



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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## France: Capitulation to Islamophobia by the Left

COVID-19 in Sweden \* U.S. Election 2020 and "Marxists"  
What's behind the Israel-Sudan Normalization Deal?

## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.47, December 2020

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## What's behind the Israel-Sudan Normalization Deal?

*Statement of the Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine), 24.10.2020*

**N**orth Sudan is in the news for three reasons: for its pro-democracy and revolutionary movement, for the economic deep crisis with inflation of over 200%, and for the pressure Trump applies on it to normalize relations with Israel.

On 19 December 2018, the slashing of bread subsidies in the northern Nile-side town of Atbara led to a mass movement aiming at the removal of the dictator Omar al-Bashir after three decades in power. While the mass protest began over the high price of bread and fuel shortage, the protest was not simply over bread but about equality and for decent living free of oppression and exploitation.

In the demonstrations, women were in the front line. Sudanese women face child marriage, domestic violence, and rape. *"One in four women are married before 18, while nine out of 10 have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM) in the strict Islamic north African nation, the United Nations (U.N.) says."*<sup>1</sup>

This brings to mind the Russian revolution of 1917 where the working-class moment was in the front line of the revolutionary struggle. In Sudan however, the bourgeois and the lower middle class are in the leading role so far.

On 11 April 2019, Omar al Bashir was removed by the army that formed a *"transitional council"* which includes politicians from *"The Forces of Freedom and Change"* (FFC) coalition to run the country.

*"The Transitional Military Council and the FFC signed a power-sharing agreement in August 2019. They agreed to reform the economy, appoint civilian governors, and a transitional parliament, as well as dismantle the Bashir regime. This was a sell-out by the FFC."*<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the large protesting movement, the TMC has been facing the rebellion of the black population in Darfur led by Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu who demands that Sudan will be a secular state or the province will demand its self-determination.

The working class of Sudan reentered the revolutionary movement against the TMC in late May last year with a two-day general strike on 28 and 29 May. The TMC used brutal force to dispersed the sit-in demonstration in Khartoum on 3 June, killing hundreds and beating, assaulting, and rapping demonstrators.

The Corona set back the mass protest but beginning with June this year the masses are demonstrating once again and it is only a question of time that the working class will enter again on the historical stage, to lead the movement.

### Some History of Sudan

The country known as Sudan (Billad as-Sudan, 'land of the blacks') was known in ancient times as Nubia. It was known for the great trade road with the savannah south of the Sahara. In the Jewish Bible, it is described as a region rich in gold, bdellium, and onyx.<sup>3</sup>

It was described as positioned at the southwestern boundary of Eden, a vast well-watered region that received water from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Much of its history

has been linked with Egypt, its neighbor to the north. In 3100 BC, the pharaohs extended their rule as far up the Nile including modern Aswan. Later on, the country that was named by the pharaohs as Cush (the Blacks) became a colony of Egypt. The local ruling class in Cush serving the empire adopted the customs and beliefs of their imperial masters. The first Kushite dynasty, established before the 8th century BC with its capital city at Napata (near modern Merowe), was Egyptian in style. And the Kushite god by this time is Amen-Re. Eventually, the Kushite kings ruled in Egypt and were the first to unite the peoples of the Upper and Lower Nile.

In modern times the Ottomans that ruled Egypt ruled Sudan as well. However, during Napoleon's campaign in Egypt and Syria (1798–1801), the Egyptians freed Egypt from the Ottomans and founded the Muhammad Ali dynasty. Sudan became once again an Egyptian colony.

In the 19th century, Britain occupied Egypt. General Gordon became in 1873 the governor-general of Equatoria (South Sudan, most of the northern parts of present-day Uganda, including Lake Albert and West Nile). In 1881 the situation was changed with the emergence of Mohammed Ahmed, a charismatic religious leader known as the Mahdi who led a rebellion against the British. In the war, over Khartoum, the British army was defeated and General Gordon lost his head in 1885. The Mahdi ruled until his death in June 1885, and he was replaced by the caliph - Abdullahi ibn Mohammed.

For 14 years the Califa maintained a military Islamic state in Sudan, but it was defeated by the British army led by Herbert Kitchener at Omdurman with artillery and machine-gun fire. This restored British control in Sudan.

When King Farouk was overthrown in the 1952 coup by Naguib and other officers including Gamal Nasser the new government recognized the right of self-determination of Sudan. After the elections of 1954 in Sudan the National Unionist Party, led by Ismail al-Azhari, led the nation into a separate independence state in 1956.

However, already in August 1955, the non-Muslim African majority in the south rebelled and demanded independence.

A left-wing coup in 1969 brought to power colonel, Gaafar Mohamed el-Nimeri. The Stalinist Party, the SCP, at the beginning supported Nimeri. Its recommendation of regional autonomy for the South was adopted by the government. Joseph Garang, a SCP member, became the Government Minister of Southern Affairs. This reflected the Stalinist strategic policy of Popular Fronts. This government ended the civil war in South Sudan by signing the Addis Ababa Agreement, allowing for the internal autonomy of Equatoria.

It did not take long and Nimeri began to remove the Stalinists from the government. This led to a split in the SCP. The orthodox wing, led by party secretary-general Abd al Khaliq Mahjub, demanded a popular front government with the Stalinists participating as equal partners. The National Communist wing on the other hand supported cooperation with the government without being part of it.

Nimeiri ordered the deportation of Abd al Khaliq Mahjub. When the SCP secretary general returned to Sudan illegally, Nimeiri put him under house arrest. In March 1971, Nimeiri ordered that the trade unions led by the Stalinists would be placed under government control. Nimeri also banned communist affiliated student, women's, and professional organizations. Nimeiri also announced the formation of the Socialist Union (SSU), which would be in control of all political parties, including the SCP. Then, the government arrested the central committee of the SCP.

Once again the Stalinist Strategy of the Popular Front led to defeat and the repression of the working class and the popular masses. These strategies began in 1936 in France and have continued with the same results in Spain 1936-9, in Palestine with the support for the Zionists, in Indonesia, and in Chile to mention the most known cases.

On July 19, 1971, the SCP launched a coup together with some officers of the army against Nimeiri. Major Hisham al Atta arrested Nimeri with a number of his officers. Atta formed a seven-member council, in which the Stalinists participated. But within three days the coup was smashed. Nimeiri ordered the arrest of hundreds of members of the SCP and dissident military officers. He executed some of these individuals and imprisoned many others.

Ten years later the socialist party of Sudan changed its policy in Sudan - partly because in the south the black population demanded full independence and at the same time Nimeri caved in to the growing strength of the Muslim Brotherhood in the north. In 1983, Nimeri changed the Sudanese law and imposed strict Sharia. In the same year, he abrogated the Addis Ababa Agreement, bringing the south back under central administration.

### Stalinism and Military Coups: the Example of Iran

Thus we can see that a military coup organized by the Stalinists, rather than a revolutionary uprising, is the other side of the Popular Front strategy. Such a failing coup took place in a few countries Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Iraq (1963), Indonesia (1965), Algeria (1965), Ghana (1979), and Afghanistan in the last days of the former Soviet Union. Both policies lead to the defeat of the working class. In the framework of this article, we deal only with Iran in 1953. In 1953, the Tudeh party was strong. It controlled the Central Council of the United Trade Unions of Iran. The Tudeh leadership was aware of the CIA plans to bring down the government of Musaddiq by a coup.

The period of 16-19 August was a short and critical...On August 17, the party began to call for the abolition of the Monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic. In other words, a bourgeois-democratic revolution which reflected their reformist two stages revolutions. First a democratic revolution and in a later historic period a socialist revolution. To carry out a revolution it is necessary to estimate the correct relationship of forces between the ruling class and the working class and the popular masses in favor of the revolutionary armed classes. Yet because the Tudeh was not a working-class revolutionary party it was unable to differentiate between a revolution and a coup, and it was used by the counterrevolution and the paid provocateurs who organized the demonstrations to smash the Tudeh by the nationalist government and to use it to bring down the nationalist government of Mosaddeq.

*"Tudeh members were instructed to join the demonstrations for the new cause. At the same time, CIA operatives in Tehran were organizing their paid street agents to pull down the Shah's statues around the city. This fake Tudeh crowd was joined by Tudeh supporters and added to the panic of the nationalist government, which did not intend such a radical reaction. The government, therefore, ordered the military into the streets' resulting in the arrest of many Tudeh activists... The Tudeh leadership does not seem to have been aware of the fake Tudeh activities and was not able to react to them" <sup>4</sup>*

*"General Zahedi came out of hiding to lead the demonstration. Operatives hired individuals in groups to act like protestors and cause turmoil in the streets of Tehran. The first of the hired masses posed as Tudeh supporters and encouraged real Tudeh members to vandalize and destroy any symbols of capitalism like shops or businesses." <sup>5</sup>*

*"The next day, CIA-backed agents assembled pro-shah crowds in Tehran, as the coup's military forces made a second move against Mosaddeq. The prime minister indirectly aided this second coup attempt by ordering the police to clear the Tudeh Party from the streets on Aug. 18, to bring calm to the city after two days of communist demonstrations. Overwhelmed by pro-shah forces, Mosaddeq's government collapsed on Aug. 19. Crowds were assembled by paid agents or organized by the coup's supporters in Iran's clerical and bazaar circles." <sup>6</sup>*

The Tudeh party did not and was unable to change. This was proven in 1979 when the Tudeh supported publically the Ayatollahs and during the Arab spring supported the military coup of Al Sisi in July 2013.

In an interview with Mohammad Omidvar, member of the Polit Bureau and spokesperson of the Tudeh Party of Iran, he said:

*"The Iranian revolution successfully completed its political phase of overthrowing the Shah's despotic regime. It was clear for our Party that for the Revolution to succeed it needed to evolve into its social phase replacing the socio-economic order it had inherited from the Shah's regime into a new order. Much of our Party's slogan and platform - including the nationalisation of banks and multinational companies as well as land reform - was carried out in the atmosphere that existed in the first year of the Revolution. However, constant US imperialism and reactionary interference in Iran, including the imposition of the imperialist-instigated Iraq-Iran War, stopped the Revolution in its tracks and provided the backdrop for Khomeini and his followers to stop these programmes and move towards the establishment of a theocratic regime. At the time, conscious of challenges facing the Revolution, our Party called for the formation of a "People's United Front" with other revolutionary forces to make sure that the revolutionary movement would not be derailed but this did not materialise due to significant political differences between those forces. Our Party, in its analysis of the early years of Revolution, concluded that in our policy of "critical unity" with Khomeini and his followers we were perhaps more concerned with "Unity" than being critical of some of the policies that clearly were not in line with revolutionary ideals and the people's demands. It is clear that had the left-democratic forces managed to come together, it would have been possible to change the balance of forces politically in the country for a different outcome. The reactionary forces, in a matter of three years, were able to attack the left and democratic forces one-by-one and then establish their absolute rule in Iran." <sup>7</sup>*

In an interview with Salah Adli, general secretary of the Egyptian Communist Party by "Nameh Mardom", the



Central Organ of the Central Committee of the Tudeh (Communist) Party of Iran on 6 July 2013 Adli stated about Al Sisi coup:

*"What has happened is not a military coup in any way, but a revolutionary coup by the Egyptian people to get rid of this fascist rule. What the army did is carrying out the will of the people and protecting them from the plots of the Muslim Brotherhood and their armed terrorist allies who want to ignite sectarian strife and civil wars, divide the Egyptian army and destroy the institutions of the Egyptian state to serve the interests of imperialism and Zionism in the region."*<sup>8</sup>

### Sudan since 1983

After 1983 Sudan saw a civil war between the forces of the government and the *Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA)* of the South. It began when the government attempted to impose new Islamic laws on the entirety of Sudan and southern troops rebelled. Exacerbated by drought, famine, and ongoing violence, thousands upon thousands of Sudanese perished.

On June 30, 1989, Colonel Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir seized power in a coup. He sent government troops and tanks to parliament and ousted Speaker of Parliament Hassan al-Turabi. In 2002, the United States government's Sudan Peace Act declared that Bashir's regime was conducting a campaign of genocide, claiming upwards of 2 million lives in the southern provinces.

For years the U.S. government-supported Southern secession as a way to weaken the Northern government in Khartoum, particularly over Sudanese support for Palestinian and other armed groups in the Arab and Islamic world. For this reason, the USA declared that Sudan is a terrorist state.

Like the Kurds in Syria that had illusions in the USA, the people of South Sudan have discovered that US imperialism has one interest only which is to control regions for economic and military reasons. By supporting the alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias known as the *Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)*, Washington gained indirect control of half of Syria's strategic resources - including many oil fields and dams, and much of its most fertile agricultural land.

Now the SDF is backed into a corner and the Kurdish militia that dominates the alliance, the *People's Protection Units (YPG)*, faces the Turkish army without any backing from the USA.

In June this year, Turkey deployed Special Forces in northern Iraq in an operation against Kurdish rebels backed by air and artillery support as the conflict continues to escalate.

Warplanes struck more than 150 Kurdish targets in northern Iraq's Haftanin region, 15km from the Turkish border an operation launched against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

*"According to the latest news from Friday the media center of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said attacks by the Turkish army and affiliated groups have recently increased in northeast Syria. Artillery and mortar shells targeted the people in particular and inflicted a lot of material damages to the property of civilians in the area, intending to empty the area of its residents," the SDF said. Many villages near the M4 international road were bombed by the mercenaries of the Turkish*

*occupation army over the past three days, especially along Ain al-Issa line," it added, noting that "flights of reconnaissance and warplanes accompanied the bombing."*<sup>9</sup>

On January 9, 2005, under the terms of the so called "Comprehensive Peace Agreement" (CPA), South Sudan got autonomy for 6 years, at the end of which would be a referendum to decide if the southern provinces should secede from the rest of Sudan. Islamic law is to remain in the north and to be voted on for the south.

Thus the United States played a key role in the creation of South Sudan as an "independent" state, mainly to weaken North Sudan but also to gain control of the oil of Sudan located mainly in South Sudan. This independence has left disputes between Sudan and South Sudan, including demarcation of the border, status and rights of the citizens of each country in the other, and the status of the oil-rich Abyei region, disputes that may lead in the future to armed conflict between the two.

*"A new Global Witness investigation shows how South Sudan's state-owned oil company, the Nile Petroleum Corporation (Nilepet), has fallen under the direct control of President Salva Kiir and his inner circle and is being used to funnel millions in oil revenues to the country's brutal security services and ethnic militias, with limited oversight and accountability. While South Sudan's population continues to suffer a senseless war and economic crisis of their leaders' making, Nilepet is failing its true constituents, serving instead the interests of a narrow cabal, and being used to prolong the brutal conflict," said Michael. While South Sudan is a producer of crude oil, it lacks the capacity and infrastructure to refine this into the fuel its population relies on. As a result, Nilepet is deeply integrated into global oil supply chains, including international refineries and commodity traders, without which it would be unable to raise revenues. These international trading partners could play a key role in challenging and holding it accountable. Gibb, Campaign Leader for Conflict Resources at Global Witness."*<sup>10</sup>

*"Oil exploration started in the 1970s by American and French companies but now is dominated by Asian companies. Fields in the Kurdufan states are operated by the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC), the 2B Operating Petroleum Company, and Petro-Energy. Most of these companies are jointly owned by Chinese, Malaysian and Indian investors along with the Sudanese state."*<sup>11</sup>

The oil production in South Sudan is causing a very serious pollution to the lands of the peasants, and poisons the drinking water. *"It includes everything from increased droughts to strange health conditions for the people and animals exposed to oil contamination in the air, on the roads, and in the local waterways"*.<sup>12</sup>

As to the political nature of South Sudan within two years of independence, South Sudan entered an internal ethnic civil war. The immediate cause of the civil war was the killing of Nuer, of the civilian population of Juba in December 2013, by a Dinka component of the Presidential Guard. Yet it reflects the opposition to the dictatorial corrupted rule of John Garang of the GRSS government. On July 8, 2016, fighting broke out between forces loyal to Kiir and forces loyal to Machar, and Machar fled the country. In Machar's absence, the government launched large-scale offensives throughout the country to consolidate its power. During this time, abuses against civilians, including appalling levels of sexual violence, forced more than four million people to flee their homes and left more than

seven million South Sudanese – over half the population – in need of humanitarian assistance. In February 2020, the parties formed the *Transitional Government of National Unity* (TGoNU) and Machar returned to Juba.

Ugandan troops were deployed in South Sudan as a so-called peace keeping force. Yet Uganda has been among the clandestine suppliers of weapons that originate in the EU, US, and China to both sides of the bloody civil war. Also, Israeli brokers and companies supply weapons to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its main opposition, the SPLA-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO). The SPLA-IO is receiving weapons also from North Sudan. This organization is representing the Nuer ethnic group and their leader Riek Machar.

In the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan, we do not support any side, as both states are semi-colonies and have reactionary regimes. Nor we support any side in the new civil war in South Sudan between two corrupted politicians serving USA imperialism.

### North Sudan

Last year the pro-democracy movement toppled Omar al Bashir on April 11. However, instead of a democracy of any type, the masses only got a so-called *Transitional Military Council* (TMC) which is officially run by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman Burhan. However, according to Al Jazeera,

*"Many say that Dagaló, also known as Hemet, is the top authority. Under this government at least 118 pro-democracy activists were killed. The masses are in the streets demanding democratic government, at the moment the Freedom and Change Forces (FCF), an umbrella organization of protesters is leading. The FCF demands a greater share of power with the army..."*

*Hemeti has been linked to mass rapes and killings in Darfur in the war that started in 2003, joining the Janjaweed militia. On June 3, maybe hundreds of people were shot, beaten, and robbed by security forces called the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), connected with Hemeti, in Khartoum. Residents have reportedly begun referring to them as the Janjaweed, evoking the terror of the 2000s. The New York Times puts the number of RSF at some 50,000.*

*Hemeti also has close ties with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, the two Gulf States which fund and support autocratic regimes across the Middle East. When Sudanese troops were fighting for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, Hemeti's RSF sided with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Foreign Policy reported that the RSF "reportedly received Saudi and Emirati support, including money and weapons. Sudanese protesters are deeply suspicious of Saudi and Emirate offers of help, angrily rejecting a \$3bn aid pledge. Many have even demanded that TMC sever ties with both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates."*<sup>13</sup>

Sudan is in a very deep economic crisis with inflation of over 200%. People cannot afford to buy bread and drinking water. It begs for loans from the IMF and the World Bank. The transitional government, which took office in August, is negotiating with creditors to ease Sudan's foreign debt, which amounts to \$62 billion, as official data indicates. It is under the pressure of Trump to normalize relations with Israel as a condition for being removed from the list of states that support terrorism and thus be able to receive loans.

*"Several Sudanese political forces called on authorities to accept a US offer to normalize relations with Israel in exchange for removing the country from the US list. In a joint press conference in the capital, Khartoum, the National Umma Party, Sudan Liberation Movement, and Eastern Front called on Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, chairman of the transitional Sudan Sovereign Council, to accept the US offer to normalize Sudanese-Israeli relations. The American proposal is limited to the upcoming US presidential elections and we shouldn't miss this historic opportunity," said Mubarak al-Fadel, head of the Umma party. He added: "After the announcement of the results of the US presidential elections, we will enter into a major crisis in Sudan if we don't agree to the offer made in the Emirates. Sudan will not be removed from the terrorism list for many years if we don't take advantage of the existing opportunity," al-Fadel said."*<sup>14</sup>

There is opposition to the Normalization Deal amongst the Islamists opposition parties (in the country that hosted the "Three No's" conference).<sup>15</sup> It is clear this is a reactionary deal-as well as bolstering the position of Netanyahu and Trump, it also spells doom for the Sudanese refugees in Israel who now can be forcefully repatriated to Sudan.<sup>16</sup>

### The Program of the Permanent Revolution

Unlike the Stalinists and their disastrous two-stage revolution, the only way to get out of the deep crisis in North and South Sudan, as the local "ruling" classes is unable to lead a democratic revolution, is only by the working class in alliance with the poor peasants which can lead such a revolution. However, once the working class backed by the poor peasants take power, they will continue with the socialist tasks. However for this revolution to win a revolutionary working class party must be formed.

### Programmatic Demands

\* No Sharing Deal with the army! Down with the Transitional Military Council and the government of South Sudan!

\* No to the "normalization" of Sudan with Israel!

\* For a revolutionary Constituent Assembly!

\* Expropriation of the oil companies and the mines under workers' control.

\* Building action committees of the "bread and Dignity" movement in every village and city leading to elected national leadership to lead the revolution. This leadership from the North and the South of Sudan should cooperate.

\* For the complete cancellation of all debts to the IMF and the World banks, the imperialist institutions have robbed Sudan – North and South.

\* Form a working-class revolutionary leadership to fight for democratic demands culminating in the socialist revolution!

\* \* \* \* \*

We refer readers also to the following documents of the RCIT: Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa, Document of the 2nd Congress of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency in Lusaka, Zambia, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/manifesto-for-the-revolutionary-liberation-of-black-africa/>

ISL: After the Israel-UAE-Bahrain Deal: No to the "Normalization" with Israel! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/after-the-israel-uae-bah->

[rain-deal-no-to-the-normalization-with-israel/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/greetings-for-pan-african-women-s-day-2020/)

Almedina Gunić: Pan-African Women’s Day 2020: Long Live the Socialist Struggle for Women’s Liberation! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/greetings-for-pan-african-women-s-day-2020/>

Michael Pröbsting: EU-Sudan: A Cynical Division of Labor, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/eu-sudan-a-cynical-division-of-labor/>

RCIT: Sudan: The Deal with the Military Council is a Sell-Out of the Revolution! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/sudan-the-deal-with-the-military-council-is-a-sell-out-of-the-revolution/>

**Footnotes**

- 1 <https://fr.reuters.com/article/us-sudan-women-rights-idUSKBN1W4369>
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- 14 Ibid
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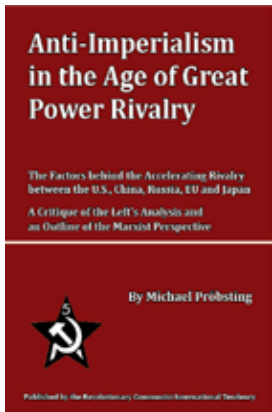
# Books of the RCIT

## 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.





## COVID-19: Revealing Figures from Sweden

### A comparison of the mortality rates of the first 9 months in 2020 with previous years confirm that this is a serious but not unprecedented pandemic

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23.11.2020

One of the most important developments in current world politics is the unprecedented offensive of the ruling class to contain the pandemic by a wave of repression and attacks on fundamental democratic rights of the popular masses. In fact, the policy of putting a whole society under curfew orders has not been seen in the Western imperialist countries since the end of World War II in 1945. This is why the RCIT has characterized this policy from early on as the *COVID-19 Counterrevolution*.<sup>1</sup>

All these unprecedented attacks are justified by the claim that COVID-19 would be the worst pandemic since the so-called *Spanish flu* after World War I. However, we have demonstrated in a number of works, like several other critical democrats and scientists, that this is simply a lie. (See e.g. the so-called *Great Barrington Declaration* with which we have dealt in a recently published essay).<sup>2</sup>

#### The Real Interests of the Ruling Class

We have provided a number of examples demonstrating that other diseases and pandemics in the past years and decades have been as deadly as or even worse than COVID-19. Likewise, we pointed out that the Lockdown policy fails as particularly effective instrument against the pandemic and has devastating social, economic and mental consequences for the society. We concluded from our analysis that the real motive of the ruling class' for the reactionary Lockdown policy is not concern for public

health. It is rather to advocate the political and economic interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie. These interests, as we outlined in our works, can be summarized in:

- The expansion of the police and surveillance state in a period of massive political instability in which the ruling class strives to repress class struggles and popular uprisings (in autumn 2019 a pre-revolutionary world situation had opened up with a global wave of mass struggles which was only ended by the beginning of the global Lockdown policy in spring 2020);
- Finding a scapegoat for the Third Depression of the capitalist world economy (which began in late 2019);
- Strengthening the role of the bourgeois national state in order to promote chauvinism against other states (in particular rivaling Great Powers);
- Promoting the market position of the largest monopolies, in particular in industries like drugs, biotechnology, robotics, Artificial Intelligence and the whole IT industry, the whole online retail sector, etc.

As a result, we have noted that the ruling elite increasingly turn towards a policy of *Chauvinist State Bonapartism* and *state-capitalist regulation*.<sup>3</sup>

#### Sweden: How Devastating is the Pandemic in a Country which has not imposed any Lockdown until now?

Sweden, one of the few countries which have not imposed any lockdown (nor any other enforcement measures) until



### Publications of the RCIT

## The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution

*On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance*

By Michael Pröbsting, July 2020

Introduction \* The localized version of Lockdown policy is spreading \* New information concerning severity (or not so severity) of the pandemic \* Telling figures for Europe, Sweden and Ischgl \* The worst pandemic in Africa? Really? \* Capitalism and care homes as deadly traps for old people \* The real nature of the ruling class bonapartist offensive under the cover of COVID-19 \* Why is the ruling class opting for a local lockdown strategy? \* Excuse: A crisis characteristic for the present period of capitalist decay \* The nature and inner contradictions of the local lockdown strategy \* Preparing for a new counter-revolutionary offensive \* The Lockdown Left: a never ending embarrassment \* The shameful example of the PSTU/LIT-CI \* The imperialist aristocratism of the Lockdown Left \* Building a Revolutionary World Party \* Footnotes

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now has become a main target of attack both by the global bourgeoisie as well as by the Lockdown Left, i.e. the “left-wing” supporters of the bonapartist policy. It is exactly because Sweden avoided a lockdown that this country is a useful example to examine the true severity of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We did already show in the past, using the figures available, that Sweden suffered less from the pandemic than various other imperialist countries which imposed draconic lockdowns (e.g. Belgium, Britain, Spain, Italy and France).<sup>4</sup> Since there is a controversy about the methodology of counting COVID-19 deaths and comparing countries, we think it is most useful to look at the figures for total mortality. For this we use the official data of Sweden’s public health authorities. Using these figures, we did already demonstrate that the total mortality rate in the first half of 2020 has not been substantially higher than it

was in the past two, three decades which reflects that the pandemic is not “unprecedentedly deadly”, as the Lockdown supporters tirelessly claim.<sup>5</sup>

As we are nearing the close of this year, more and more data emerge about the development of total mortality which enables observers to make a comparison with past years. A few days ago, *Statistics Sweden* – the official statistical authority of the country – published new data which help to evaluate the severity of the current pandemic. So what do these figures tell us?

In Table 1 we reproduce the figures for the first nine months of 2020 and compare them with the same period in the year before. As we can see, mortality increased by 9.9% and mortality per capita (since the total population became slightly larger) increased by 9.3%.

While this represents a clear increase of mortality compared with the year before, it is in no way unprecedented.

**Table 1. Sweden: Total Population, Total Mortality and Total Mortality Per Capita, January-September 2019 and 2020<sup>6</sup>**

	<i>Jan-Sept 2020</i>	<i>Jan-Sept 2019</i>
Population	10,373,225	10,313,447
Death	72,312	65,776
Number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants	697.1	637.8
<i>Mortality Jan-Sept 2020 compared to Jan-Sept 2019:</i>	+9.9%	
<i>Mortality per capita Jan-Sept 2020 compared to Jan-Sept 2019:</i>	+9.3%	

**Table 2. Preliminary population statistics for Sweden, first six months of 2018-2020<sup>9</sup>**

	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2018</i>
Population	10,352,390	10,281,189	10,171,524
Death	51,405	44,857	48,033
Number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants	496.6	436.3	472.2
<i>Mortality Jan-Jun 2020 compared to Jan- Jun 2019:</i>	+14.6%		
<i>Mortality per capita Jan- Jun 2020 compared to Jan- Jun 2019:</i>	+13.8%		
<i>Mortality Jan-Jun 2020 compared to Jan- Jun 2018:</i>	+6.4%		
<i>Mortality per capita Jan- Jun 2020 compared to Jan- Jun 2018:</i>	+5.2%		

**Table 3. Number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants per month, 2020 and 2018, Sweden<sup>11</sup>**

	<i>2020</i>	<i>2018</i>
January	78.2	84.2
February	75.5	88.2
March	80.1	90.1
April	102.0	76.9
May	83.4	66.3
June	71.8	65.6
July	66.1	71.1
August	65.0	66.3
September	65.2	68.2
<i>Total</i>	687.3	676.9

*Increase in 2020 compared with 2018: +1.5%*

For example, 97,008 people had died in Sweden in 1993 – at a time when the country had a substantially smaller population. In 1990, Sweden had a population of 8.5 million people which has increased to 10.3 million today. Likewise, 2000 was also a year with substantial excess mortality.<sup>7</sup> In fact, certain oscillations in the mortality figures can be observed in every country and sometimes such changes are significantly more distinct. For example, in Austria the number of death in 2015 was 6.2% higher than the year before (78.252 resp. 83.073).<sup>8</sup> This increase is within the range of oscillating development of mortality and, hence, it was hardly noticed by the public.

### Comparison with the Mortality Figures of 2018

Furthermore, one has to note that 2019 was the year with the lowest mortality rate in the whole past decade. If we compare the mortality rate of the first half year in 2020 with the same period in 2018, the growth of mortality becomes even less drastic. Mortality in January-June 2020 was 6.4% higher than in the same period in 2018 and mortality per capita has increased by 5.2%. In Table 2 we reproduce the figures for the period January-June for the past three years.

In this context it is important to bear in mind that while mortality in the first half of 2020 was above the average, mortality in third quarter was below the average.<sup>10</sup> This has been most likely caused by the fact that a number of people who died in Q2 by COVID-19 would have died in Q3 by other causes. So if we add the monthly mortality rate figures for the January – September period in 2020 and compare them with the same period in 2018, we see that the figures for the mortality rate per capita was only 1.5% higher in the COVID-19 year. (See Table 3)

In this context we should point out that a Swedish blog focused on economic and statistical issues has published an article in which the author claims that the mortality rate in the first 9 months of this year was even the third least deadly year ever recorded so far.<sup>12</sup> However, as the author uses Swedish-language statistics we have not been able to verify this claim.

### A Pandemic which is Politically Exploited by the Ruling Class

However, what is clear and evident – and also confirmed by other observers in Sweden<sup>13</sup> – is the fact that the mortality rate in 2020 so far does not reflect the existence of an “unprecedented dramatic pandemic”. Furthermore, these figures also demonstrate that the “Swedish way” without lockdown and other enforcement measures does definitely not result in a higher mortality rates than countries where governments have imposed draconic Lockdowns.

We repeat that the hysteric propaganda of the capitalist governments about the “worst pandemic ever” which would justify curfew for the popular masses and unprecedented restrictions of democratic rights lack any scientific basis!

The fact that more and more data become public which reveal the real nature of the COVID-19 pandemic will help to counter the reactionary fear and hysteria propaganda of the ruling class. At the beginning, the RCIT was part of a very small minority which had to swim against the all-powerful stream of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. But

in the past few weeks we have seen important changes. In various countries in Europe, smaller and larger popular protests are taking place.<sup>14</sup> In addition there are also a growing number of medical scientists who withstand the pressure of the governments and who criticize the panicking COVID hysteria and the anti-democratic Lockdown policy. Times are changing and sooner or later popular hatred will make the governments tremble!

### Footnotes

1 The RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February we have published more than 50 pamphlets, essays, articles and statements plus a book which are all compiled at a special subpage on 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/>. In addition, we draw attention to our 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/>. See also our very first article on this issue by Almedina Gunić: Coronavirus: “I am not a Virus”... but WE will be the Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the “Wuhan Coronavirus” hysteria and the revolutionary answer, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Police and 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/>.

2 The Great Barrington Declaration, <https://gbdeclaration.org/>; Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: The Great Barrington Declaration is indeed Great! Numerous medical scientists protest against the reactionary lockdown policy, 11 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-the-great-barrington-declaration-is-indeed-great/>

3 For a more detailed discussion of the new policy of the ruling class we refer to chapter II. “On the nature of the COVID-19 global counterrevolution” in the above-mentioned book “The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It.” See also the two above-mentioned essays “The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution” and “The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase”.

4 Worldometers: COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>, accessed on 23 November 2020

5 See e.g. chapter “Telling figures for Europe, Sweden and Ischgl” in the above-mentioned essay “The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution.”; see also: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_in\\_Sweden#Excess\\_mortality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Sweden#Excess_mortality)

6 Statistics Sweden: Population in the country, counties and municipalities on September 30, 2020 and population change in January–September 2020, <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/quarterly-population-statistics--municipalities-counties-and-the-whole-country/quarter-13-2020/>; Population in the

country, counties and municipalities on September 30, 2019 and population change in July–September 2019, <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/quarterly-population-statistics--municipalities-counties-and-the-whole-country/quarter-13-2019/>

7 Reuters: Coronavirus pushes Swedish deaths to highest since 1993 in April, 18 May 2020 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-sweden-toll/coronavirus-pushes-swedish-deaths-to-highest-since-1993-in-april-idUSKBN22U1S4>

8 Statistik Austria: Gestorbene nach ausgewählten Merkmalen, Lebenserwartung und Säuglingssterblichkeit seit 2009, [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/gestorbene/022911.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/gestorbene/022911.html)

9 Statistics Sweden: Preliminary population statistics for Sweden, first six months of 2010-2020, <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/quarterly-population-statistics--municipalities-counties-and-the-whole-country/preliminary-population-statistics-for-sweden-first-six-months-of-2010-2020/>; Mortality per capita is our own calculation

10 See on this e.g. Statistics Sweden: Excess mortality in Sweden is followed by mortality deficit, 15.10.2020, <https://www.scb.se/en/About-us/news-and-press-releases/excess-mortality-in-sweden-is-followed-by-mortality-deficit/>

11 Statistics Sweden: Number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants per month, 2015-2020, [www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/preliminary-statistics-on-deaths/](http://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/preliminary-statistics-on-deaths/). We are aware that the added sum of the nine months is not identical with the figure provided in Table 1 (687.3 resp. 697.1). The reason for this small discrepancy most likely is the fact that in Table 1 we took the exact figures provided for the whole period of January to June. In contrast, the figures provided in Table 3 (and which we added) are the figures for each months,

i.e. they correspond to a constantly changing size of the population.

12 September 2020 least deadly month ever in Sweden - 2020 third least deadly year ever so far, 24.10.2020, <https://cornucopia.cornubot.se/2020/10/september-2020-least-deadly-month-ever.html>

13 See e.g. Emanuel Karlsten: Sweden's two corona months are not more deadly than the flu of the 90s – but that does not mean that everything is normal, 18 June 2020, <https://emanuelkarlsten.se/swedens-two-corona-months-are-not-more-deadly-than-the-flu-of-the-90s-but-that-does-not-mean-that-everything-is-normal/>; Emanuel Karlsten: Number of deaths in Sweden during the pandemic – compared to previous years' mortality, 13 October 2020, <https://emanuelkarlsten.se/number-of-deaths-in-sweden-during-the-pandemic-compared-to-previous-years-mortality/>.

14 We refer to our latest documents: Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: Watch Your Back, Lockdown Gangsters! A new wave of draconic Lockdowns sweeps Europe but popular resistance and criticism of medical scientists are increasing, 21 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-watch-your-back-lockdown-gangsters/>; RCIT: COVID-19: Madrid's Workers and Poor Protest against the Reactionary Lockdown Regime! Support the struggle against anti-democratic attacks and for expansion of the public health service! 2 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/madrid-s-workers-and-poor-protest-against-the-reactionary-lockdown-regime/>. There are also ongoing protests in Israel against the corrupt Netanyahu government and its anti-democratic Lockdown policy albeit they are of a more contradictory nature. see on this e.g. Yossi Schwartz: Israel: Draconian Law against the Right to Demonstrate, 01.10.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/draconian-law-against-the-right-to-demonstrate-in-israel/> and Adam Smith: Israel: What is behind a Second Lockdown? 19.09.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/what-is-behind-a-second-lockdown-in-israel/>.

# 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.

**The COVID-19  
Global  
Counterrevolution**

What It Is and How to Fight It

By Michael Pröbsting



Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



# The U.S. Election 2020 and some “Marxists”

## The treacherous support for Biden usually goes hand in hand with failure in the anti-imperialist struggle

By Yossi Schwartz, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23 November 2020

The question of whether to vote for a capitalist party in elections is not a tactical question, it is a question of a Marxist principle. Capitalist parties represent the interests of the capitalist class, the enemy of the working class and the oppressed. Those socialists who call to vote for the enemy are traitors to the working class; those who call to vote for a party of the imperialist enemy take responsibility for the oppression of the people in the semi-colonies and for the oppression of the minorities like the Muslims in the imperialist states.

Eugene V. Debs was an American socialist who understood this basic question. He was imprisoned in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary for speaking out against the draft during the first imperialist World War 1914-18.

He said: “Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder. In the Middle Ages when the feudal lords who inhabited the castles whose towers may still be seen along the Rhine concluded to enlarge their domains, to increase their power, their prestige and their wealth they declared war upon one another. But they themselves did not go to war any more than the modern feudal lords; the barons of Wall Street go to war. The feudal barons of the Middle Ages, the economic predecessors of the capitalists of our day, declared all wars. And their miserable serfs fought all the battles. The poor, ignorant serfs had been taught to revere their masters; to believe that when their masters declared war upon one another, it was their patriotic duty to fall upon one another and to cut one another’s throats for the profit and glory of the lords and barons who held them in contempt. And that is war in a nutshell. The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.” [1]

He also said: “Turn your back on the corrupt Republican Party and the still more corrupt Democratic Party - the gold-dust lackeys of the ruling class counts for still more after you have stepped out of those popular and corrupt capitalist parties to join a minority party that has an ideal, that stands for a principle, and fights for a cause. This will be the most important change you have ever made and the time will come when you will thank me for having made the suggestion. It was the day of days for me. I remember it well. It was like passing from midnight darkness

to the noontide light of day. It came almost like a flash and found me ready. It must have been in such a flash that great, seething, throbbing Russia, prepared by centuries of slavery and tears and martyrdom, was transformed from a dark continent to a land of living light.” [2]

Debs ran for president on the Socialist Party ticket five times since 1900. In 1912 he’d won 901,551 votes — about six percent of the vote. Sanders claims that he follows his hero Debs, but Debs if he was alive would not recognize him as a comrade, for joining the party of the class enemy.

### Opportunists Support Biden

In the presidential elections in the USA, while some of the left organizations correctly opposed the vote for both capitalist parties, others like the Stalinists and groups who share an origin in Shachtmanism, called for voting for Joe Biden.

The Stalinists in the USA - the CPUSA - is one of these parties. This of course should not surprise us as the Stalinists turned to the strategy of the class collaboration in the form of a popular front already in 1935 in France and Spain. During the presidential elections in 2016 they called to vote for Clinton and this time for Biden. They wrote:

“Biden is far from being a socialist; he is not even a “progressive Democrat,” but at this point the electoral priority has to be to defeat Trump and the Republican majority in the Senate, while we continue to stress mass mobilizations and active struggle at the working-class base...“It is not just that Trump is a repulsive individual, it is that I want socialism, and this country and the world need socialism, need it desperately. “Socialism requires the unity and empowerment of the working class, and Trump and his allies are the main obstacle to those things right now, and so must be defeated. Biden is no socialist, no anti-imperialist, no consistent friend of the working class, and we’ll have to fight him too if he wins, but Trump is more dangerous on all fronts and must be defeated on November.” [3]

Solidarity, an organization originating from the now dissolved Shachtmanite International Socialists and which today is affiliated with the Mandelite “Fourth International”, wrote: “Just to be clear: everything said about Biden by those who argue against voting for him is true. These truths,



## Publications of the RCIT

# The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism



however, at this moment, don't carry the day, if you believe, as I do, that Trump has to be stopped in his tracks, repudiated, to decisively interrupt the downward spiral toward a white supremacist autocracy. And a strategic vote for Biden makes sense since his administration will be forced to bargain with "progressive" Democrats in the Congress, and it should be possible to win significant programs, call them non-reformist or revolutionary reforms." [4]

The League for a Revolutionary Party on the eve of the presidential elections wrote: "Joe Biden is the embodiment of the Democratic Party's long history of betraying its promises to all those facing injustice and inequality. As a senator, he was a principal architect of this country's current nightmare of racist policing and mass incarceration, he supported harsh anti-immigrant laws, and he backed restrictions on women's reproductive rights. Despite his carefully crafted "regular guy" image, Biden has always put capitalist profits ahead of working-class interests: he crafted legislation allowing banks to rip off their customers, backed free-trade deals that encouraged manufacturers to shift production to low-wage countries like China, and supported imperialist military adventures around the world, including George W. Bush's invasion and occupation of Iraq".

Nevertheless, this organization called to vote for Biden: "A victory for Biden and the Democrats will therefore deal a significant setback to the far right and its drive for authoritarian rule. It will allow everyone who is committed to saving the country's relatively democratic rights more time to organize and fight to defend them. And with the deadly pandemic continuing to rage and the world economy on the verge of collapsing into another Great Depression, working-class and oppressed people will face an onslaught of attempts to make them pay for the crisis and will desperately need their democratic rights to defend themselves. Indeed, it is for this reason that the masses of working-class and oppressed people have always proven the most reliable defenders of democracy – it is a matter of survival...

"Towards that end, we as revolutionary socialists advocate voting to oust Trump, which means voting for Biden even though he belongs to our enemy class. This is an urgently necessary defensive tactic. Every four years, the working class gets to choose who will govern on behalf of the capitalists who profit from their exploitation and oppression. Especially when the result will affect the extent to which the masses will have rights to organize and defend their interests, as it does this year, we must take a side." [5]

### The Logic of the Class Struggle behind the Wrong Theory

The capitulation of the LRP to the party of the class enemy should not surprise us. This left-wing Shachtmanite group whose method is pragmatism, claims that the Soviet Union became a capitalist state already in the 1930s and became a state-fied capitalism because the counterrevolution culminated on the eve of World War II. According to them, a new ruling class came to power by transforming the state apparatus and destroying the Bolshevik party. This "theory" was contrary to Trotsky who stood for the position that the USSR was a degenerated workers' state and that to open the road to socialism, a working-class political revolution is necessary.

The LRP claims that the restoration of capitalism was completed by 1939. According to them by the end of the war, the Stalinist Soviet Union had become a world power

dedicated to the survival of capitalism, an imperialist state. However, they have not been able to show that a capitalist class existed in the former Soviet Union and Marxism, which is a class-based theory, teaches us that without a ruling capitalist class there cannot be a capitalist state. Their theory put them in the "Third Camp", together with the British SWP and the former ISO (which dissolved itself in 2019) in the US by refusing to defend the Soviet Union against the real imperialism. In line with their theory, they have also refused to side with anti-imperialist forces when led by Islamists. A clear example is Syria where the LRP took the position: "Defend the Syrian Revolution against All its Enemies - Imperialism, Assad and Reactionary Islamists". They wrote already in 2013: "The revolutionary struggle against Assad drew mass support from all sectors of Syrian society. It created local councils and numerous independent militias. Those who say there is no popular revolution defame this extraordinary revolutionary struggle. But the military character of the struggle has given Islamist and other bourgeois forces extra leverage, distorting and seeking to hijack the popular insurgency." [6] Based on such an approach, they have refused to side with the Islamist-led popular struggle against Assad and the Russian occupation forces.

In Afghanistan and Mali, while they called for the defeat of the imperialists they never called for an anti-imperialist united front with the Islamists nor for a military victory of the popular resistance against the occupiers led by the Islamists. Revolutionary Marxists wish and struggle to replace the Islamists leadership with a revolutionary working class leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle. But until this is possible it is necessary to side with the movement even when led by reactionaries. Sectarian demagogues would say this is a stagiest theory and will confuse the position for a military victory of the anti-imperialist movement led by reactionaries with political support for the reactionaries, but as we will see this was Trotsky's method of the Permanent Revolution.

In any case, like Shachtman who in 1958 joined the Socialist Party and was active in pressuring this party to work with the Democratic Party in order to push the Democrats to the left, the LRP ended with political support for the Democratic Party. Shachtman was pushed into this position by the dialectical logic of the class struggle and so are they.

They all use the old argument of the lesser evil that contradicts the first principle of Marxist politics – the independence of the working class from the class enemy. Trotsky answered the reformist argument of the lesser evil already in 1931 at a time a real fascist movement was growing fast in Germany. (We note in passing that while Trump is a Bonapartist, he is not a fascist).

"The social democracy supports Bruening, votes for him, assumes the responsibility for him before the masses – on the basis that the Bruening Government is the "lesser evil". The Rote Fahne attempts to ascribe the same view to me – on the basis that I expressed myself against the stupid and shameful participation of the Communists in the Hitler referendum. But have the German Left Opposition and myself, in particular, demanded that the Communists vote for and support Bruening? We Marxists regard Bruening and Hitler, together with Braun, as component parts of one and the same system. The question, which one of them is the "lesser evil", has no sense, for the system against which we are fighting needs all these elements. But these ele-

ments are momentarily involved in conflicts with one another and the party of the proletariat must take advantage of these conflicts in the interest of the revolution...."

"There are seven keys in the musical scale. The question which of these keys is "better": Do, Re or Sol is a senseless question. But the musician must know when to strike and what keys to strike. The abstract question as to who is the lesser evil: Bruening or Hitler – is just as senseless. It is necessary to know which of these keys to strike. Is that clear? For the weak-minded let us cite another example. When one of my enemies sets before me small daily portions of poison and the second, on the other hand, is about to shoot straight at me, then I will first knock the revolver out of the hand of my second enemy, for this gives me an opportunity to get rid of my first enemy. But that does not at all mean that the poison is a "lesser evil" in comparison to the revolver. The misfortune consists precisely of the fact that the leaders of the German Communist Party have placed themselves on the same ground as the social democracy only with inverted prefixes: the Social democracy votes for Bruening, recognizing in him the lesser evil. The Communists on the other hand, who refuse to trust either Braun or Bruening in any way (and that is absolutely the correct way of acting), in the meantime go into the streets to support Hitler's referendum, that is, the attempt of the Fascists to overthrow Bruening. But in this they themselves have recognized in Hitler the lesser evil, for the victory of the referendum would not have brought the proletariat into power but Hitler. To be sure, it is painful to have to argue such A.B.C. questions. It is sad, very sad indeed, when musicians like Remmele, instead of distinguishing between the keys, stamp with their boots on the key-board" [7]

### The Refusal to Consistently Defend Oppressed Nations

The opportunists' support for the lesser (imperialist) evil goes hand in hand with their refusal to support oppressed nations on the ground that the resistance to the imperialists is led by Islamists.

The CPUSA wrote: "Though the current government has used harsh methods to maintain its rule and to repress peaceful dissent, corporate-controlled media here and in other Western countries do a disservice when they gloss over or fail to mention that as well as legitimate peaceful protests, the panorama in Syria includes notable levels of violence by people whose agendas are far from those of democracy and personal liberty, and whose methods are very distant from those of the brave protesters who brought down the governments of Egypt and Tunisia. Which of the different factions in the Syrian opposition would come out on top of a "regime change" is far from clear." [8]

To cover up for this rotten reformist position they added a pacifist line: "You might think that the United States and its allies would have learned from Iraq that intervening, under a "humanitarian" guise, in another country's internal struggles is a recipe for disaster. The nature and leadership of the Syrian government should, rather, be matters to be decided by the Syrian people exclusively, without outside interference. Rather than channeling support to Syrian factions, the United States should be calling for a "hands-off" policy while the Syrian conflict is settled by peaceful negotiations. We call upon members and friends of our party to tell the Obama administration as well as their representatives in Congress: "Hands off Syria!" [9]

In a joint international statement, various centrists – including the British SWP and the French NPA – wrote: "We fight dictatorships, imperialist aggression, and Daesh. We reject

the politics of "national security," racism, and austerity. It's time to mobilise! "Over recent months, people across the Middle East have been hit by an intensification of conflict in Syria and Iraq. That escalation has been sponsored both by global imperialist powers – chiefly the USA, Russia, and European countries – and regional imperialist actors including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and Iran. These conflicts are the product of two distinct forms of counter-revolution: local dictatorships and counter-revolutionary regimes on one hand, and reactionary Islamic forces like Daesh" [10]

Thus they put on the same level the imperialists and the oppressed nations by calling semi-colonies "imperialist" and by putting the imperialists and Daesh on the same level.

Of course, Daesh is a thoroughly reactionary force but as we said when oppressed nations fight imperialism even under the leadership of reactionary forces revolutionary Marxists side with them without giving them political support.

Marx supported the independence of Poland even when the national movement was led by reactionary aristocrats. Even right-wing centrists know this ... when it is a question of the remote past: "...in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, Marx advocated not just the right of self-determination for Poland, but outright independence. This was in spite of the fact that the independence movement in Poland at the time was led by the reactionary Polish aristocrats." [11]

Likewise, Marx supported the Irish national movement against Britain even when led by reactionary priests: "What is distinctive of Fenianism? Actually, it originates from the Irish Americans. They are the initiators and leaders. But in Ireland, the movement took root (and is still really rooted) only in the mass of the people, the lower orders. That is what characterizes it. In all earlier Irish movements, the people followed the aristocracy or middle-class men, and always the Catholic churchmen. The Anglo-Irish chiefs and the priests during the rising against Cromwell; even James II, King of England, in the war against William III; the Protestant Republicans of Ulster (Wolfe Tone, Lord Fitzgerald) in the 1798 revolution and, finally, in this century the bourgeois O'Connell supported by the Catholic clergy, which also played a leading role in all earlier movements except 1798. The Catholic clergy decreed a ban on Fenianism, which it did not lift until it realized that its attitude would deprive it of all influence on the Irish masses." [12]

The Communist International, at the time when it was still revolutionary, supported the Rif Islamic republic against Spanish and French imperialism. On September 11th 1924, *l'Humanité* (the newspaper of the French Communist party) published a telegram sent the day previous by Pierre Séward, General Secretary of the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) and Jacques Doriot, leader of the *Federation des jeunesses communistes*, to the leader of the Republic, Muhammad bin 'abd al-Karim al-Khattabi, a Salafi Islamist. It read: "We hope that after the definitive victory over Spanish imperialism, it [the Republic] will continue, with the French and European proletariat, the struggle against all imperialists, including the French [français y compris], until the complete liberation of Morocco's soil."

Trotsky emphasized the importance of the anti-imperialist struggle. On the 2nd December 1922, days before the end the fourth World Congress, Trotsky wrote: "Congress invites the French party and its Central Committee to pay far more attention and allot far greater forces and resources than it

has up till now to the colonial question and to propaganda in the colonies." [13]

As a result of these efforts, the French communists and their supporters waged an impressive struggle against the colonialist policy of their government: "Working with the *Confédération générale du Travail unitary (CGTU)*, the PCF organized a 15,000-strong protest against the war on May 16th in Paris, and over the spring and early summer of 1925 encouraged the crews of half a dozen cruisers to mutiny (100 sailors were court-martialed in late July). Between May and October, there were over 250 meetings against the war across France, all building towards the 12th October 24-hour strike, involving 500,000 workers." [14]

Later, Trotsky supported the Kuomintang, led by the butcher Chiang Kai-Shek, against the attacks of imperialist Japan: "In order to arrive at a real national liberation, it is necessary to overthrow the Kuomintang. But this does not mean that we postpone the struggle until the time when the Kuomintang is overthrown. The more the struggle against foreign oppression spreads the more difficulties the Kuomintang will have. The more we line up the masses against the Kuomintang the more the struggle against imperialism will develop..." At the acute moment of Japanese intervention, the workers and the students called for arms. From whom? Again from the Kuomintang. It would be a sectarian absurdity to abandon this demand under the pretext that we wish to overthrow the Kuomintang. We wish to overthrow it but we have not yet reached that point. The more energetically we demand the arming of the workers the sooner we shall reach." [15]

Trotsky has explicitly expressed this position in an interview with Mateo Fossa in 1938: "In Brazil, there now reigns a semi fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict wills the working class be? I will answer for myself personally — in this case, I will be on the side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!" [16]

Needless to say, the same refusal to be on the side of Islamists who fight imperialism is also reflected in the right-wing centrists in Europe. Thus the IMT led by Allan Woods wrote on their website on Syria: "The question is: who is getting this aid? Is it being distributed to all the fighting militias? This is far from being the case. In fact, many FSA fighters have often complained about the lack of resources and arms and expressed their frustration at other fighting groups who refuse to share resources with them. Who are these groups that are getting foreign aid and what is their agenda? It is very important to be clear on this: these groups are rabid reactionary forces, no different from the Assad forces. They advocate a fundamentalist ideology and defend the interests of those who fund

them, i.e. of those that have interests directly opposite to those of the Syrian masses. They are the forces of the counter-revolution, that while fighting the regime, are working to undermine what is left of the genuine revolution." [17]

The ISA (former CWI), the twin sister of the IMT, has a similar position on Syria. "Various reactionary forces — from western imperialist powers to Jihadist militias — managed to regain the initiative in a whole number of countries after the initial revolutionary upsurge. The revolutionary process was derailed, the masses became preoccupied with daily survival and demoralization took root." ... [18]

Their political program for the Palestinians' struggle against oppression exposes their bias in favor of the Zionists. Their program put on the same level the oppressor settler colonialist Zionists and the oppressed Palestinians, by recognizing the right of self-determination for the Zionists, instead of calling for one Palestinian socialist state with civil rights for the Jews living in occupied Palestine in the frameworks of a socialist federation of the Middle East. Like Trotsky's position on South Africa [19] while correctly they reject the two states' solution in the framework of the existing imperialist order, but shamelessly they support two states in the framework of "a socialist order". They write in a recently adopted congress resolution: "The tensions around the Israeli-Iranian conflict, the acute Gaza crisis and the "threat of a bi-national state" in the context of the Israeli-Jewish population losing a clear majority between the river and the sea (historic Palestine) are all serious causes of concern for the Israeli ruling class. In the current circumstances in the Middle East and the aftermath of the rise of Hamas rule in Gaza in the previous decade, they're more resistant to territorial concessions today. But in a post-Trump, post-Netanyahu, and most likely a post-Abbas context, the Israeli ruling class may attempt to stabilize the national conflict with a new deal with the PLO and Palestinian Authority, which may include some new concessions and recognition of the Palestinian Authority as a formal state, of course without the content of any independent national state. In the context of a capitalist Middle East, a "two-state" solution in reality means constructing a puppet enslaved statelet in the shadow of a major regional power, one of the strongest military forces globally. This would guarantee immense material and political inequality and no solution to the national aspirations of the mass of the Palestinian refugees as well. This is a non-starter" ... This does not mean that a "one-state" program may offer a "better" contemporary solution, as in fact it disregards the deepened national schism, suspicions and strong national consciousness among the two national groups. While standing emphatically against the brutal oppression and expropriation of the Palestinians, a program that guarantees the right for existence, self-determination and equality for both nations is required as a starting point." [20]

Marxists support the right of self-determination only of oppressed nations. On this question Lenin wrote: "Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. They must, therefore, unequivocally demand that the Social-Democratic parties of the oppressor countries (especially of the so-called "Great" Powers) should recognise and champion the oppressed nation's right to self-determination, in the specifically political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The socialist of a ruling or a colonial nation who does not stand for that right is a chauvinist." [21]

## Islamophobia

Related to the question of supporting the right of self-determination of the oppressed nation is the struggle against racism, whether it is against black people in the USA or Muslims in Europe or against real Anti-Semitism (unlike the idiotic false propaganda that Anti-Zionism is Anti-Semitism).

Historically the left in France have joined the Islamophobia campaign: *"Just after the November 2015 attacks, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, 2017 presidential candidate and popular figurehead of the left-nationalist La France Insoumise party, said that he disputed the very term "Islamophobia." Mélenchon, who has consistently called for the prohibition of public displays of religion like Muslim street prayers, gave an explanation widespread across the political spectrum: "For my part," he said, "I defend the idea that we have the right not to like Islam, we have the right not to like the Catholic religion, and that is one of our freedoms."* [22]

Today the French left is divided on this burning issue. On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at least 13,000 people participated in a demonstration against Islamophobia in Paris. The demonstration included Muslim organizations and activists, and some left-wing forces. The French newspaper *Libération* on November 1st printed a call signed by members of *La France Insoumise* and the *Collective against Islamophobia in France* (CCIF), following the attack on a mosque in the city of Bayona on October 28th. A member of the far-right party National Rally shot two people after trying to burn the mosque. The demonstration had a very mild slogan: *"Yes to the criticism of religion, no to the hate against believers". "Nevertheless, some left-wing parties and movements did not join the demonstration, among them of course the Socialist Party, and some leading members of La France Insoumise. Although MPs from the radical left party La France Insoumise (LFI) had originally committed themselves to the march, as the event drew closer, several senior figures distanced themselves from it, including Francois Ruffin who explained that he was going to play football instead. Some signatories, such as the Green (EELV) MEP Yannick Jadot also pulled out, while the Socialist Party (PS) argued that it could not support a text that denounced secular laws. In the end, the only nationally-recognizable politician to attend the November 10 march was LFI's leader Jean-Luc Melenchon"* [23]

Today the question of fighting against Islamophobia is one litmus paper that separates the left from the fake left. It brings to mind the famous case of Alfred Dreyfus. While the truly social democrat leader, Jean Jaurès, defended Dreyfus because he realized that Dreyfus was a victim of Anti-Semitism. Jules Guesde, on the other hand, a radical socialist who established the revolutionary Socialist Party, took an ultra-left position and refused to defend Dreyfus. Yet not by chance – as it happens many times with the ultra-leftists – he turned to the right, united his party with the Party of Jaurès in 1905 to form the French Socialist Party under the leadership of Jean Jaurès. Ironically, while Jaurès opposed WWI before he was murdered, Jules Guesde served as minister of the portfolio during the first imperialist world war.

*Down With the Imperialist Islamophobia!  
Mobilize the Working Class and the Oppressed to Smash the  
Reactionary Attack on Muslims!*

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## France: “Our Republic”?

### Social-Chauvinism and Capitulation to Islamophobia by the Left

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 2.11.2020

The Islamophobic hate-mongering of the Macron government has provoked global outrage and a widespread campaign of boycott of French products in Muslim countries. As we elaborated in our recently published statements, the RCIT – while opposing terrorist attacks against innocent civilians – denounces Macron’s racist campaign against so-called “*extremist Islam*” and stands in full solidarity with the Muslim migrants in France. Hence, we strongly support the legitimate protest actions against imperialist and Islamophobic France.<sup>1</sup>

Macron’s anti-Muslim campaign has also strongly affected the so-called “left” in France, i.e. social democratic and Stalinist parties, “Trotskyist” organizations, etc. More precisely, it has revealed the deep-sitting social-chauvinist mindset of large sectors of the left and their close relations with the French Republic.

As we have shown in documents published after the attack on the racist magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, the “left” in France – similar to many other countries in Western Europe, North America as well as Russia – is adapting to bourgeois Islamophobia because it is deeply integrated in the political and ideological system of imperialism.<sup>2</sup> Macron’s Islamophobic campaign – exploiting the revenge killing of the racist provocateur Samuel Paty as pretext – has again brought into sharp relief these features.

#### Stalinist PCF: Defend “our Republic” against “Islamofascism”?

It is not particularly surprising to see the Stalinist PCF wholeheartedly joining Macron’s crusade against the Muslim world. This party – “communist” in words but social-imperialist in deeds – has a long and shameful history of serving the ruling class against the oppressed. In the 1930s and later it defended the colonial occupation of Algeria. It served in the Jospin government which waged imperialist wars against Serbia (1999) and Afghanistan (2001).<sup>3</sup> More recently, in January 2015, it refused to oppose sending French forces to Iraq.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it has a long-standing record of supporting imperialist immigration control and committing hostile acts against migrants.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, the Stalinists try to drown out the thunder of cannons with their slobbery songs of love and peace. But cannons are louder than songs and the Stalinists’ deeds tell another story than their words.

This was not always the case. As we pointed out in past works, the PCF took a consistent anti-imperialist stance in the first years of its existence in the early 1920s. This was the time when Lenin and Trotsky led the Communist International before Stalin and his parasitic bureaucracy eliminated the Marxist principles of revolutionary internationalism and anti-imperialism. For example, the PCF waged a resolute campaign of solidarity activities in support of the struggle of the Riffian Berbers in the early 1920s. This people fought, under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois Islamist Abd el-Krim, against the Spanish and French imperialists and attempted to drive these occupiers out of its

country. The PCF waged a militant anti-colonial campaign in solidarity with the Riffians which even included a general strike on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1925. In its propaganda and agitation, the PCF publicly expressed its support for the Riffians struggle until “*Moroccan soil was completely liberated*” from both Spanish and French imperialists.<sup>6</sup>

Jaques Doriot, a leader of the PCF at that time, openly stated in the parliament in June 1925: “*If we were in power we would bring an immediate end to the French occupation of the colonies.*” When he was interrupted by the social democrat deputy Pierre Renaudel, a “left-wing” defender of French imperialism, with a question as to whether he had correctly heard, Doriot retorted: “*We shall arrive at power by the revolution. It will be a proletarian dictatorship. We shall proclaim the independence of the colonies, Algeria, Madagascar, and all the colonies will have free choice as to their form of government.*”<sup>7</sup>

The communists took a similar line during the uprising of the Syrian people against the French occupiers at these years. In a Manifesto issued in May 1924, the Communist International stated: “*The Communist International does not confine itself to condemning the actions of French imperialism in Syria as a violation of the right to national self-determination. It calls on the French proletariat to wage an energetic struggle against the instigator of the war, imperialism. (...) The Communist International, including its French section, stands by the Syrians ... in everything they may do to avoid the hated yoke of the guiltiest imperialism in the world today, the imperialism of Poincare, Millerand, the Comite des Forges, and French finance. (...) Syrian peasants and French workers form, perhaps unconsciously, an anti-imperialist united front. It will be the task of the Communist International and its French section to make everyone aware of the unity of this front.*”<sup>8</sup>

However, this has been a long time ago and today’s “communists” are as much communist as the Catholic clergy are celibate. Macron’s call to arms against Islam has reminded the PCF leadership – if it needed any reminder at all – that its place is on the side of “our Republic”, i.e. the imperialist state. This holy institution must be defended – no ifs, no buts – against the “terrorists”. And those “backward Muslim” who don’t kneel down before the juggernauts of the “*fundamental values of the Republic*” need to make the acquaintance of the republic’s police, judges and prison guards.

“*Islamist terrorism has just reminded us that it has been waging a constant war against the fundamental values of the Republic: the intransigent separation of religions and the State; secularism which guarantees freedom of conscience and criticism; freedom of expression, creation and the right to criticize any religion; equality between citizens who must not be distinguished by their origins, their religions, or their personal convictions. This Islamist terrorism has one objective: to spread terror on everyone, to attack democracy and public schools. (...) As the Conflans-Sainte-Honorine attack demonstrates, this terrorism relies on networks claiming to be political Islamism, which claims to be unrelated to jihadism, but whose propaganda feeds it. This threat must be fought wholeheartedly. (...) Those who supported or contributed to the assassination of Samuel Paty*

*must be identified and brought to justice without delay. Hate preachers, fanatics who call for murder, jihadists must be prosecuted, put out of harm's way, severely condemned. (...) The means must be given to public authorities, intelligence, the police and the judiciary to thwart hate campaigns, such as the one against Samuel Paty until his assassination."*<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, the PCF – and other reformist party and union bureaucrats – joined the members of Macron's government at the official memorial event on 18 October.<sup>10</sup> There, they jointly praised Samuel Paty who – according to Macron (and his Stalinist buddies) – is a "quiet hero" who "incarnated the Republic" but who is a racist provocateur in the eyes of 1,5 billion Muslims and all authentic democrats and socialists around the globe.<sup>11</sup>

### Jean-Luc Mélenchon: another "Guardian of the Republic" ... and defender of Putin's crimes

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, leader of *La France Insoumise* which has become the main « left-wing » party in France, shares the PCF' position on the current events in France. This is hardly surprising since Mélenchon and the Stalinists formed a joint electoral bloc for many years before the fell out with each other about leadership positions.

However, Mélenchon has added a particular chauvinist note. He utilized the Chechen origin of Abdoullakh Anzorov, Paty's assailant, in order to launch a disgusting attack. He said: "Faced with Islamist terrorism, it is necessary to respond very precisely. There is a very clear problem with the Chechen community in France. Chechens who are active in political Islam on social media must be found and expelled."

He also said: "We are dealing with madmen and assassins who commit acts of Islamist terrorism which sully their religion and rot our lives (...) And we must also then question what is happening with Chechens in France, for we have welcomed [into France] Chechens who were partisans of a religious civil war. [And] this is the second time we have dealt with individuals linked to this community. The first time they sent 150 [people] to terrorize a city; the second time, one cuts off the head of a teacher (...) we have to wonder what they are doing."<sup>12</sup>

This is a shameful statement which reveals the thoroughly pro-imperialist and social-chauvinist nature of Mélenchon and his companions in the LFI leadership. The Chechen wars in 1994-96 and 1999-2009 were not "religious civil wars" but national liberation struggles as the Chechen people have been brutally suppressed for many decades by Russia. They heroically fought for an independent state but were ultimately defeated by Russian imperialism with the most barbaric methods and heavy losses among its own army. It is estimated that the two wars have resulted in the killing of hundreds of thousands of Chechens (out of a total population of Chechnya of little more than one million people!) and the displacement of the majority of the population!<sup>13</sup> Today Chechnya is a prison camp guarded by the butcher Kadyrov, a loyal servant of Putin.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly shameful, Mélenchon supports the campaign of hatred against the Chechen migrant community, a well-known instrument of the ruling class – not only in France but in the whole of Europe. "The Chechens don't know how to behave" – this is the well-known canon of European chauvinism.

All this is not particularly surprising since Mélenchon is well-known for his sympathies for Putin and his support

for Russia's military intervention in Syrian in 2015 which saved the tyrant Assad from being overthrown by the popular uprising.<sup>15</sup>

### NPA, A&R, GMI: Rallying for the Racist Provocateur Samuel Paty

Smaller, more left-wing forces in France don't go that far. Various "Trotskyist" organizations have (rightly) refused to join Macon's ministers in the 18 October event. Furthermore, they have also denounced the Islamophobic rhetoric of the government.

However, these centrists – "revolutionaries" in words and servants of opportunism in deeds – fail to consistently oppose Macron's campaign or even to understand its very nature. In a statement the *Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste* shared the public sympathy with the racist provocateur Paty: "On Friday, October 16, the NPA received the news of the decapitation of a high school teacher in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine with shock and horror. All our thoughts are with his family, his friends, his students, and his colleagues as well as all people in the larger education community, which has been shaken by this atrocious crime. The NPA condemns this disgraceful act. (...) We express our total solidarity with Samuel Paty's relatives, friends, and colleagues, and more generally with all educators who have been impacted by this assassination. The NPA will join initiatives to express our mourning, our anger, and our solidarity in the wake of this tragedy"<sup>16</sup>

The NPA leadership – whose core is part of the "Fourth International" in the tradition of Pablo and Mandel – is not alone in taking such an approach.<sup>17</sup> *Anticapitalisme & Revolution*, a left-wing opposition current within the NPA (which constitutes – together with co-thinkers in the U.S., Spain and Greece – an international opposition tendency within the Mandelist international) has basically the same position. "Samuel Paty has been the victim of a vile act and we want to express our pain and anger here. Those who commit or claim this assassination in the name of fundamentalism are reactionary bands, enemies to be fought. (...) We invite all unions and teachers to meet in general meetings, even during this time of school holiday, to organize tributes and reactions to Samuel Paty's assassination."<sup>18</sup>

Another small group, the *Groupe Marxiste Internationaliste* (which is the leading force in CoReP), shares the same approach. In a statement called "Against organized Islamist Fascism!", this group claims that Paty was killed "because he proposed to his school pupils to think about freedom of speech in the context of the Charlie Hebdo cartoons about Mohamed. We condemn this murder and state our unconditional solidarity with the relatives and colleagues of Samuel Paty."<sup>19</sup> The cynical language of this statement is characteristic for the social-imperialist arrogance of these people which describe something deeply offending 1,5 billion people as an effort to make young people "think about freedom of speech in the context of the Charlie Hebdo cartoons about Mohamed"!

The quotes from these three organizations demonstrate that most of the French left consider Paty as an innocent victim who did nothing wrong. But Paty was not a "good guy". He was someone who spread the racist cartoons of *Charlie Hebdo* which are deeply insulting and denigrating for all Muslims. He exploited his position as a teacher in order to humiliate young Muslim school pupils. Yes, we oppose his assassination as it only provided the govern-

ment with a pretext for a wave of repression against Muslim migrants. But this does not make Paty one of us. No, he was one of them, a loyal servant of the ruling class and its *Charlie Hebdo* hate-mongering!

By joining the public chorus of sympathy for Paty, French centrism sends a clear message to the Muslim world: “*right or wrong, it’s my country*” to use the British phrase. “*We consider Paty and his racist deeds as one of us. You, the Muslims, you don’t understand this because you are backward. Hence, you don’t belong to us.*” The reader should ask himself or herself: why do these “Trotskyists” not send condolence messages to the friends and families of the hundreds and thousands of Malians who have been killed by the French occupation forces and their local allies in the past years?! The answer is simple: they feel much closer to the French racist teacher than to the African “foreigners” who have been killed by the French Foreign Legion!

### An issue of “freedom of speech”?

We do not deny that the NPA, A&R, GMI and other organizations are sincere in their statements. They really consider Paty as an innocent victim who did nothing wrong. They do so because for them, insulting and humiliating Muslims is fine, it is part of their so-called “freedom of speech”. Indeed, like Macron, the PCF and Mélenchon and the pseudo-Trotskyists present the issue as one of “freedom of expression”.

Such the NPA writes: “*Whatever the conclusions of the investigation, nothing can justify such an assassination. We stand by our unwavering attachment to freedom of expression and educational freedom for teachers.*” Likewise, A&R explained their call for “*general meetings to organize tributes and reactions to Samuel Paty’s assassination*” that they do not want to “*defend freedom of expression alongside those who vilify it on a daily basis [i.e. the government, Ed.]*”. And the GMI wrote: “*It is education, knowledge, information, freedom of speech and art which has been attacked by obscurantism.*”<sup>20</sup>

We note in passing that such a bizarre position is also shared by left-wing Islamophobes outside of France. Andrew Coates, a left-wing blogger in Britain close to the notorious pro-Zionist *Alliance for Workers Liberty*, published a silly polemic against us in which he did not only demonstrate his abhorrence for the RCIT’s opposition to the *Charlie Hebdo* type of Islamophobia but also his lack of geographical knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, all this talk about “freedom of speech” in the context of Islamophobia is camouflage and hypocrisy. Let us imagine Mr. Paty would not have shown denigrating caricature of the Prophet Mohamed but ... Nazi caricatures about Jews or if he would have promoted the fascist lie denying that millions of Jews were killed in the Holocaust/Shoa. Would these pseudo-socialists also have praised Mr. Paty and have called for rallies in defense of “freedom of expression”? Certainly not! But if it is directed against Muslims and their religious beliefs, than it is fine for these “very progressive” organizations! It is also very telling that all the French lefts’ statements mentioned above did not raise a single word of criticism against Charlie Hebdo and its Islamophobic caricatures!<sup>22</sup>

Macron and his Islamophobic left-wing allies claim that the *Charlie Hebdo* caricatures would provoke only a small minority of “Islamist extremists”. But how do they ex-

plain that in nearly all Muslim countries masses go on the streets and support a boycott campaign in protest against Macron and French Islamophobia?! How do they explain that nearly all statesmen of Muslim countries – including the most subservient lackeys of imperialism and friends of France like General Sisi and Mohammed bin Salman – have condemned these provocations?<sup>23</sup> All religious authorities of Islam and even prominent sport figures like the famous Chechen mixed martial arts champion Khabib Nurmagomedov denounced Macron as a “brute” and invoked God’s wrath against him.<sup>24</sup> How do they explain that there is not a single Muslim country where any public activity in support of the Islamophobics’ “freedom of expression” has taken place? No, *Charlie Hebdo* and its numerous defenders in the imperialism world are a racist provocation to the whole Muslim world – similar to the right-wing fanatics who like to publicly burn the Quran!<sup>25</sup>

What Macron and his servants among the French left are promoting is a modern version of medieval principle: *Cuius regio, eius religio*. This formula was the foundation of the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 which ended the peasant war in Germany which was directed against the Catholic Church and its feudal allies. It meant something like that the religion of the ruler was to dictate the religion of those ruled. While both Macron as well as the “Left” claim to defend the principles of secularism, in fact they advocate the undisputed domination of the “religion” of *Charlie Hebdo*, i.e. the freedom to humiliate and insult the Muslim people.

### Marxism and religion

It is a widespread (and shameful) prejudice of large sectors of the so-called left to denounce all movements and struggles which take place under the banner of religion. Hence, many “Marxists” condemn forces associated with Islam as thoroughly “backward”. In contrast, authentic Marxists reject such an approach.

We have elaborated extensively in other documents that Marxists have to understand the role of religion – as is the case with ideology in general – in a dialectical and materialist way.<sup>26</sup> This means that Marxists have to view religion primarily as a distorted expression of social interests. This is often the case in liberation struggles against dictatorships (e.g. in Syria, Egypt), against foreign occupation powers (e.g. in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Mali, Kashmir, Chechnya, etc.) or in the case of resistance against religious and national oppression as migrants (e.g. in France, Britain).

Of course, Marxists reject the socially conservative agenda of such movements. But they cannot and must not ignore the democratic and revolutionary class interests which lurk behind the religious fog, as these manifest the determination of the oppressed popular classes to overthrow a reactionary dictatorship or a foreign imperialist invader. Marxists have to support and relate to these progressive class interests and oppose such movements’ reactionary politics so as to be able to break the workers and oppressed away from the Islamist leaderships and to win them over to revolutionary politics.

We remind the pseudo-progressive left that it was already Marx and Engels who pointed to the complex relationship between ideology resp. religion and material class interests. Engels explained in a letter to Franz Mehring in 1893:

*"Ideology is a process which of course is carried on with the consciousness of the so-called thinker but with a false consciousness. The real driving forces which move him, he remains unaware of, otherwise it would not be an ideological process. He therefore imagines false or apparent driving forces."* <sup>27</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that liberation struggles have taken place many times under the banner of religion. Engels, referring to the peasant wars in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, wrote: *"In the so-called religious wars of the Sixteenth Century, very positive material class-interests were at play, and those wars were class wars just as were the later collisions in England and France. If the class struggles of that time appear to bear religious earmarks, if the interests, requirements and demands of the various classes hid themselves behind a religious screen, it little changes the actual situation, and is to be explained by conditions of the time."* <sup>28</sup>

Marx and Engels could see such a mixture of religion and politics in various national liberation struggles which took place at their time like those of the Poles against Tsarist Russia or of the Irish people against the British Empire. In both cases, Catholicism played a very prominent role.

Consequently, we look not only to the religious and ideological appearance of a given movement but also, and in particular, to the classes and their social relations behind them. Hence, it is telling that the propaganda of "Islamist extremism" has been waged by Russia in the context of its Chechen wars and its military interventions in Syria. The same has been the case with the U.S. and Europe when it had to justify its numerous aggressions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Mali, etc.

Likewise, when oppressed Muslim masses rally against the U.S., European or Russian occupiers under the slogan *"Allahu Akbar"*, when Muslim migrants in Europe – where they face systematic racist oppression – protest against discrimination under religious slogans, it does not have only a religious but also a political meaning as such struggles are directed against the imperialist oppression. V. I. Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution 1917, pointed out in his draft program that politically backward masses often participate in *"political protests in religious guise"*. <sup>29</sup>

In this context it is noteworthy to bear in mind that the oppression of migrants in the imperialist countries also often includes not only a national but also a religious element. <sup>30</sup> This was already identified by the Second International at its Stuttgart Congress of 1907 where it stated in a resolution on immigration control: *"The immigration and emigration of workers are phenomena that are just as inseparable from the essence of capitalism as unemployment, overproduction and workers' underconsumption. They are often a way of reducing the workers' participation in the production process and on occasion assume abnormal proportions as a result of political, religious and national persecution."* <sup>31</sup>

For all these reasons, Marxists have to differentiate: religious (as well as anti-religious) slogans of the oppressors have a very different meaning than religious slogans of the oppressed. The first is utterly reactionary and must be fought no strings attached by revolutionaries. But if the oppressed fight against their oppressors under religious slogans, such struggles must be supported by revolutionaries – naturally without sharing any backward ideologies.

### Islamophobia and the imperialist aristocratism of the Left

How can the shameful position of large sectors of the French left (and not only the French!) on the issue of Islamophobia be explained? The phrase of the PCF which we quoted above – *"our Republic"* – points to an important characteristic of the left in France as well as in many other imperialist countries. As the RCIT has explained repeatedly large sectors of the left and the official workers movement have become integrated in the bourgeois state apparatus. Such integration is not limited to the regular participation of social democratic, Stalinist or left populist (e.g. Melanchon, PODEMOS) parties in national, regional or local governments. It also contains the integration in various sectors of the state apparatus like social security, health insurance, the education sector, think tanks, media outlets, etc. – in other words, in the social and ideological sectors of the capitalist state apparatus (the so-called *"soft power"* of the bourgeoisie in contrast to the *"hard power"* like police, army, judiciary and prison system).

Such a process of integration took place in Western Europe after World War II when these reformist parties become regular participants in national, regional or local governments. It even more increased after 1968 when the education system was massively expanded and the defeat of the uprisings resulted in demoralization of many activists who drew the conclusions to try *"changing the system from within"* (while, as a matter of fact, *"the system rather changed them"*).

This process of integration had two major consequences which are relevant for the issue which we are discussing in this essay. First, the left and the workers movement became more and more based in the upper strata of the working class, the middle layers and the universities. This means, on the other hand, that they became isolated from the plebeian masses of the working class, the special oppressed like the migrants, etc. Hence, the left and the official workers movement have become more and more remote from the problems of the majority of the working class. It is characteristic that the French left – including the *"Trotskyist"* organizations – are totally isolated from the so-called *banlieues* which are home of around 6 million people, a significant sector of lower strata of the working class, and which have experienced repeatedly violent uprisings of the migrant youth. We saw, by the way, the same phenomenon in Britain where most leftist organizations shamefully took an ignorant and often hostile position towards the August Uprising of the migrant and poor youth in 2011. <sup>32</sup>

This process of integration of the left in the bourgeois state apparatus has profound consequences for the material and ideological corruption of the left. It binds the left and the labor bureaucracy to the capitalist state, i.e. they have an objective interest in the well-being and the continuing existence of this machinery. In other words, instead of having an objective interest in the destruction of this state apparatus by a socialist revolution, they are rather interested in its prolonged preservation.

Furthermore, the integration of the left in the capitalist state unavoidable affects its political consciousness. The *"Marxism"* of such a left inevitable becomes *"official"* and *"supportive of the state"*, i.e. it mixes socialist phrases



with crucial ideas of the imperialist state. Among such are e.g. various forms of pacifist prejudices or an understanding of the West as a “*superior civilization*” which has to be defended against the “*backward barbarians*” from the South (such as Muslim migrants).<sup>33</sup> Political results of such a social-chauvinist adaptation are, among others, the failure of most of the left to side with the resistance forces fighting against the imperialist aggressors in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, etc.; their failure to understand the racist and Islamophobic character of the notorious *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons; or their failure to oppose and mobilize against the lockdown policy of the ruling class in the last half year.<sup>34</sup> The Stalinist phrase characterizing the French state as “*our Republic*” perfectly summarizes in just two words the political and ideological identification of large sector of the left with the imperialist state. We have called this process of the lefts’ adaptation as *imperialist aristocratism*.

One result of such integration in the bourgeois state apparatus is the fact that the left is disproportionately strong represented among teachers. This is a sectors which is relatively privileged – compared with the lower and middle strata of the working class – as it is usually related with an academic degree, relative job security (or at least the possibility for such), better income, etc. At the same time, teachers play a crucial role in the education sector of the capitalist state apparatus. They are central to transmit the bourgeois ideology of the state to the youth so that they later become subservient labor force and citizens. It is therefore not surprising that the teachers union and the left in general “*instinctively*” solidarize with Paty since he just “*did his job*” of transmitting the “*values*” of “*our Republic*” to the ignorant school pupils. Too bad that the later and their parents did not to appreciate Paty’s effort sufficiently!

A final note: Of course, our assessment does not mean that *all* activists of the left belong to rather privileged sectors of the society and *none* of them is part of the plebian masses of the working class. That would be a silly caricature of our analysis. But what is obviously the case is that the left is much more based on the former layers and disproportionately underrepresented among the later. As a result, the left as a whole is a milieu which is *dominated* by the mindset and the prejudices of the academic and liberal middle layers and which is rather ignorant of the consciousness of the masses.

Such a relationship between the social basis of reformist and centrist organizations and their political outlook was well-known to the Marxist classics. Lenin and Trotsky already both pointed out this important correlation at their time. In emphasizing the difference between the new Communist International and the old Second International, Lenin said in 1920: “*One of the chief causes hampering the revolutionary working-class movement in the developed capitalist countries is the fact that because of their colonial possessions and the super-profits gained by finance capital, etc., the capitalists of these countries have been able to create a relatively larger and more stable labour aristocracy, a section which comprises a small minority of the working class. This minority enjoys better terms of employment and is most-imbued with a narrow-minded craft spirit and with petty-bourgeois and imperialist prejudices. It forms the real social pillar of the Second International, of the reformists and the “Centrists”; at present it might even be called the social mainstay of the bourgeoisie.*”<sup>35</sup>

Later, when the American section of the Fourth International wavered in the face of the public pressure at the beginning of World War II, Trotsky emphasized: “*But it must now be underlined that the more the party is petty-bourgeois in its composition, the more it is dependent upon the changes in the official public opinion. It is a supplementary argument for the necessity for a courageous and active re orientation toward the masses.*”<sup>36</sup>

Given the much comprehensive “*petty-bourgeoisification*” of the left and the reformist labor movement in the past decades, these hints of the founders of the Third and Fourth International are even more relevant today than they were at their time!

### The necessity to break with the centrist swamp

All these developments underline once more that revolutionaries in France and elsewhere must decisively break with the reformist traitors and the centrist muddleheads! Authentic socialists must draw a line under parties which fail to condemn the *Charlie Hebdo* Islamophobia and which defend “*freedom of speech*” for such racists. Broader speaking, it is necessary to break with the imperialist aristocratism of the left and its left-liberal middle class milieu. Instead it is urgent to defend an authentic Marxist program and to orientate towards the lower and middle strata of the working class and the oppressed.

Our words in the RCIT book on the COVID-19 counter-revolution are no less relevant on the issue of the struggle against imperialist Islamophobia: “*It is these layers which are most dramatically affected by the current triple crisis of capitalism. And it is these layers which will rebel first against the counter-revolutionary attacks. It is these layers which are least affected by all the Stalinist and reformist prejudices. In summary, the slogans of revolutionaries in building a new World Party of Socialist Revolution must be to break with the so-called “Left” and to orientate towards the working class and oppressed masses.*”<sup>37</sup>

The RCIT looks forward to collaborate closely with revolutionary organizations and activists who share our commitment to consistent anti-imperialism and Marxist internationalism!

### Footnotes

1 See on this RCIT: Boycott Imperialist and Islamophobic France! Solidarity with the Muslim migrants! Drive out the French occupiers from Mali and other countries! 26.10.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/boycott-imperialist-and-islamophobic-france/>; Yossi Schwartz: Down with the Islamophobia in France: “We Are Not Samuel!”, 20 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/down-with-the-islamophobia-in-france/>

2 See on this e.g. RCIT: France after the Attacks in Paris: Defend the Muslim People against Imperialist Wars, Chauvinist Hatemongering, and State Repression! 9.1.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/statement-paris-attacks/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Racist Character of Charlie Hebdo and the pro-imperialist campaign “Je Suis Charlie”. Solidarity with Muslim People! NOT Solidarity with Charlie Hebdo! 17.1.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/racist-charlie-hebdo/>; Michael Pröbsting: After the Paris Attack: Socialists must Join Hands with Muslim People Against Imperialism and Racism! Reformist and Centrist Forces try to derail the Workers Movement by Failing to Stand up for Solidarity with the Muslims and Against Imperialist War-Mongering! 17.1.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/france-defend-muslims/>

3 See on this e.g. chapter 13 in the book by Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>.

4 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: France: “Communist” Party fails to Vote in Parliament against Imperialist War in Iraq! 15.1.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/french-pcf-iraq-war/>

5 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: French Stalinists Join the Bandwagon of Anti-Migrant Demagoguery, 24.09.2019, <https://www.thecommu->

[nists.net/worldwide/europe/french-stalinists-join-the-bandwagon-of-anti-migrant-demagoguery/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/french-stalinists-join-the-bandwagon-of-anti-migrant-demagoguery/)

6 Quoted in: David H. Slavín: The French Left and the Rif War, 1924-25: Racism and the Limits of Internationalism, in: Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 26, No. 1, January 1991, p. 10; see also numerous documents from the PCF which are reproduced (in German language) in Jakob Moneta: Die Kolonialpolitik der französischen KP, Hannover 1968, S. 42-61

7 Quoted in Scott Nearing: Stopping A War. The Fight of the French Workers Against the Moroccan Campaign of 1925, Social Science Publishers, New York City 1925, p. 21

8 Extracts from an ECCI Manifesto against French Imperialism in Syria, 11 May 1924, in: Jane Degras: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents Volume II 1923-1928, pp. 93-94

9 PCF: Combattre le terrorisme islamiste. Faire triompher la République démocratique et sociale, 20/10/2020, [https://www.pcf.fr/actualite\\_combattre\\_le\\_terrorisme\\_islamiste\\_faire\\_triompher\\_la\\_republique\\_d\\_mocratique\\_et\\_sociale](https://www.pcf.fr/actualite_combattre_le_terrorisme_islamiste_faire_triompher_la_republique_d_mocratique_et_sociale) (our translation)

10 "Trade unions, democratic and secular associations, left parties, we all were with the teachers, all over the country, on this Sunday, October 18. To all of us and to our fellow citizens, we propose to act together to reduce obscurantist terror and advance the principles of freedom, equality, fraternity and solidarity, of secularism which are the basis of our Republic." (See the PCF statement quoted above.)

11 Sudip Kar-Gupta, Richard Lough: Beheaded teacher was 'quiet hero' who incarnated French values, Macron says, October 21, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-security-idUSKBN2760JV>

12 Quoted in Philippe Alcoy: Jean-Luc Mélenchon Blames the "Chechen Community" for Murder of Teacher in France, 22 October 2020, <https://www.leftvoice.org/jean-luc-melenchon-blames-the-chechen-community-for-murder-of-teacher-in-france>

13 For a short summary of the RCIT's position on the Chechen liberation struggle see e.g. RCIT: Solidarity with the Liberation Struggle of the Chechen People! Open Letter to the Oppressed Chechen People, February 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/solidarity-with-the-liberation-struggle-of-the-chechen-people/>

14 The RCIT has published a number of documents on Russia rise as an imperialist Great Power. They are compiled at a sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

In particular we refer to our book by Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, January 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>; see also the pamphlet by the same author: Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>; see also RCIT Russia: Fight against Russian capitalism and imperialism at home and abroad! Provisional Platform of the Revolutionary Communists (Russian Federation), September 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/platform-of-rcit-russia/>.

15 The RCIT has supported the Syrian Revolution from the beginning in March 2011 and continues to do so until today. Our numerous booklets, statements, and articles on this issue are compiled at a sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>. Our call "Save the Syrian Revolution!" has been published in six languages and can be read here in English: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/call-save-the-syrian-revolution/>.

16 NPA Statement: After the tragedy of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine: anger, solidarity, and rejecting Islamophobia in France, 18 October 2020, <https://nouveauantiimperialiste.org/communiqu/apres-le-drame-de-conflans-sainte-honorine-colere-solidarites-refus-des-amalgames>; in English: <https://nobordersnews.org/2020/10/18/npa-statement-after-the-tragedy-of-conflans-sainte-honorine-anger-solidarity-and-rejecting-islamophobia-in-france/>

17 The RCIT and its predecessor organization have dealt in numerous documents with the history of the Fourth International and its degenerated fragments. In particular we refer to Workers Power: The Death Agony of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Trotskyists Today (1983); this book can be read online or downloaded as a pdf for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/death-agonies-of-the-fourth-international-1983/>; Michael Pröbsting: Healy's Pupils Fail to Break with their Master. The revolutionary tradition of the Fourth International and the centrist tradition of its Epigones Gerry Healy and the "International Committee", <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/healy-and-fourth-international/>. There are also critical assessments of various so-called Trotskyist organizations in our above-mentioned books *The Great Robbery of the South* (Chapter 13) and *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*.

18 Anticapitalisme & Revolution: Après la décapitation de Samuel Paty, l'opportunisme crasse est déjà en marche!

18.10.2020, <https://anticapitalisme-et-revolution.blogspot.com/2020/10/apres-la-decapitation-de-samuel-paty.html>; in English: <https://socialist-resurgence.org/2020/10/23/french-socialists-govt-officials-use-sympathy-over-killing-of-samuel-paty-to-support-anti-islamic-legislation/>

19 GMI: Contre le fascisme islamiste organisé, pas d'union sacrée avec Macron. Pour une véritable laïcité, totale et complète! 19 octobre 2020 <https://groupe-marxiste.info/2020/10/19/contre-le-fascisme-islamiste-organise-pas-dunion-sacree-avec-macron/> (our translation)

20 See the respective statements of these organizations mentioned above.

21 Curiously enough, he calls us "U.S. Left", albeit we are an international organization without any presence in the U.S. (See Andrew Coates: Call from US Left, "For popular action to close down the racist Charlie Hebdo magazine!", 27 October 2020, <https://tendancecoatesy.wordpress.com/2020/10/27/call-from-us-left-for-popular-action-to-close-down-the-racist-charlie-hebdo-magazine/>)

22 For a more detailed analysis of the disgusting *Charlie Hebdo* caricatures see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Racist Character of Charlie Hebdo and the pro-imperialist campaign "Je Suis Charlie". Solidarity with Muslim People! NOT Solidarity with Charlie Hebdo! 17.1.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/racist-charlie-hebdo/>

23 The only state leader who expressed support for Macron has been so far Anwar Gargash, the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates. He said: "[Muslims] have to listen carefully to what Macron said in his speech. He doesn't want to isolate Muslims in the West, and he is totally right." He added Muslims "need to be integrated in a better way" in Western nations. (...) *The French state has the right to search for ways to achieve this in parallel with combating extremism and societal closure.*" (Al Jazeera: UAE minister backs Emmanuel Macron's remarks on Muslims, 2 November 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/2/uae-minister-backs-emmanuel-macrons-remarks-on-muslims>) However, it is characteristic in itself that the only prominent representative in the Muslim world coming to aid of Macron is a minister of the United Arab Emirates, a totalitarian Arab monarchy which has become Israel's Best Friend Forever!

24 Russian MMA star attacks 'brute' Macron over Islam, 30 October 2020, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/contents/afp/2020/10/box-mma-ufc-france-attack.html>

25 See on this e.g. the RCIT statement: New anti-Islam film: We condemn the latest imperialist-racist assault on the Muslims! 13.9.2012, <https://rcitarchive.wordpress.com/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/prottest-against-anti-islam-film/>

26 See, e.g., ISL: Islam, Islamism and the Struggle for Revolution, November 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/islam-and-revolution/>; Yossi Schwartz: The Marxist View of Religion in General and Islam in Particular, December 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/marxism-and-islam/>; Michael Pröbsting and Simon Hardy: Theses on Islamism, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-islamism/>

27 Friedrich Engels: Letter to Franz Mehring (July 14, 1893), in: MECW Vol. 50, p. 164

28 Friedrich Engels: The Peasant War in Germany (1850), in: MECW Vol. 10, p. 412

29 V. I. Lenin: A Draft of Our Party Programme (1899), in: LCW, Vol. 4, p. 243

30 For a more detailed elaboration of the RCIT's position on migration and the internationalist program of revolutionary equality we refer readers to various documents which we have published and which are accessible on our website. See e.g., Michael Pröbsting: Patriotic "Anti-Capitalism" for Fools. Yet Again on the CWG/LCC's Support for "Workers" Immigration Control and Protectionism in the US, 30.5.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cwg-lcc-us-protectionism/>; Michael Pröbsting and Andrew Walton: The Slogan of "Workers" Immigration Control: A Concession to Social-Chauvinism, 27.3.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/workers-immigration-control/>; Michael Pröbsting and Andrew Walton: A Social-Chauvinist Defence of the Indefensible. Another Reply to the CWG/LCC's Support for "Workers" Immigration Control, 14.5.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cwg-immigration-control/>; RCIT: Marxism, Migration and Revolutionary Integration, <https://www.thecommunists.net/oppresed/revolutionary-integration/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South, chapter 8.iv) and 14ii), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>; Michael Pröbsting: The British Left and the EU-Referendum: The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism, August 2015, Chapter II.2, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/british-left-and-eu-referendum/part-5-1/>; RCIT-Program, chapter V: <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/fight-against-oppression-of-migrants/>, RCIT-Manifesto chapter IV: <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/chapter-iv/>; See also Michael Pröbsting: Migration and Super-exploitation: Marxist Theory and the Role of Migration in the present Period of Capitalist Decay, in: Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory (Volume 43, Issue 3-4, 2015), pp. 329-346. We have also published a detailed study on migration and the Marxist program in German. See Michael Pröbsting: Marxismus, Migration und revolutionäre Integration (2010); in: Der Weg des Revolutionären Kommunismus, Nr. 7, pp. 38-41, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/werk-7>

31 Resolution zur Ein- und Auswanderung, in: Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress, Stuttgart 1907, vom 18 bis 24. August, Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin 1907, p. 58; translation in English: Weekly Worker No. 1004, 4 April 2014, <http://www.cpgb.org.uk/home/weekly-worker/1004/border-controls-reactory-by-nature>

32 See on this 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/new-english-language-site-1/uprising-of-the-poor-in-britain/>; 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-language-site-1/august-uprising-what-should-have-been-done/>; Bericht der RKOBDelégation über ihren Aufenthalt in London 2011, <http://www.rkob.net/international/berichte/uprising-in-gb/>; Michael Pröbsting: Britain: "The left" and the August Uprising, 1 September 2011, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/britain-left-and-the-uprising/>

33 We have dealt with the lefts' identification with the imperialist civilization in another essay. See e.g. chapter "The imperialist aristocratism of the Lockdown Left" in our pamphlet: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>

34 The RCIT has elaborated a detailed analysis of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution in more than 50 essays, statements and articles as well as a new book. All of them are publicly available on a special subpage on our website and the most important of them have been translated in various languages. See <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>.



# 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!*

