It is not and it can not be a sustainable achievement. Hence, we criticize any conception – advocated by anarchists or other forces – as utopian which orientates on building an alternative society within a few blocks.<sup>44</sup> Such an approach only serves to focus the work of activists to a small area isolated from the popular masses. In contrast, revolutionaries advocate that activists do not isolate themselves from the masses but rather work and live among them. We say to the activists: “*Organize and fight in the workplaces and neighborhoods of the popular masses. Do not leave the work among them by transferring the focus of your work to small, isolated ‘liberated areas’.*”

#### Revolutionary Tactics

As we have said above, the RCIT urges revolutionaries not to neglect the struggle for reforms. However, the focus of work must be to organize and mobilize the masses to build organs of self-organizations – popular assemblies and committees of action in workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and universities as well as armed self-defense guards. Likewise, it is important to organize agitation among members of the police and the National Guard so that they refuse orders to suppress the protests.

It is urgent to resist against the attempts of the reformist forces like Bernie Sanders to divert the focus of the movement away from the street and towards the elections in November. This is the usual strategy of “progressive” Democrats who want to gain seats so that they can be part of the game of bourgeois politics. While revolutionaries do not refuse in principle to stand at elections in order to reach a wider audience for socialist ideas, they must never support bourgeois politicians (like those of the Democratic Party).<sup>45</sup> Neither can they support shifting the focus from the mass mobilizations towards bourgeois electoral politics. The task is not to replace Trump by Biden but rather to overthrow the Trump Administration by a general strike and a popular uprising so that the road is open for the formation of a workers government.

Having said all this, this does not mean that we underestimate the importance of fighting for concrete reforms. Socialists should support all demands which weaken the police and which serve the working class and oppressed in advancing their independent organizations. In contrast, all demands which politically hamper and confuse the popular masses need to be opposed by revolutionaries.

The RCIT calls to review all old cases which brought Afro-Americans in prison. These cases must be reviewed by popular tribunals whose members are elected by the masses, first and foremost members of the black community. We demand the same for all cases of police violence or murder against black, Latino, etc. people and, in general, those from the popular masses.

All prisoners, in particular from ethnic minorities, who have been incarnated for petty crimes (drug abuse, theft, etc.) should be immediately pardoned and released. Naturally, this would not include sexual offenders.

We also call for the immediate release of and drop of charges against more than 10,000 activists who have been arrested until now during the ongoing popular uprising since late May.

We support all demands which put limits – or at least make it more difficult – for the police to brutally attack the workers and oppressed. Hence we support bills to ban police from using chemical weapons and chokeholds. At the same time we warn that even if such bills would be adopted, police would often ignore and break such law. Likewise we strongly support that schools, universities and other institutions stop collaboration with police.

We also advocate the immediate expulsion of all police, prison guards and army unions from the AFL-CIO.

The RCIT proposes to combine such a program of action with social and health demands. In order to fight rising unemployment and poverty, we advocate a public employment program financed by taxes on the super-rich. Likewise, we call for the nationalization of corporations under workers control and without compensation.<sup>46</sup>

Against the assault on democratic rights we put forward demands against the lockdown, against the suppression of the right to assemble and demonstrate, against emergency powers for police and army, against the build-up of surveillance, etc.

And in order to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we demand free mass testing, quarantine for those infected and free access to hospitals for severe cases, the expansion of the public health sector under workers control, an international program of cooperation in order to develop a vaccine, the expropriation of the pharmaceutical industry under workers control, etc.<sup>47</sup>

Likewise, the struggle against the dramatic economic attacks must have at its center a set of demands against sacking, the worsening of the labor conditions and wage cuts, for the expropriation of corporations under workers control, for a public employment program financed by taxes on the super-rich, etc.

These are some of the most important demands in the current situation. While each and every of these demands is progressive and should be raised, they are part of a comprehensive Transitional Program which aims at the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the nationalization of banks and corporations under workers control, the overthrow of the capitalist state by an armed uprising of the workers and popular masses and its replacement by a workers and popular government based on action councils of the masses, etc.

Such a program can not and will not be realized spontaneously. It needs an organization of like-minded and dedicated activists, a revolutionary party, which fights for it. The RCIT calls activists who broadly share our outlook

to unite with us so that jointly build a revolutionary party in the U.S. and international. Such a *Revolutionary World Party* will fight for the overthrow of the capitalist exploiter system. It will be free from all opportunistic trends among the so-called left, like support for state bonapartism (e.g. the Lockdown policy) and reactionary support for any imperialist Great Powers (e.g. China, Russia, EU). We appeal to all comrades to join the RCIT in working for such a historic task!

### Footnotes

1 Mark Murray: Poll: 80 percent of voters say things are out of control in the U.S., 7 June 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/poll-80-percent-voters-say-things-are-out-control-u-n1226276>

2 The RCIT has published several statements and articles on the popular uprising in the U.S. since its beginning. USA: Justice for George Floyd! Workers and youth of all color: unite in struggle! For self-defense committees against the police! Organize a general strike now! 30 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/usa-justice-for-george-floyd/>; A Pre-Revolutionary Situation Has Opened Up in the U.S., 31 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/a-pre-revolutionary-situation-has-opened-up-in-the-u-s/>; United States: Is a Bloody Counterrevolution Looming? For a general strike and self-defense committee to defend the popular uprising against a police-military crackdown! 2 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/is-a-bloody-counterrevolution-looming-in-the-us/>; Why We Speak about a Pre-Revolutionary Situation in the U.S., 4 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/why-we-speak-about-a-pre-revolutionary-situation-in-the-u-s/>; Report (with Video): Black Lives Matter Demonstration in San Francisco, 7 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/blm-demonstration-in-san-francisco-7-6-2020/>

See on this the compilation of RCIT documents on the popular uprising in the U.S. which can be found on this sub-page of our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/articles-on-uprising-after-murder-of-george-floyd/>

3 RCIT: The Global Popular Uprising against Racism and Police Violence. This is a turning point ending the global counterrevolutionary situation. But workers and oppressed need to prepare for an ongoing reactionary offensive of the ruling class!, 8 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-global-popular-uprising-against-racism-and-police-violence/>. The RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 crisis extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February we have published nearly four dozen documents which are all collected at a special sub-page in our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. See also the new book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>.

4 Chris Walker: Majority of Americans Support Uprisings, Disagree With Trump, Poll Finds, Truthout June 2, 2020 <https://truthout.org/articles/majority-of-americans-support-uprisings-disagree-with-trump-poll-finds/>

5 Ethan Winter, Charlotte Swasey and Jason Ganz: Voters Support Protests, Have Lost Trust In Police, 6 June 2020, <https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2020/6/6/voters-support-reforms-have-lost-trust-in-police>

6 Urban Initiative: State and Local Finance Initiative, <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/state-and-local-finance-initiative/state-and-local-backgrounders/police-and-corrections-expenditures>

7 Amanda Arnold: What Exactly Does It Mean to Defund the Police? 2020-06-12, <https://www.thecut.com/2020/06/what-does-defund-the-police-mean-the-phrase-explained.html>

8 See Center for Popular Democracy: Freedom to Thrive: Reimagining Safety & Security in Our Communities, 2017

9 Amanda Arnold: What Exactly Does It Mean to Defund the Police? 12 June 2020, <https://www.thecut.com/2020/06/what-does-defund-the-police-mean-the-phrase-explained.html>

10 Brian Barrett: The Pentagon's Hand-Me-Downs Helped Militarize Police. Here's How, 2 June 2020, <https://www.wired.com/story/pentagon-hand-me-downs-militarize-police-1033-program/>

11 Nada Elia: Defund the police: We need an alternative to the racist US system, Middle East Eye, 10 June 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/defund-police-we-need-alternative-racist-us-system>; Ramzy Baroud: The 'Palestinian Chair': Israel's direct role in US police violence, Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC), Brief No. 9/2020, 18 June 2020

12 Andrew Guthrie Ferguson: Drones and Protesters: How High-Tech Surveillance Amplifies Police Bias and Overreach, The Conversation, 13 June 2020, <https://theconversation.com/high-tech-surveillance-amplifies-police-bias-and-overreach-140225>

13 Steve Peoples, Alan Fram and Jonathan Lemire: Key Democrats spurn push to defund police amid Trump attacks, 2020-06-10 <https://apnews.com/3e6226c495f63ea8551f0d997af9412b>

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

15 See on this e.g. the following articles of the RCIT: Yos-

si Schwartz: United States: The Need for a Labor Party, 23 July 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/united-states-the-need-for-a-labor-party/>; Yossi Schwartz: Once Again: Opportunism of US Left Exposed. An Analysis of the US 2016 Elections Campaign, 14 August 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/left-and-us-election/>; Yossi Schwarz: Why Not to Vote for the Democratic Party in the Forthcoming US Elections or at any other time, 2.3.2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/no-vote-sanders/>; see also chapter "Deep domestic political crisis in the U.S." in RCIT: World Perspectives 2020: A Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, 8 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2020/>

16 Andrew Marantz: Bernie Sanders Is Not Done Fighting. The senator on the protests, his phone calls with Joe Biden, and when to compromise, June 9, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-new-yorker-interview/bernie-sanders-is-not-done-fighting>

17 Jonathan Allen, Trevor Hunicutt: Explainer: U.S. protesters call to 'Defund the Police.' What would that look like? Reuters, 5 June 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-minneapolis-police-defunding-explaine/explainer-u-s-protesters-call-to-defund-the-police-what-would-that-look-like-idUSKBN23C219>

18 Michael Balsamo: When protesters cry 'defund the police,' what does it mean? 2020-06-08 <https://apnews.com/30c53c007138ba221f11c584895be787>

19 Sam Levin: Movement to defund police gains 'unprecedented' support across US, 4 June 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/04/defund-the-police-us-george-floyd-budgets>

20 See on this e.g. chapter III of the above mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight; see also by the same author: Britain: "The left" and the August Uprising, 1 September 2011, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/britain-left-and-the-uprising/>

21 Karl Marx: Drafts of The Civil War in France, in: MECW, Vol. 24, p. 486

22 V. I. Lenin: The State and Revolution. The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution;



## RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

# Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

*Adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of the RCIT in November 2017*

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

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format*

in: CW Vol. 25, p. 407

23 See on this e.g. the following two books by Michael Pröbsting which can be read online or downloaded as a PDF for free: *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/>; *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, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>

24 Jamiles Lartey: By the numbers: US police kill more in days than other countries do in years, *The Guardian*, 9 June 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/09/the-counted-police-killing-us-vs-other-countries>

25 Matthew Friedman: Just Facts: As Many Americans Have Criminal Records as College Diplomas, 17 November 2015, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/just-facts-many-americans-have-criminal-records-college-diplomas>; Cynthia A. Golembeski: Being convicted of a crime has thousands of consequences besides incarceration – and some last a lifetime, *The Conversation* 18 June 2020, <https://theconversation.com/being-convicted-of-a-crime-has-thousands-of-consequences-besides-incarceration-and-some-last-a-lifetime-139192>

26 See on this e.g. the latest RCIT statement: China / Hong Kong: Down with the National Security Law! Organize and mobilize against the looming counter-revolutionary onslaught by the Stalinist-Capitalist regime! 23 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-hong-kong-down-with-the-national-security-law/>; on the Muslim Uyghurs see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: China: Defend the Muslim Uyghurs against Oppression! 18.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-defend-the-muslim-uyghurs-against-oppression/>

27 See on this e.g. Where does the RCIT Stand on Russia's Occupation of Chechnya? <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/russia-and-chechnya/>

28 Report of The Sentencing Project to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. Regarding Racial Disparities in the United States Criminal Justice System, August 2013, p. 1, <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/>

29 V. I. Lenin: The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, in: LCW Vol. 25, p. 237

30 Alan Woods: Marxism and the State, December 2008, <https://www.marxist.com/marxism-and-the-state-part-one.htm>

31 Ibid

32 V. I. Lenin: The State and Revolution, in: LCW Vol. 25, p. 405

33 Leon Trotsky: What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat (1932), in: Leon Trotsky: The Struggle Against Fascism In Germany, Pathfinder Press, New York, p. 147, <http://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/trotsky/germany/1932-ger/next01.htm>

34 See on this e.g. Julia Wallace, Tatiana Cozzarelli: Cop Organizers Aren't Comrades, August 30, 2017 <https://www.left-voice.org/cop-organizers-aren-t-comrades>

IG: Cops, Prison and Security Guards Out of the Labor Movement! DSA Debacle Over Cop "Union" Organizer, <http://www.internationalist.org/dsadebacle1709.html>

35 Left Voice: Open Letter to Kshama Sawant: Don't Support the Police! August 23, 2018, <https://www.leftvoice.org/open-letter-to-kshama-sawant-don-t-support-the-police>

36 Interview with POA leader Brian Caton, *The Socialist* newspaper, 16 September 2009, <https://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/8032/16-09-2009/interview-with-poa-leader-brian-caton>

37 DSA: June Dispatch: Growing our power to defund the police and defend black lives, 4 June 2020, <https://www.dsausa.org/news/june2020-dispatch/>

38 Meagan Day: Bernie Sanders Should Embrace the Demand to Defund the Police, 2020-06-10, <https://www.jacobin-mag.com/2020/06/bernie-sanders-defund-police-uprising>

39 Socialist Alternative: Minneapolis Council Makes Big Promises in Response to Rebellion, 12 June 2020 <https://internationalsocialist.net/en/2020/06/us>

40 Max Rameau and Netfa Freeman: Community Control Vs. Defunding the Police: A Critical Analysis, 10 June 2020, <https://www.blackagendareport.com/community-control-vs-defunding-police-critical-analysis>

41 See on this e.g. Joint Platform of Progressive Organizations: YES to Jobs, Food and Health! NO to Lockdown, State Repression and Poverty! June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/joint-platform-yes-to-jobs-food-and-health-no-to-lockdown-state-repression-and-poverty/>; Joint Statement of the Revolutionary and Progressive organizations of the world: For a people-based approach to the COVID-19 Crisis! Down with State Repression! April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/for-a-people-based-approach-to-the-covid-19-crisis-down-with-state-repression/>; RSL (Kenya): The Oppressed Masses demand "Stop Killing Us!" Report (with Pictures and Video) of the Demonstration of the People of Kenya against Police Brutality, 9 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/demonstration-against-police-brutality-in-nairobi-8-6-2020/>; RSV (Nigeria): Down With The Iron Curtain Of Hunger! Open Up Nigeria! Mass Testing Is The Key! 29th April, 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/down-with-the-iron-curtain-of-hunger-in-nigeria/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Police & Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>

42 See on this e.g. Oli Mould: Seattle's BLM Autonomous Protest Zone and the Paris Commune of 1871: Anti-Capitalist Spirit still Lives, *The Conversation* 16.06.2020, <https://theconversation.com/revolutionary-ideals-of-the-paris-commune-live-on-in-black-lives-matter-autonomous-zone-in-seattle-140673>; Democracy Now: Seattle Activists Create Autonomous Zone Near Abandoned Police Precinct After Days of State Violence, 11 June 2020, [https://www.democracynow.org/2020/6/11/seattle\\_activists\\_create\\_autonomous\\_zone\\_near](https://www.democracynow.org/2020/6/11/seattle_activists_create_autonomous_zone_near)

43 'Go back to your bunker': Seattle mayor hits back at Trump, 12 June 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/bunker-seattle-mayor-hits-trump-200612062032717.html>

44 See on this e.g. Shane Burley: Life and times at the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, 16 June 2020, <https://roarmag.org/essays/life-and-times-at-the-capitol-hill-autonomous-zone/>

45 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today. 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, RCIT Books, 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/book-united-front/>

46 See on this e.g. the RCIT's founding program: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/> and the RCIT's Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation (2016), <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/>

47 See on this RCIT: A Revolutionary Action Program to fight COVID-19! Workers and Oppressed: Don't trust the State of the Rich and Powerful! Trust only Yourselves! April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/health-program-covid19>

# 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!*

