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Maruthei Thangavel (1954-2021) A Revolutionary Fighter

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

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Brazil: Don't Wait for Elections – Defeat the Bolsonaro Government on the Streets!

Workers and popular organizations must break collaboration with sectors of the capitalist class!

Statement of Corrente Comunista Revolucionária (RCIT Section in Brazil) and the International Bureau of the RCIT, 17.9.2021

1. Brazil's far right-wing government of Bolsonaro is in deep crisis. Its economy – just coming out of the deep slump in 2020, is contracting again (-0.1% in the 2nd quarter of 2021). Likewise, the social and health situation is catastrophic. The government is deeply discredited as it widely known for corruption. As a result, the regime has lost much of its support. According to the latest polls, Bolsonaro would receive only about 25% of the votes at the incoming Presidential elections in October 2022.

2. As a result, Bolsonaro tries to mobilize his supporters and has implicitly threatened with a coup. The President is also attacking the Supreme Court and other institutions which are involved in investigations of corruption by the Bolsonaro clan and which could impeach him and send him and his two sons to jail. However, despite deploying huge state resources, the number of participants in the two pro-Bolsonaro demonstrations on Independence Day (7 September) in Brasília and São Paulo was clearly below their expectations.

3. If Bolsonaro would carry out such a coup, the RCIT would call the workers and popular organizations to stop it via a general strike and mass mobilizations on the streets. Socialists would advocate the formation of armed self-defense guards and appeal to the soldiers to help defeating the coup.

4. However, it is unlikely that Bolsonaro would be able to launch such a coup. The main reason for this is that his government is deeply despised by the popular masses as well as by the majority of the bourgeoisie itself. Many representatives of the ruling class view Bolsonaro as a crazy clown who is incapable of running a state and who discredits the main bourgeois institutions (the Brazilian version of Trump). Under such conditions, a coup by Bolsonaro supporters would probably rather resemble the caricature of the 6 January riot in Washington than a serious coup.

5. The "liberal" sectors of the bourgeoisie stand at this moment in opposition to Bolsonaro (e.g. sectors of PMDB, PSB, PSD, etc.). At the same time, they are strongly in favor of the so-called neoliberal reforms. However, these parties have not enough votes to win the presidential election. For this, they need the popular support which the reformist PT has. The PT and trade union bureaucrats around former President Lula are more than willing to join such a popular front as this has been their strategy for decades. They try to exploit popular hatred against the Bolsonaro government for channeling support for the elections next year. Such a coalition between sectors of the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy constitutes what Trotskyists characterize as a *popular front*. These forces oppose any attempt to bring down the right-wing government by mass mobilizations on the streets as soon as possible. For the leaders of these led popular front, demonstrations have only the

purpose to mobilize electoral support for the possibility to win elections and become the next government. In fact, a revolution that can bring to power a real workers and popular government is far from their goal.

6. The RCIT warns that such a popular front would represent only another version of bourgeois rule. It would be like the Biden government in the U.S. – it would represent a more effective government of the ruling class than its predecessor as it would implement basically a similar pro-business policy of attacks against the working class and the oppressed but without a clown at the top. In fact, such a popular front government could carry out such attacks more effectively as it would have the support of the leaders of the trade unions and popular organizations. We can see this in the U.S. where the *Black Lives Matter* movement – which mobilized such a gigantic uprising in summer 2020 – has virtually disappeared from the streets since Trump lost the election! Likewise, we can see in other countries that a bourgeois-bonapartist agenda aiming towards the creation of a more authoritarian government can be driven forward not only by classic right-wing governments but also by liberal ones (e.g. Macron in France) or by "left-wing" ones (like the Stalinist-capitalist dictatorship in China).

7. Naturally, our warning about the dangers of a popular front does not mean that socialists should not participate in anti-Bolsonaro mobilization initiated by these forces. Of course, this remains an important task for all socialists. However, left-wing forces should work *within* such campaigns to advance a break of the workers and popular organizations with the openly bourgeois forces. We need a workers united front for a general strike against the Bolsonaro government instead of a popular front to advance the electoral fortune of Lula & Co.!

8. The RCIT calls all socialists to jointly fight for:
 * *Mass mobilizations and general strike to bring down the right-wing government as soon as possible! Do not wait for elections or an impeachment to get rid of Bolsonaro!*
 * *Build councils of action in workplaces, neighborhoods and villages to organize the workers and popular masses!*
 * *Workers and popular organizations should break with any popular front!*
 * *No vote for any popular front at the elections!*
 * *For a workers and popular government based on popular councils and militias!*

Brazil: Bolsonaro fails in his call up for the extreme Right on Independence Day

Report by *Corrente Comunista Revolucionária* (Brazilian section of RCIT), 8 September 2021

The *Corrente Comunista Revolucionária*, the Brazilian section of the CCRI/RCIT was present at the last demonstration by *Fora Bolsonaro/Mourão* on September 7, the national holiday of independence.

Unlike other demonstrations, this one had a special ingredient. President Bolsonaro, who is increasingly cornered by the loss of popularity and the lawsuits against him, his ministers and his family, called up his fanatical supporters to turn the celebration of Independence Day into a day of march to the capital Brasília, in a crude imitation of Mussolini's famous Fascist March on Rome in 1922. His intention was to increase his political strength.

It did not work. The media reported that he expected 2 million protesters in Brasília (but at most 40,000 attended) and another 4 million in São Paulo (just over 100,000 attended). The most he succeeded to do was to gather those in the streets who represent what he already has in the

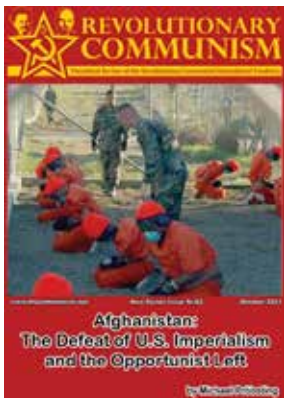
polls, that is about 25% of the votes. But his bravado by threatening to no longer comply with the decisions of the supreme court which he does not agree opened the way for various parties, including the traditional right (PSDB-PMDB) to start discussing the possibility of impeachment of the president. Probably no such impeachment will happen, but it puts Bolsonaro even more under pressure.

Meanwhile, hunger, unemployment, inflation almost reaching 9%, increases in fuel prices, electricity, the water crisis, forest fires, etc., are devastating the country.

As traditionally happens on that date, progressive social organizations and left-wing parties staged demonstrations throughout Brazil (290 cities), with emphasis on Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (around 50,000 people). The main demands were for *Fora Bolsonaro/Mourão!* Against Hunger, for more vaccines for everyone.



Pictures from the left-wing demonstration against Bolsonaro (Sao Paolo, 2.9.2021)



PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

Afghanistan and the Left: Closet Social-Imperialism

A critique of reformist and centrist forces which are outraged about the Taliban's victory against the U.S. occupation in Afghanistan

by Michael Pröbsting

Introduction * The Class Character of the Afghan Insurgency * The Marxist Classics on Anti-Colonial Wars * A Few Historical Examples * Denouncing an Anti-Colonial Insurgency as Equally Bad as Imperialist Occupation ... or Even Worse * "Trotskyists" Jump the Wagon of Imperialist Public Opinion (CWI, IMT, ISA, IRI) * Some "Orthodox Trotskyists" Follow the Opportunist Trend (COR-TRCI, IG) * The Orthodox Past and the Revisionist Present: The Example of the L5I * A Secret Alliance of US Imperialism and Taliban? Someone Should Tell Beijing! * Stalinists Call Great Powers and Regional Powers to Intervene in Afghanistan * Stalinists and "Trotskyists" Appeal to Capitalist Governments Not to Recognize the New Afghan Government * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

Sri Lanka: Important Struggle of the Teachers

Report by Chandimal Wijetatne, General Secretary of the Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union, 25 August 2021

Preface of the Editorial Board

Below we publish the report of comrade Chandimal Wijetatne, General Secretary of the Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union. Sri Lanka's teachers are involved in an important struggle since more than 6 weeks. They fight both for economic as well as democratic rights as the right-wing chauvinist government of Mahinda Rajapaksa tries to intimidate the teachers.

The situation in the country's education sector is devastating. The government utilizes the COVID pandemic in order to expand its power. It has closed school which effectively means that many children have no longer access to education. According to a report by comrade Upul Siriwardena, President of the Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union, teachers are doing their best to continue education for school students by online teaching. However, as the comrade reports, there are enormous limits as 60% of the school students have no access to the internet at home!

There exist a number of trade unions among the teachers (similar to the situation in many other sectors of Sri Lanka's working class). The Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union is one of the more sizeable unions with a membership of about 3000 teachers. It is the second largest union in the Sabaragamuwa province of Sri Lanka.

The teachers' struggle has received wide attention in Sri Lanka. The trade unions have organized a number of protests and media activities. Below you find several links about the struggle.

Excerpts from a Press Conference with Upul Siriwardena speaking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4Y880Os308> (Minute 9:21 to 9:56)

Statement by Chandimal Wijetatne: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1799660423625074/permalink/3015722418685529/>

Other pictures and videos from the teachers struggle: [https://www.facebook.com/%E0%B6%BD%E0%B6%82%E0%B6%9A%E0%B7%8F-%E0%B7%83%E0%B7%8A%E0%B7%80%E0%B7%8F%E0%B6%B0%E0%B7%93%E0%B6%B1-%E0%B6%9C%E0%B7%94%E0%B6%BB%E0%B7%94-%E0%B7%83%E0%B7%9A%E0%B7%80%E0%B7%8F-%E0%B7%83%E0%B6%82%E0%B6%9C%E0%B6%B8%E0%B6%](https://www.facebook.com/%E0%B6%BD%E0%B6%82%E0%B6%9A%E0%B7%8F-%E0%B7%83%E0%B7%8A%E0%B7%80%E0%B7%8F%E0%B6%B0%E0%B7%93%E0%B6%B1-%E0%B6%9C%E0%B7%94%E0%B6%BB%E0%B7%94-%E0%B7%83%E0%B7%9A%E0%B7%80%E0%B7%8F-%E0%B7%83%E0%B6%82%E0%B6%9C%E0%B6%B8%E0%B6%BA-108488264365010/photos/pcb.3015701355354302/295200575693777)

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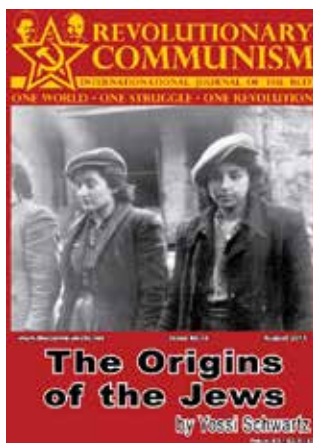
<https://www.facebook.com/108488264365010/photos/gm.3015371568720614/294915645722270/>

Sri Lankan government teachers called an online strike since 12th of July this year. This struggle has been erupted due to the arrest of few teachers' trade union leaders along with university student leaders. They protested against the proposed bill of Kothalawala Defence university. Sri Lankan government charged that these trade union leaders had violated the quarantine law of the country and illegally they were transported and confined into a quarantine centre.

At the beginning teachers protested only for this illegal act. But later their real grievances have come out and demanded to solve their 23 years long salary anomalies problem. So many protests, demonstrations have been organized by teacher trade unions. These agitation actions have been spread throughout the local towns and cities with the help of huge gathering of teachers.

At present, two teachers' trade union blocks lead the struggle. One teachers' front is led by teachers' trade union which affiliated with political parties and the second block is consisted with non-political party influenced forces. But their all demands are relied on salary anomalies. Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union works with the second block as an independent force.

The struggle is temporarily called off due to ongoing Covid 19 third wave in the country. Sri Lankan government has appointed a sub-ministerial committee to find ways and means to solve the problem.



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

Sri Lanka: Government says no Money to Solve Teachers' Salary Anomalies

Report by Upul Siriwardena, President of the Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union, 7 September 2021

Preface of the Editorial Board

Below we publish the report of comrade Upul Siriwardena, President of the Ceylon Independence Teacher Service Union. The struggle of Sri Lanka's teachers for higher wages and against authoritarian attacks, which started in mid-July, is continuing.

The teachers' struggle is an important development of the class struggle and has clearly impacts on the domestic political situation. This is reflected in the fact that the right-wing chauvinist government of Gotabhaya Rajapaksa has been forced to create a sub-ministerial committee to deal with the demands of the teachers.

As comrade Upul Siriwardena indicates at the end of his report, it is crucial to build a single united front of struggle of different teachers' unions in order to unite the teachers and to push forward the bureaucratic leaders of various unions.

It is clear that the struggle of teachers deserves the full support of socialists in Sri Lanka and internationally. A successful outcome of this strike would be an encouragement for other sectors of the working class to enter the struggle. It would also politically weaken the chauvinist Gotabhaya government and, by this, improve the conditions of the oppressed national minority of the Tamils to fight for their rights.

The Sri Lankan teachers have been continuing an online teaching strike since 12th July this year. It seems to be going forward without solution. Meanwhile the government has reshuffled the cabinet and even appointed a new education minister in order to create the impression of change and to pacify the teacher's struggle. The President has appointed a sub-ministerial committee to find a solution to address the teachers' issue.

Now they have declared their stance on teachers' salary anomalies. In Table 1 and 2 we document the offers of the government.

In addition to above mentioned salary increment, an allowance of Rs 5000/- is ready to be paid for the forthcoming September & October. This allowance is mere petty cash to deflect the teachers' anger towards the government. The government's next intention is to release the delayed Ordinary Level Exam's result for the whole island. Along with online teachers' strike, aesthetic subjects teachers have boycotted "practical test" of O/L candidates. Therefore, the government could not release the results yet. The government says that the proposed salary increment would be implemented in four instalments due to ongoing economic hardships.

The teachers have demanded more than three times higher salary increment than offer of the government. Due to prevailing Corona pandemic, the teachers' trade unions demanded to pay the proposed salary increment at once. In response, one of the ministers who represents the cab-

Books of the RCIT

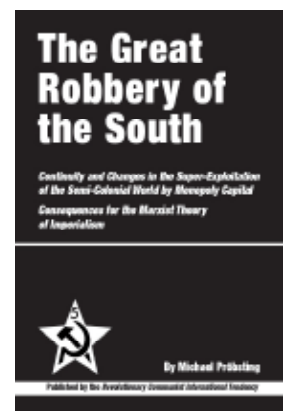
Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *THE GREAT ROBBERY OF THE SOUTH*. The book's subtitle is: *Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*. The book is in English-language. It has 15 chapters, 448 pages and includes 139 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who is the International Secretary of the RCIT.

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He shows that the relationship between the small minority of rich capitalist countries and the huge majority of mankind living in the semi-colonial world forms one of the most important elements of the imperialist world system we are living in. The Great Robbery of the South shows that the past decades have been a complete confirmation of the validity of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its programmatic conclusions. *The Great Robbery of the South* demonstrates the important changes in the relationship between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Using comprehensive material (including 139 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that never before

has such a big share of the world capitalist value been produced in the South. Never before have the imperialist monopolies been so dependent on the super-exploitation of the semi-colonial world. Never before has migrant labor from the semi-colonial world played such a significant role for the capitalist value production in the imperialist countries. Never before has the huge majority of the world working class lived in the South – outside of the old imperialist metropolises.

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future. Order your copy NOW! \$20 / £13 / €15 plus p+p (21\$ for US and international, £9 for UK, €10 for Europe)



inet subcommittee said to teachers that do not demand a pound of flesh like Shylock. In this situation all teachers' unions – except the government-backed trade unions – have vehemently rejected the government's request to end the strike.

It is evident that the government does not have a plan to solve the struggle in a constructive way but rather launches oppressive steps to curb the teachers' struggle. In this context, teachers may face a bitter experience in the struggle. On the other hand, leading teachers' unions do not have a clear perspective to win the struggle. Obviously, the leadership of the leading teachers' union like *Ceylon Teachers' Union* (CTU) and *Ceylon Teacher Services Union* (CTSU) are in the leadership to the struggle due to the pressure of rank and file members of the unions.

More than two years ago, these traditional teachers' unions proposed to convert the teacher service to "a closed service" by separating teachers from other government services like *Sri Lanka Postal Service* and *Sri Lanka Railway*

Service. They suggested that this would be an advantage for increasing the salaries and improving the living conditions of the teachers. Now the government says they will implement the union's proposal without any significant salary hike.

The trade union which the author of these lines represents – the *Ceylon Independent Teacher Services Union* (CITSU) – unambiguously warned from the beginning about the dangers of transforming schools into "a closed service" and its future consequences.

The pro-closed service unions do everything possible to isolate CITSU in the struggle. But they are incapable to counter our arguments and or to explain what the advantage of a closed service would be.

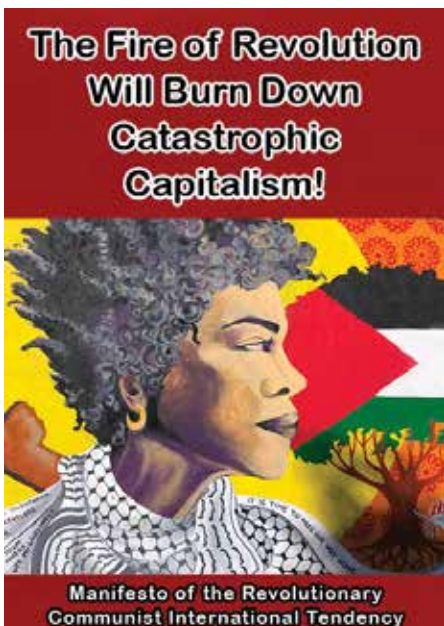
The *Ceylon Independent Teacher Services Union* always stands to defend the teachers' struggle and condemn all sort of sectarianism which sabotages the unity of the teachers in the struggle for their interests!

Table 1. Government Offer for Teachers' Salary Increment

Teachers' Grades	Government's proposed salary increment	US\$
3-2	Rs 3790	\$ 17
3-1 (C)	Rs 4620	\$ 21
3-1 (B)	Rs 5740	\$ 26
3-1 (A)	Rs 6580	\$ 29
2-2	Rs 5875	\$ 26
2-2 (3rd salary scale)	Rs 6585	\$ 29
2-1	Rs 8250	\$ 37
1	Rs 11820	\$ 53

Table 2. Government Offer for Principals' Salary Increment

Principals' Grades	Government's proposed salary increment	US\$
3	Rs 6895	\$31
2	Rs8645	\$39
1	Rs 12020	\$54



New Program of the RCIT

Manifesto for the Liberation Struggle

Adopted at the III. World Congress of the RCIT in April 2021

- * Introductory Note
- * A New Era of Counterrevolutionary Offensive and Revolutionary Upheavals
- * The Capitalist State Monster Attacks Democracy! Defeat Chauvinism and Bonapartism!
- * Great Power Rivalry and Imperialist Aggression in the South: Turn the Guns against the Lords of Power and Money!
- * Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership: How to Organize and How to Fight?

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

Cambodia: Union Leader Imprisoned for “Causing Social Unrest”

Free Rong Chhun! Down with the bonapartist regime of Hun Sen!

By Laurence Humphries, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 28 August 2021

Rong Chhun, a prominent trade union leader, had been campaigning for land rights for many Cambodian poor peasants who say that Vietnam is encroaching on their land.

“The Appeal Court on Wednesday denied the bail request of union leader Rong Chhun who has been charged with “incitement to cause social unrest” in relation to a border issue. Chhun, the president of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions, was arrested on the night of July 31 after he went to meet residents in Trapeang Phlong commune, in Tbong Khmum province’s Ponhea Kraek district. A resident claimed Cambodia had lost land to Vietnam and the Vietnamese authorities had pushed residents 200m into Cambodian land. On August 1, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court charged him with incitement to cause social unrest under Article 495 of the Criminal Code. The Appeal Court’s Wednesday decision came as roughly 20 civil society activists gathered outside the court appealing for his release and the dropping of all charges against him.” [1]

“The Phnom Penh Municipal Court on August 18 sentenced Rong Chhun, head of the Cambodia Watchdog Council, to two years in prison and fined him two million riel (\$500) for incitement to cause serious disorder to social security. Two other activists were also convicted on the same charges. Sor Kanika and Ton Nimol, who were arrested for demanding Chhun’s release, were sentenced to 20 months incarceration and fined two million riel each, according to the court spokesman Plong Sophal. “The court also ordered the three accused to pay compensation to the Cambodian Border Affairs Committee, the plaintiff, in the amount of 400 million riel [\$100,000],” Sophal said.

Chhun was arrested in July of last year for posting claims to Facebook that Cambodia had lost land to Vietnam, citing comments by villagers. Chhun’s defence lawyer Choung Chou Ngy, who also defended Sor Kanika, said the sentence was unjust and he was discussing an appeal with his clients. After the verdict was issued, some foreign diplomats expressed dismay over the

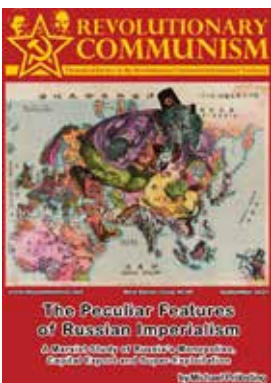
ruling, saying the sentence was unjust and that the decision violated Cambodia’s Constitution, which ensures freedom of expression.” [2]

The verdict of course was expected. The courts, both civil and criminal, are controlled by the Hun Sen Bonapartist government which has turned Cambodia into a virtual police state where all opposition is either banned or outlawed. Hun Sen, the former Stalinist, is leader of a bourgeois capitalist regime which stamps out any opposition to his rule as many political parties and pro-democracy activists have found out.

“Rong Chhun is one of Cambodia’s most tireless defenders of labour rights,” said Naly Pilorge, director of LICADHO, a Cambodian human rights group. “His continued imprisonment at the height of a global pandemic needlessly puts his health at risk and he should be released and all charges against him dropped.” Rong Chhun was arrested from his home on July 31 last year and has been in prison ever since. A month after his arrest, Rong Chhun, who is president of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions and a member of civil society group the Cambodia Watchdog Council, was charged with “incitement to commit a felony or cause social unrest” based on a social media post about the border demarcation between Cambodia and Vietnam.

The border has been a sensitive issue in Cambodia, where anti-Vietnamese sentiment remains strong, since the fall of the Khmer Rouge more than 40 years ago. The opposition has sought to capitalise on anti-Vietnamese feeling, accusing the government under Prime Minister Hun Sen of being too lenient towards Cambodia’s wealthier neighbour. “If the court is independent, I believe it will drop charges against my uncle. He did not cause chaos or incite anyone,” said Rong Vichea, 28, Rong Chhun’s nephew who is worried his uncle could be infected with COVID while in prison.” [3]

Many activists campaigning for democratic rights have been arrested and are languishing in Cambodian jails. It



Publications of the RCIT

The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

A Study of Russia’s Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

Introduction * Another Denial of Russia’s Imperialist Character * The Methodological Failure of our Critics * Russia’s Economy: Dominated by Domestic, not Foreign, Monopolies * Capital Export and the Problem of “Round-Tripping” Foreign Direct Investments * “Phantom FDI”: No Russian Peculiarity but a Global Phenomenon * Russia’s Leading Multinational Corporations and their Foreign Investments * Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Capital Export * Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Migration * Conclusions * Footnotes

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is the policy of Hun Sen to deal with all his opponents in this way. He ensured in the 2018 General election that opposition pro-democracy parties were banned and their leaders either jailed or escaped into exile. Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won all 125 seats. The result speaks for itself.

"Cambodia's government under long-term leader Hun Sen has cracked down on the opposition and critical voices, outlawing the opposition party in the run-up to the 2018 elections and putting its leader on trial for treason. A 2020 report from the United Nations human rights office found "civic and democratic space in Cambodia had been shrinking", and the work of human rights and civil society organisations subjected to "undue interference, intimidation or harassment". Licadho, a human rights group, says 19 activists, artists and human rights defenders were arrested in the weeks following Rong Chhun's arrest. Sar Kanika was detained a month after Rong Chhun at a peaceful rally calling for his release, while Ton Mimol was picked up at an October rally outside the Chinese embassy. Rong Chhun denied the charges against him when he was put on trial in January, and his supporters were angry about Wednesday's court ruling." [4]

In 2020 Hun Sen had a leader of a bourgeois-democratic party arrested and jailed. Trade union and labour leaders are constantly under attack for defending the rights of workers and poor peasants and establishing basic democratic rights.

"A court has begun its "treason" trial for opposition leader Kem Sokha more than two years after his arrest. Almost no journalists and no non-governmental organisations were allowed into the courtroom on Wednesday, drawing criticism from civil society groups and the press. Kem Sokha was arrested in a midnight raid in September 2017 after a public speech he gave in 2013. In the speech, he talked about receiving support from the US to create change in the country from a grassroots level. He was released in November last year but barred from leaving the country and engaging in politics. The charges against Kem Sokha

led to the dissolution of his CNRP in November 2017 ahead of national elections in July 2018. The ruling Cambodian People's Party took all 125 seats." [5]

The RCIT calls for the immediate release of Rong Chhun. The only way out of the capitalist misery and oppression is the overthrow of the bonapartist Hun Sen regime by a revolutionary uprising of the workers and poor peasants. Such a revolution will open the road to establish a truly socialist republic as part of a federation of socialist republics throughout South-East Asia.

** Free Rong Chhun, defend democratic rights and the right to practice and organise as a trade union. Reinstate all parties that have been banned and proscribed.*

** Establish armed self-defence guards to protect workers, trade unionists and communities against the police and the state especially at demonstrations where they use plastic bullets, water cannon and tear gas.*

** Nationalise all major capitalist and imperialist corporate entities; bring them under workers control without compensation. For a public works plan to rebuild the country and to eliminate unemployment.*

** For a revolutionary constituent assembly.*

** For a workers and poor peasant government based on popular councils and militias.*

** Build revolutionary workers parties nationally and internationally! Join the RCIT!*

Footnotes

- 1) [Rong Chhun denied bail | Phnom Penh Post](#)
- 2) [Chhun sentenced to two years | Phnom Penh Post](#)
- 3) [Cambodia union leader faces court verdict as crackdown continues | Human Rights News | Al Jazeera](#)
- 4) [Cambodia jails union leader for two years for 'incitement' | Labour Rights News | Al Jazeera](#)
- 5) [Cambodia: 'Treason' trial for opposition leader begins | Cambodia News | Al Jazeera](#)

RCIT Publications on Kashmir & India

- * **"Azadi Kashmir": Marxists and the independence of Kashmir**
- * **The Kashmir Question and the Indian Left Today**
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Written by Michael Pröbsting
(International Secretary of the RCIT)

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Comrade Maruthei Thangavel – Presente!

An Obituary by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 August 2021

It is with great sadness that we have to inform the public that our comrade Maruthei Thangavel – the founder and a leading member of the RCIT's section in Sri Lanka – has died after a long period of illness at the age of 67 years. Comrade Thanga – as everyone called him – was a Tamil worker and a Trotskyist militant for many years.

Comrade Thanga dedicated his whole life to the liberation struggle of the working class. The focus of his political work was the *Socialist Plantation Service Union*, a trade union which focused on the improvement of the living conditions of the Tamil plantation workers. This work was very hard and difficult. The Tamil plantation workers are usually forced to live in small, isolated and very poor villages with only limited access to electricity and water. They face very harsh conditions of super-exploitation by the landowners. Furthermore, they are oppressed as they belong to a national minority which has faced horrific oppression by the state for many decades. Add to this that trade unionists like comrade Thanga also had to face the bureaucratic apparatus of the official trade union which has close relations to the landowners and the state, and which tries to harass socialist activists by any means possible.

Comrade Thanga was not only a dedicated trade unionist but also a Trotskyist activist for many years. First a member of the CWI section, he went with the comrades who split in 2007 with the faction which remained loyal to the center around Peter Taaffe. This group became the *Socialist Party of Sri Lanka* (SPSL) and joined our predecessor organization (the L5I) in the following year. It was in this period when the cadres who later founded the RCIT met the Sri Lankan comrades including comrade Thanga.

In January 2011 an internal debate about the Tamil question began in the SPSL which was provoked by discussion at the Asian congress of our predecessor organization at that time. At this congress comrade Michael Pröbsting – a member of the L5I's international leadership at that time and the RCIT's International Secretary today – argued that revolutionaries should support the slogan of an independent socialist Tamil Eelam if the Tamil people in Sri Lanka in their majority support such a goal. This was an application of the classic Leninist position that Marxists support the right of oppressed people to separate and build an independent state.

Comrade Thanga was the only Tamil member of the SPSL's Central Committee. He fully supported this position and argued with comrades about this issue. However, the majority of the SPSL leadership strongly opposed this idea and urged the L5I's international leadership to censor comrade Michael for a supposed "breach of discipline". The majority of the L5I happily picked up this ridiculous

and bureaucratic accusation and formally criticized comrade Michael because he had raised the slogan of a socialist Tamil Eelam at an internal congress! A few weeks later, comrade Michael, comrade Almedina Gunić (the International Women's Secretary of the L5I at that time and of the RCIT today) and other comrades were expelled because we had launched a faction struggle against the centrist degeneration of the L5I.

Comrade Thanga was not deterred by this outburst of bureaucratic chauvinism. He stood by the Leninist program of national liberation of oppressed people despite the massive pressure of the majority of the SPSL and L5I leadership.

One should bear in mind that this discussion did take place not in "free" Western country but in Sri Lanka where the right-wing chauvinist regime of Rajapaksa had brutally smashed the de facto state of the Tamil people in the North and East of the country (led by the so-called *Tamil Tigers*) and slaughtered about 40,000 Tamils within a few weeks in spring 2009.

But despite all these difficulties, comrade Thanga continued to defend the Marxist principles. After a short but intensive internal struggle, he left the SPSL together with a few other comrades.

When the founders of the RCIT began to build a new international organization in April 2011, comrade Thanga and his friends immediately joined us. Despite the small numbers of militants, he dedicated himself to the task to build a new organization with the same energy as he did before. Soon he came into contact with comrade Kamalanathan and his friends and together they went ahead with building the *United Lanka Workers' Party* – the RCIT's section in Sri Lanka.

Due to his severe illness, comrade Thanga could no longer do the same amount of political work in the last years as he did before. However, he remained a dedicated Trotskyist and a loyal member of our organization until his last breath. Physically, comrade Thanga is dead. But he continues to live in our memories and in the memory of thousands of Tamil workers whom he helped in their daily struggle for a decent living!

Comrade Maruthei Thangavel – Presente!

International Bureau of the RCIT

We refer readers to a special sub-page on the RCIT website dedicated to comrade Maruthei Thangavel which contains other obituaries and pictures: <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/comrade-maruthei-thangavel-1954-2021/>

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Comrade Maruthei Thangavel (1954-2021)

Departure of a Revolutioner

Obituary by the Executive Committee of United Lanka Workers' Party, 27 August 2021

He was born to a working class family at Lellopitiya, Bopeththa, plantation area in Ratnapura district of Sri Lanka. He was inherited with gifted humanity to all human beings. He too was victimised to the grievances of plantation workers. He was well experienced at his early age how his parents were trying to survive as a family.

Thangavel was received his formal education at a school which was situated in his living estate. He excelled both Tamil and Sinhala language. He gained a fair knowledge of English language too. Young Thangavel always fought individually and organisationally against the injustice which occurred to his fellow workers. In term of the true sense, he was a humble and sociable character and gave a leadership to community works.

Thangavel continued his social works through various kind of charity organizations of the area. He felt thrust of doing social works and held various responsibilities in order to uplift the living condition of fellow state workers. He actively participated with "Shramadana Campaign" (collective charity works) and toiled his labour for the sake of his plantation community.

He was not only a social worker but also a militant. He was always grieved on poor living condition of plantation workers and the way them to be exploited by landlords.

He led so many plantation struggles to win demands. He fought fearlessly against traditional state trade unionist, Savomyamurthi Thondaman and his movement. Therefore he had to face so many baseless allegations and had to spend his time at police stations and the courts.

During this period, he met comrade Kandaiah Kanapathy who holds an alternative leftist ideology. Thangavel was attracted to the organisation for which then Kanapathy holds the membership. Marxist workers Tendency (predecessor of United Socialist Party). Thangavel became a Marxist and a Trotskyist and launched the socialist Plantation service union to fight against the monopoly of Thondaman's Trade union hegemony.

In 2006, Comrade Thangavel fought against the theoretical derailment of United Socialist Party and finally formed The Socialist Party of Sri Lanka (SPSL) (a sister organization of L5I). Unfortunately he could not exist with the party for long time. SPSL leadership paid a loose stance on Self-determination rights on minority Tamil people of Sri Lanka. Therefore he re-launched a new workers organization by the name of United Lanka workers' Party which affiliated with RCIT. Till his untimely death, he continuously held the red flag and was an active member of the party.

Red salute to Comrade Maruthei Thangavel!



Pictures of Comrade Maruthei Thangavel, a leader of the RCIT Section in Sri Lanka

Comrade Maruthei Thangavel (1954-2021): A Great Loss!

An Obituary by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, 28 August 2021

It is never a pleasant task to write an obituary. However, it is particularly sad to write such reminiscences about a departed comrade who was so dedicated and unselfish like our Sri Lankan comrade Maruthei Thangavel! As both our Sri Lankan section as well as the RCIT's International Bureau have already published obituaries (see the link below), I will not repeat at this point the biographical notes about the life of comrade Thanga (as he was called by everyone). Rather, I wish to take this opportunity to add a few personal notes about this extraordinary comrade.

The first time, I met comrade Thanga was in March 2010 when we were still members of our predecessor organization – the *League for the Fifth International*. Comrade Almedina Gunić and myself – both members of the LFI's international leadership – visited the section in Sri Lanka in preparation of an impending congress. For most of the time, comrade Thanga accompanied Almedina and myself and supported us with the daily challenges during our stay.

As part of our trip, we also visited several tea plantations which have been a key sector of the country's economy as a result of the legacy of British colonialism. Part of this legacy was also the fact that all plantation workers have been Tamils who initially were brought to the island from India by the colonial masters in the 19th century. They did calculate that these workers could be exploited particularly profitably.

Comrade Thanga, himself a Tamil worker, lived among the plantation workers. Usually, these workers live in isolated places, poor villages where people often have no electricity and water in their small houses. Comrade Thanga had a very small "house", more precisely it was a small hut with two rooms.

He was an extraordinary dedicated comrade. He was heart and soul of "his" trade union – the *Socialist*

Plantation Service Union – which fought for the interests of the plantation workers. He spent most of his time in supporting other workers and defending them against the greedy and cruel landowners. He went to the bosses arguing on behalf of these workers, writing formal letters, giving legal advice, organizing meetings, recruiting new members, etc.

When he told us stories about his trade union work, one could see in his eyes how deeply interwoven he has always been with these workers. His kind of trade union work was not limited to the "usual" wage negotiations etc. To give only one example which he told me. A female plantation worker broke her leg during her work (the plantations are often in mountainous areas with steep hillside so their work is often very dangerous). The criminal landowner instructed his workers to continue their job and not to care about her. At one point, the workers refused the order and brought her to a doctor. The landowner tried to punish these workers by reducing their wage. Comrade Thanga stepped in and supported the workers in their protest.

Comrade Thanga was a kind of full-time trade union organizer (and also working for the party) but he hardly got a regularly wage. One always wondered how he managed to survive. But his "secret" was that he was so beloved by other workers that they always supported him on one way or another.

While building the trade union and defending the day-to-day struggle of the plantation workers was the focus of his activities, comrade Thanga was not only a trade union activist but also a revolutionary militant and party member.

During resp. in wake of my second visit to the country – in January 2011 – I learned another side of his personality. As mentioned in the RCIT's obituary, I raised at an international congress of our predecessor organization



Maruthei Thangavel and Kamalanthan, leaders of the RCIT Section in Sri Lanka

the necessity to support the slogan of an independent socialist Tamil Eelam if the Tamil people in Sri Lanka in their majority would support such a goal. This was only an application of the Marxist position of the right of oppressed people to separate and to build an independent state. However, the majority of the SPSL leadership was very hostile to this idea.

Comrade Thanga was very interested in this issue and in a break of the congress he came to me and asked me questions about the Marxist program on the national question. He was not quick in drawing conclusions and while I had the impression that he sympathized with this idea he didn't tell me anything about his conclusions about this issue. Then, at a next session of the congress there was a certain tumult among the delegation of the Sri Lankan section (all in all about 10 comrades or so). They discussed animated in Sinhala so I couldn't understand what it was about. When other delegates asked what the cause of the debate was, the leaders of the delegation refused to answer and just said that everything was fine. When we later found out that the reason were differences on the Tamil question, it became clear that the majority of the SPSL leaders had already developed a strong bureaucratic mentality.

Comrade Thanga was very loyal and did not want to undermine his comrades. So he too didn't tell me what was the issue of the tumult. When the congress had finished and I left the country I had no idea about the differences within the Sri Lankan section. I only got a hazy notion when the majority of the LFI leadership informed me some weeks later about the outrage of the SPSL leaders and censored me – for defending the Leninist program at an internal congress!

However, we only got a clear picture when we received a postal letter from comrade Thanga in which he informed us that he and some other comrades had to break with the SPSL because of their hostility to the program of national liberation for the Tamil people. This letter filled us with enthusiasm as we received it in the very days of our bureaucratic expulsion from the L5I in April 2011. Similar to the SPSL leaders who could not stand the Leninist program on the Tamil question, the majority of the L5I leaders could not stand our defense of the Leninist

principles. (For more details of our faction struggle against the centrist degeneration of the L5I and our expulsion, see my book: *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*, December 2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/>)

Comrade Thanga was not a theoretician. He was a revolutionary activist, fighting for the interests of his class brothers and sisters and his strong sides were agitation and organizing. But while he might have read less from Marx, Lenin and Trotsky than some of his comrades in the SPSL leadership, he knew what was right and what was wrong. In this situation he demonstrated an extraordinary courage. He was the only Tamil member in the Central Committee of the SPSL and he was alone in consistently defending the right of national self-determination of the Tamil people. He was bureaucratically harassed and only few comrades among the membership supported him. Still, he refused to capitulate and he did stick to the principles. He was prepared to face the consequences and worked towards building a new organization. Soon, he joined us but we could also not offer him a rosy future as we were very small at that time. But for him, principles were more important than positions and Marxism more important than money.

In this way, comrade Thanga became the founder of our section in Sri Lanka and together with other comrades he eagerly worked towards building a revolutionary party – both nationally as well as internationally. Despite his declining health he never waived in his dedication to the revolutionary cause. I remember him very well during my third visit to the country when he spoke at a conference with passion. His contributions were always clear and concrete, orientated to solve problems.

We will strongly miss comrade Thanga! Naturally we can not bring his body to life again. But we can – and we will – continue the struggle for the revolutionary program of liberation of the workers and oppressed, for the very ideas for which comrade Thanga did dedicate his life. In our struggle, in our collective organizations, comrade Thanga and his contribution to the cause of revolution will continue to exist. It is in this way that we will make him immortal!



Maruthei Thangavel and Michael Pröbsting (on the left side)

We miss you, Comrade Maruthei Thangavel

An Obituary by Almedina Gunic, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 31 August 2021

It was eleven years ago when I first met comrade Thangavel during a travel as an international delegate. Together with comrade Michael Pröbsting, I got the honor to meet Thanga in person who supported us during the visits at the tea plantations. At that time, all three of us were members of the *League for the Fifth International*.

Thangavel was fully dedicated to the cause of helping and supporting the workers and their families at the plantations. He would write letters with demands from the workers in handwriting, rephrase them many times until they are perfectly formulated and then he would read them out and discuss with the workers if they agree with the formulations he chose. If they agreed, he would type them down on an old type writer. Sometimes he would repeat this procedure for weeks as the letters were often enough ignored by the plantation managers or even "lost" by them. He was able to speak Tamil, Sinhala and English - a very rare if not unique combination of skills on the plantations.

He visited workers who were injured at work, harassed by the plantation management, desperate about the dreary living situation. He lived at one of the plantation, in a small housing, build like all the others out of clay. No running water, nor electricity. No connection to the world outside except for his small, old cellphone he carried with him like a precious tool.

Thanga organized his revolutionary work the same way he organized everything in his life: with great care, discipline and dedication. He woke up very early, did his exercises to stay healthy and tackled the tasks of the day. He would not drink alcohol or smoke, he would not laze around or miss appointments. He would read whenever he got the chance. Surrounded by the dirty earth of the plantations, he managed to maintain his appearance clean

and orderly. Domestic work was easy for him, he organized his house self-sufficient - often enough the women workers mentioned his approach as a positive example when their husbands would not do their chores.

When we rejoined our forces and elaborated the first manifesto of the RCIT, he organized himself a printed copy and started teaching lessons about its content with many of the younger plantation workers. He taught the children, the young (and not so young) adults to read and to write if they wanted to learn it.

He was rarely alone in his house. This was not a surprise as he would keep his spirit high in every situation, confident about the just cause of socialist work. He was a magnet for those around him. Thangavel was a man of great kindness, somebody who inspires people to fight for a better world, even if everything seemed doomed just a moment ago. No wonder, he chose the more demanding path to struggle for the national liberation of Tamil people instead of surrendering to chauvinism. No wonder he was willing to build the RCIT with all the difficulties at the early stages.

Whenever people talked to him, be it a daughter of one of the workers talking about her dream to leave the plantations and live in a city - be it an older worker who worried about his health - be it a strong (and very impatient) women worker who demanded from him to visit the managers with her yet again - he would listen and speak with the highest amount of concentration and presence.

Whenever I met Thanga, he offered us smart observations and bright conclusions. Once, he explained in detail the historic developments of the rail traffic system in Sri Lanka. Another time he informed us about the working situation of the tuk tuk drivers. He explained the steps of weaving a bag which one of the young woman at the plantations gave me as a gift.

Comrade Michael Pröbsting correctly stated that Thanga was not a man of theory in the sense of a writer of books. I am convinced this was not because of missing talent. It was his deliberate choice - a life dedicated to learn from the workers and oppressed themselves. Dedicated to revolutionary work on the ground, to the life in the present moment and the struggle for a marvelous future. Indeed, we need such extraordinary people to build a socialist world - comrade Thangavel will be missed deeply.

It is difficult to do comrade Thangavel justice in an obituary likewise to express the deep sadness about his passing in words. It is in our daily work as revolutionaries where we have to honour our lost comrade by living up to his discipline, modesty, empathy and dedication.



Almedina Gunic with Maruthei Thangavel

Afghanistan, Health Pass and the End of Bourgeois Democracy

By *Damián Quevedo, Convergencia Socialista (RCIT Section in Argentina), 27 August 2021*

The States of the European Union (EU) are seeking the tightening of restrictions on the entry of immigrants. As we pointed out in previous notes, the so-called Green Card is ultimately a social passport that will allow capitalists to establish who are acceptable visitors and who are not, who is “healthy” or “infected”. This possibility, in the hands of the bourgeoisie, will be, if consolidated, a phenomenal weapon against those below!

Spain is one of the countries at the forefront of immigration controls. Argentine tourists who want to travel to Spain will only be able to enter if they had received two doses of any of the coronavirus vaccines accepted by the EU or the World Health Organization, which cannot be combined with another one which is not approved, according to the embassy of that country in Argentina. (Página 12, 08/25/2021).

It is not by chance that these types of tools appear in these times when the population surplus is one of the manifestations of the crisis. The massive migration of millions of the dispossessed increases the social problems of imperialist countries, due to the increase of a labor force that cannot be absorbed by capital. What ends up being produced is a huge increase in unemployment and marginalization!

Spain is, along with Greece, an imperialist country, albeit not as developed as other powers. It is precisely for this reason that this country is behind in the global competition in the multimillion-dollar vaccine market and has to settle, like most of the world, to buy what others produce!

The departure of the United States and its allies from Afghanistan will accelerate the European crisis, as it will increase the migration process. Their governments, in particular the weaker, will have to tighten immigration controls, using the excuse of the pandemic. This process will cause a transformation of the political regime, since representative democracy, as it is today, will not serve the capitalists to face such a challenge.

Bourgeois democracy is a historical anachronism, which in the midst of this crisis and with the Covid Counter-revolution in between, was transformed into a political

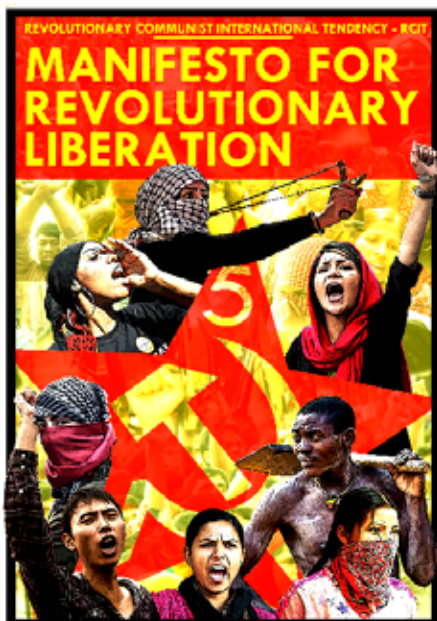
corpse, which the capitalists are trying to bury. But it is the working class, with its methods, leading all the poor people, which must fulfill this task, ending this bourgeois regime and giving rise to another, where direct democracy is practiced, starting from the assemblies of the factories, schools and neighborhoods!

The current pre-revolutionary situation pushes the polarization of the social classes in conflict and the political radicalization. Representative democracy is a regime typical of nascent capitalism. Today, the bourgeois mode of production is in its period of agony, which means that to stay on its feet, it requires much more repressive institutions that allow the big ones to quickly and expeditiously eliminate those who are not in a position to survive the crisis. Obviously, the ruling class wants to use such repressive institutions to crush the mass movement!

For these reasons, when the owners of the world speak of “returning to normality”, it should not be believed that societies will return to the conditions prior to the pandemic, especially to the situation prior to the economic crisis. A return to that recent past is highly unlikely, simply because the social conditions that allowed and justified it no longer exist.

So, as we have been pointing out, it is an urgent need for the revolutionary left to understand this new situation and rearm itself politically and programmatically, strongly calling on the working class to fulfill its historic task. This means that we must fight to bury capitalism and to prevent the bourgeois regimes from becoming monstrous tools at the service of control and social repression.

With what from our international current we have called “Covid Counterrevolution”, the imperialists began to take steps in that direction, which caused crisis, misery, unemployment and all kinds of hardships for those below – a process which has gone hand in hand with the explosion of new and more powerful rebellions. The conditions for the triumph of national revolutions of a socialist character are more than mature, it only remains to take advantage of them!



Program of the RCIT

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

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

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