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Cartoon by Carlos Latuff

## **The Military Coup in Egypt** **Analysis, Program &** **the Failure of the Left**

**WORKERS AND OPPRESSED UNITE!**

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# Revolutionary Communism

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# Egypt: International Solidarity against the Army Crackdown!

*Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14.8.2013*

1. The crackdown of the military-imposed regime against the pro-Morsi mass protests is underway. According to different reports between 300 and 2.200 people have been killed in the first few hours only. The smaller of the two protests, at Nahda Square in Giza, has been already destroyed by the army and police. However thousands of people are still defending the protest camp at the Raba'a al-Adawiya mosque in Cairo's Nasr City neighbourhood. In reaction there have been a number of mass protests and attacks on army bases and police stations (e.g. in Helwan in southern Cairo, Alexandria and Sinai).

2. There is no doubt that these are decisive days for the democratic struggle against the reactionary regime of al-Sisi and his army command. The crackdown demonstrates once more the reactionary character of this regime. This regime threatens to suppress any possible resistance and to destroy the limited democratic gains of the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 Revolution which brought down the Mubarak dictatorship. This is why the RCIT states that the main enemy today is the al-Sisi regime and the main task is to defend the democratic rights and the mass protests against the regime.

3. If there has still be any doubt about the character of the regime, a few incidents in the last days symbolically demonstrate once more its thoroughly counter-revolutionary character. It arrested two leaders of the Suez Steel workers who have organized a number of strikes. It collaborated with the Israeli army in killing four Islamist fighters on the Sinai Peninsula who are part of the just struggle against the Zionist Apartheid state. The regime detained 42 Syrians in Alexandria, including children and a pregnant woman, in order to deport them to Turkey. In doing so it helps the reactionary Assad dictatorship in its determination to liquidate the Syrian Revolution. The struggle for a workers and popular insurrection against the military-imposed regime is part of the necessary advance of the Arab Revolution towards a consistently democratic, anti-imperialist and socialist revolution.

4. The protests against the al-Sisi regime are currently led by the bourgeois-Islamist leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. The RCIT does not support in any way the politics of this party. Quite the opposite, the RCIT supported the mass protests against the Morsi government on 30<sup>th</sup> June and before. These protests were progressive because the workers and poor fought for bread and democratic freedom against the bourgeois-democratically elected Morsi government. However, the military coup created a completely new situation. The army command takeover was thoroughly counter-revolutionary albeit it claimed to be related to the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration. In fact this claim was nothing but a figleaf for the army command, the imperialists and the *fulool* (remnant of the Mubarak regime) to take power directly in their hands and to start an anti-democratic rollback.

5. The RCIT sharply condemns those leftists in Egypt and internationally who objectively helped the reactionary military regime in their counterrevolutionary plans by

whitewashing their coup d'état on 3<sup>rd</sup> July as an "advance for the revolution" or even a "Second Egyptian Revolution". The centrist *Revolutionary Socialists* in Egypt and their international co-thinkers of the SWP(UK) and the ISO(USA) or the IMT of Alan Woods are examples for this shameful betrayal. They are a warning example for the workers vanguard that political organizations lacking a revolutionary method in program and politics will inevitable end on the side of the counterrevolution.

6. The main task today is to organize the broadest possible resistance against the military dictatorship and the current crackdown. The struggle should be organized around the following slogans:

*\* Defend the pro-Morsi demonstrations without giving political support to their leadership. For a broad united front (including Islamists) in defense of democratic rights! For mass action committees to organize the resistance! For armed self-defense units! For a general strike against the military regime!*

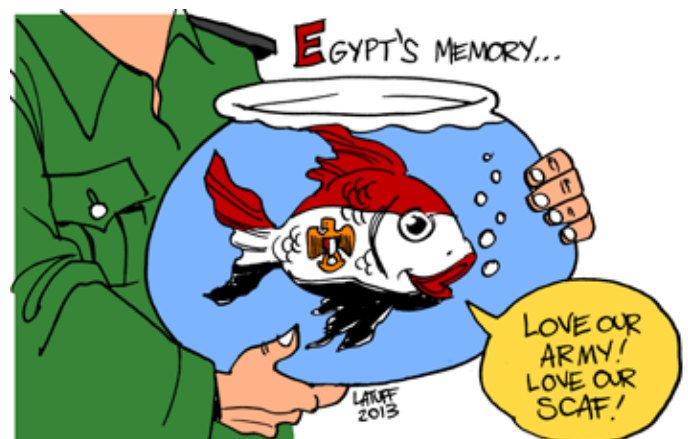
*\* For a Revolutionary Constitutional Assembly elected and controlled by the working people and protected by armed popular militias! Prepare the struggle for a workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as to the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs.*

*\* Advance the independent organization of the working class by building a rank and file movement inside the trade unions against the pro-regime or the pro-Morsi leaderships! For a new Workers Party based on a revolutionary program!*

7. At the same time the international workers movement must rally to defend its brothers and sisters in Egypt and to support their resistance against the military dictatorship. For solidarity demonstrations and protest pickets in front of the Egypt embassies! For material support for the protest movement against the regime! The international workers movement must organize actions to hit the military dictatorship in Egypt!

*Forward in building a revolutionary party in Egypt and internationally!*

International Secretariat of the RCIT ■



Cartoon by Carlos Latuff

# Egypt: Down with the Military Dictatorship!

Leaflet of the Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation (RKOB, Austrian Section of the RCIT), [www.rkob.net](http://www.rkob.net)

**T**he RKOB and our international organization – the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) – support the resistance against the military dictatorship of General al-Sisi in Egypt. We state:

\* Down with the military dictatorship and its lackey-government!

\* Stop the mass murder committed by the army and the police! Defend the right to assembly, demonstrations, free press etc.! Stop the arrests! Freedom for all political prisoners! Stop the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood!

\* For Councils of Action and armed militia of workers and peasants! For a country-wide coordination of these committees and militias!

\* No attacks against churches and Copts! Muslims, Christians, and Atheists: Fight together against the Dictatorship!

\* Down with US imperialism and Israel, which support the military dictatorship of General al-Sisi!

\* Open the Borders to Gaza! Solidarity with the Palestinian Resistance! Long live the Syrian Revolution against the dictator Assad!

\* For a workers government allied with the peasants and urban poor!

\* For joint struggle of the Workers, Peasants and Poor in Maghreb and Mashreq! Spread the Revolution! For a Socialist Federation of Workers- and Peasants-Republics in Maghreb and Mashreq!

\* Build a revolutionary combat party of the workers! For the Fifth Workers International based on a revolutionary program!

\* International Solidarity with the resistance against the military dictatorship in Egypt! For an international solidarity campaign by the workers movement!

As communists we do not support the political program of the Muslim Brotherhood. Quiet the opposite, we supported the mass protests for bread and freedom on 30<sup>th</sup> June. But we are also aware that the military coup d'état on 3<sup>rd</sup> July has created a new situation. Today the main enemy is the dictatorship of General al-Sisi. We defend the Muslim Brotherhood against the dictatorship and its thugs. It is important today to form a united front against the dictatorship.

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency is an international combat organization for the liberation of the working class and the oppressed. It has national sections in Occupied Palestine/Israel, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, USA and Austria. The RCIT is based on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers movement which is associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Join us!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without a revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party! ■

## Down, Down with Sisi! Freedom, Freedom for Egypt!

### Report from a Rally in Austria in Solidarity with the Resistance in Egypt

By Nina Gunić, Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation (RKOB, Austrian Section of the RCIT), 25.8.2013

The solidarity movement in Austria with the Resistance against the military regime of General Sisi continues. After the demonstration on 18th August (report with photos and videos here), another rally took place on 23rd August in Vienna. The Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation (RKOB) again played an active role in the rally.

Several hundred people – mostly Arab and Turkish migrants – expressed their militant opposition against the dictatorship. A number of speakers from the Egypt community declared their solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Egypt.

Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT (the RKOB is the Austrian Section of the RCIT), emphasized in his speeches the international importance of solidarity protests not only with the resistance in Syria, Palestine, Brazil and many other countries. He stated that the military regime is a dictatorship financed by the USA. He called for power to be taken in the hand of the toilers, the working people. He called to prepare for a longer perspective of underground work against the dictatorship and the preparation of a general strike.

The RKOB demonstrated again that it stands for international solidarity in words and deeds!

Photos of the demonstration can be viewed at [www.rkob.net/wer-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei/aegypten-demo-23-8-2013](http://www.rkob.net/wer-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei/aegypten-demo-23-8-2013)

A Video of one of the speeches of Michael Pröbsting at the rally can be viewed at the same link or at the YouTube Channel of the RKOB at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN4Lb7DT4yc&list=UUCSUT4RYehM3d6by9il4AIw> ■



Young Women hold a Speech at a Rally in Austria, 23.8.2013

## Down with Al-Sisi! Long live international solidarity!

### Report on the demonstration in Vienna against the military dictatorship in Egypt

By Nina Gunić, Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation (RKOB, Austrian Section of the RCIT), 18.8.2013

On Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> August, a demonstration was held in Vienna in which more than 1,000 people took part. The demonstration was organized by a number of Muslim associations both from the Egyptian as well as Turkish community. The demonstration was directed against the military dictatorship in Egypt and the regime of Al-Sisi. It was clearly an important demonstration, which brought masses – i.e. ordinary people not organized in political parties – to the streets. This was visible by the many homemade posters which people carried, the mood, and the participation of many families with strollers.

The *Revolutionary Communist Organization for the Liberation* (RKOB) was an active and vocal part in the demonstration. We stand against the regime of Al-Sisi without giving any political support to Mursi and the Muslim Brotherhood. In opposite to all other organizations of the so-called “Left” we are active in the anti-coup mobilizations in Austria and also made public our clear and sharp rejection of the military coup from the beginning.

We spread our political message at the demonstration with our flyers and our paper as well as by our speech. Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of RCIT (of which the RKOB is the Austrian Section) declared in his speech “Al-Sisi would not be in power, if he were not a friend of the U.S. and a friend of Israel.” He made clear, however, that we are not supporters Mursi: “Brothers and sisters, I say: I am not a supporter of President Mursi”. But he also made clear that the resistance against the regime Al-Sisi is now the main

issue and that a united front in the struggle against the military dictatorship is the duty of all anti-imperialists and revolutionaries.

We have supported a successful, combative and loud demonstration. It is a shame that not only many “left” in Egypt but also in Austria have not clearly rejected the military coup on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. It is a shame that they do not show support for the resistance against the dictatorship combined with open political criticism against the Muslim Brotherhood and Mursi. All this shows the lack of revolutionary character of the centrist organizations and reformist forces. Organizations such as the “Left Turn” (affiliated with the SWP(UK) and the Revolutionary Socialists in Egypt) and the “Spark” (affiliated with the IMT of Alan Woods) have incredibly hailed the military coup on 3<sup>rd</sup> July as the “Second Egyptian Revolution”, although this was a counter-revolution in reality. This is nothing but treachery!

Today was a day of international solidarity and true anti-imperialism. We stated and state: “Down with Al-Sisi! Long live international solidarity! For a free Egypt! “

Photos of the demonstration can be viewed at [www.rkob.net/wir-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei/gegen-militaer-aegypten-demo-18-8-13](http://www.rkob.net/wir-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei/gegen-militaer-aegypten-demo-18-8-13)

A Video of the speech of Michael Pröbsting at the final rally can be view at the same link or at the YouTube Channel of the RKOB at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=N\\_LIdw\\_Osso&feature=c4-overview&list=UUCSUT4RYehM3d6by9il4AIw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_LIdw_Osso&feature=c4-overview&list=UUCSUT4RYehM3d6by9il4AIw) ■



RKOB-Banner and activists at a Solidarity Demonstration with the Resistance against the Military Dictatorship in Egypt, 18.8.2013 (Vienna, Austria)

## Israel and the Coup in Egypt

by Yossi Schwartz, Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT-Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine), 21.8.2013

It is a common knowledge that the Israeli government supports the military coup on 3<sup>rd</sup> July in Egypt. The senior Israeli writer, Yossi Melman, wrote in one of Israel's main newspapers, the *Jerusalem Post*, in this connection:

*"Israel's primary concerns regarding Egypt are the possible fall of the military regime or a descent into civil war, either of which could render null the peace treaty that has brought relative calm to the border for more than 30 years. (...) Israel has been engaging in some diplomatic lobbying, particularly in Washington and a number of European capitals, with the intent of persuading those governments against rushing to step up their condemnation of the latest Egyptian military operation to remove the pro-Muslim Brotherhood protesters from the streets of Cairo and other cities. Since the Egyptian military (...) ousted the Islamist government of president Mohamed Morsi six weeks ago, Israel has been secretly maneuvering via friendly nations, deploying heavy diplomatic leverage to stop Western governments, first and foremost the United States, from denouncing the overthrow by the Egyptian security forces, deterring them from calling it a 'massacre'. Israel's fear is that such condemnation would weaken the new military-backed Egyptian government, strengthen the will of the Muslim Brotherhood to continue its policy of brinkmanship."*

Not only Melman and the *Jerusalem Post* have observed that imperialist Apartheid-Israel is supporting the coup but does the international Zionist news agency – the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. It wrote on August 19:

*"The Israeli government is pressing its efforts to convince the United States and the European Union to support the military-backed government in Egypt. The New York Times reported late Sunday that Israeli ambassadors in Washington and the European capitals will lobby foreign ministers, and that Israeli leaders will urge diplomats to see the Israeli viewpoint that the Egyptian military will prevent a further deterioration of the situation in Cairo. The newspaper cited an unnamed 'senior Israeli official involved in the effort.' 'If you insist on big principles, then you will miss the essential – the essential being putting Egypt back on track at whatever cost,' the official told the Times. 'First, save what you can, and then deal with democracy and freedom and so on. At this point it's army or anarchy.'" (2)*

### The Failure of the Left

The question that those on the left who supported the coup have to answer themselves is how it comes that they and Israel cheer the 3<sup>rd</sup> July military coup. These left groups include not only the reformist Egyptian Communist party and the Communist Party of Israel but most tendencies on the left.

Today some of these centrists like the *Revolutionary Socialists* (RS) in Egypt, the British SWP and the IMT led by Alan Woods that supported the coup on July 3, distance themselves from their own position on the quiet. While this is of course better than continuing support for the mass murderous military dictatorship, it is nothing to be particularly proud of since today even the United Nations and various imperialist states have to raise their hypercritical

concern about their Egypt ally's "lack of democracy and human rights". Nevertheless, they are both incapable neither to explain their U-turn nor to arrive to the correct tactical conclusions today.

In their recent statement, the RS leaders criticize the left in Egypt that supported the coup.

*"Many who described themselves as liberals and leftists have betrayed the Egyptian Revolution, led by those who took part in Al-Sisi's government. They have sold the blood of the martyrs to whitewash the military and the counter-revolution. These people have blood on their hands."* (3)

This is like a thief pointing to others and accusing them of theft. It was the RS leaders themselves who only a few weeks ago published several statements about the 3<sup>rd</sup> July events in which they praised the military coup as a "popular uprising", a "height of democracy" and "a revolution of millions", where they denounced the characterization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July putsch as a "military coup" as a "US-Brotherhood plan" and where they condemned the protests of the Muslim Brotherhood against the military dictatorship as "the biggest danger that faces the revolution"! (4)

Even today – after the mass slaughter on 14<sup>th</sup> August – the RS leaders refuse to defend the protests of the Muslim Brotherhood against the dictatorship. Quite the opposite, they proudly proclaim: "Neither did we defend for a single day the sit-ins by the Brotherhood." (5) How can so-called socialists even today – when thousands of activists against the dictatorship are slaughtered – refuse to support this resistance against the dictatorship and join forces with them against this murderous regime?!

All this shows the degree of extraordinary degeneration of the RS and the SWP are going through. Similarly the IMT even today refuse to form a united front with the Moslem Brotherhood against the coup on the ground that the Muslim Brotherhood and the army are equally reactionaries: "They represent two sides of the same reactionary, counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie." (5)

What they refuse to see is that today the main dangerous enemy of the revolution in Egypt is the army and its murderous regime. While the Morsi government acted as a block against the revolution, the present dictatorship of the army is moving to crash the revolution. What is necessary is to form a united front with the Moslem Brotherhood and the Anti-Coup Alliance without giving them any political support.

The Israeli government understands this point and for this reason Israel is lobbying for the coup.

### The Egypt Revolution and Counterrevolution is a decisive test for Marxists!

Today the central test for revolutionaries is the Arab revolution and the political events in Egypt in particular. Those who supported the coup and refuse today to fight against it with a revolutionary program and the method of the Leninist united front are an obstacle for the socialist revolution as the only way out of the Egyptian crisis.

We in the RCIT can proudly say that we supported first

the mass movement against the Morsi government with a revolutionary program and without giving any political support for the liberals a la ElBaradei and Tamarod. When most on the left cheered the 3<sup>rd</sup> July military coup as “an advance of the Revolution” or downplayed its counter-revolutionary danger, the RCIT warned against the danger of a military coup and, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, we fully understood the character of the military-imposed regime as well as the setback it meant for the working class. We immediately declared that the al-Sisi regime has become the main enemy. We elaborated a revolutionary answer for this new situation where the working class was in the defensive and where the revolutionary-democratic demands – including the slogan of the Constitutional Assembly – became particularly important. On a programmatic and tactical level the RCIT has passed this important test. (6)

We urge revolutionaries in Egypt and around the world to debate with us the important lesson of the revolution and counter-revolution in Egypt in order to build a strong revolutionary organization in Egypt and international.

*\* Defend the pro-Morsi demonstrations without giving political support to their leadership. For a broad united front (including Islamists) in defense of democratic rights! For mass action committees to organize the resistance! For armed self-defense units! For a general strike against the military regime!*

*\* Fight for a Revolutionary Constitutional Assembly elected and controlled by the working people and protected by armed popular militias! Prepare the struggle for a workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as to the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs.*

*\* Advance the independent organization of the working class by building a rank and file movement inside the trade unions against the pro-regime or the pro-Morsi leaderships! For a new Workers Party based on a revolutionary program!*

*\* For international solidarity of the workers movement with their brothers and sisters in Egypt! Support their resistance against the military dictatorship! For solidarity demonstrations and protest pickets in front of the Egypt embassies! For material support for the protest movement against the regime! The international workers movement must organize actions to hit the military dictatorship in Egypt!*

*\* Forward in building a revolutionary party in Egypt and internationally!*

## Footnotes

(1) Yossi Melman: Israel supports military rule in Egypt, Jerusalem Post, 16 Aug 2013, <http://www.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/de/viewer.aspx>

(2) Jewish Telegraphic Agency: Israel lobbying U.S., EU to support Egypt’s military government, August 19, 2013 <http://www.jta.org/2013/08/19/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/israel-lobbying-u-s-e-u-to-support-egypts-military-government>

(3) Revolutionary Socialists (Egypt): Down with military rule! Down with Al-Sisi, the leader of the counter-revolution! 14 August 2013, <http://socialistworker.co.uk/art/34141/Statement+from+the+Egyptian+Revolutionary+Socialists+on+the+massacre+in+Cairo>

(4) See e.g. “What happened on June 30 was, without the slightest doubt, the historic beginning of a new wave of the Egyptian revolution, the largest wave since January 2011. (...) What has happened in Egypt is the height of democracy, a revolution of millions to directly topple the ruler.” (Statement by the Revolutionary Socialists organisation in Egypt: Four days that shook the world, July 4, 2013, <http://links.org.au/node/3424>) and “But the stubbornness, stupidity and criminality of the US-backed Muslim Brotherhood and Mohamed Badie, its General Guide, open the terrifying horizons of civil war. This can only be stopped by millions coming into the squares and streets to protect their revolution. They must abort the US-Brotherhood plan to portray the Egyptian Revolution as a military coup. The popular uprising of 30 June threw the Muslim Brotherhood out of power, and its plan is now clear. The Brotherhood is seeking to take over the squares in order to project an image of false popularity for the president who was removed by the uprising. It may even be aiming to negotiate his return to power with the support of the US and other imperialist powers in order to accomplish what Mursi promised to do for them in Syria and the region. Leaving the squares to Mursi and his supporters today is the biggest danger that faces the revolution.” (Statement from the Revolutionary Socialists in Egypt: Victory to the 30 June revolution: Statement of the Revolutionary Socialists in Egypt, 6 July 2013, <http://enpassant.com.au/2013/07/07/victory-to-the-30-june-revolution-statement-of-the-revolutionary-socialists-in-egypt/>)

(4) Revolutionary Socialists (Egypt): Down with military rule! Down with Al-Sisi, the leader of the counter-revolution! 14 August 2013, <http://socialistworker.co.uk/art/34141/Statement+from+the+Egyptian+Revolutionary+Socialists+on+the+massacre+in+Cairo>

(5) See Francesco Merli: Egypt: SCAF and Muslim Brotherhood – Two sides of reaction, IMT, 16 August 2013, <http://www.marxist.com/egypt-scaf-and-muslim-brotherhood-two-sides-of-reaction.htm>

(6) See the numerous RCIT statements and articles since early July:

\* RKOB-Leaflet: Down with the Military Dictatorship in Egypt! [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/leaflet-on-egypt](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/leaflet-on-egypt)

\* Nina Gunić: Austria: Solidarity Demonstration in Vienna against the military dictatorship in Egypt, 18.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-solidarity-demo-in-austria](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-solidarity-demo-in-austria)

\* RCIT: Egypt: International Solidarity against the Army Crackdown!, 14.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-international-solidarity](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-international-solidarity)

\* RCIT: Egypt: Appeal for solidarity after steel workers arrested by army, 13.8.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-solidarity-with-steel-workers/>

\* Michael Pröbsting: The Coup d’État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left’s “Army Socialism”. A Balance Sheet of the coup and another Reply to our Critics (LCC, WIVP, SF/LCFI), 8.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism)

\* Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the reactionary military regime!, 27.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime)

\* RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in Egypt (Editorial for RevCom#12), 22.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/editorial-revcom-12>

\* Michael Pröbsting: The Military’s Coup d’État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics, 17.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat)

\* Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left’s ignorance. Notes on the role of US imperialism in the military’s coup d’état and the failure of the Egypt left, 11.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup)

\* RCIT: Egypt: Down with the Military Coup d’État! Prepare Mass Resistance! 8.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat)

\* RCIT: Tasks of the Revolution in Egypt, 2.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution). All articles except the two latest one have been published in the RCIT’s international journal *Revolutionary Communism* No. 12 (July/August 2013). ■

## Egypt: Solidarity with Steel Workers arrested by Army

*Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 13.8.2013*

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) supports the following appeal which has been published at the website of the *Revolutionary Socialists* in Egypt in Arabic language and at the website of the *MENA Solidarity Network* in English language (1). We call all organizations and activists of the international workers movement to support and distribute this appeal. The arrest of two of the leaders of the Suez Steel workers' strike, Amr Yusif and Abd-al-Ra'uf, demonstrates once more the reactionary character of the reactionary regime which came to power on 3<sup>rd</sup> July via a coup d'état of the army command against the Morsi government. These attacks on the workers movement show once more how terrible wrong many of the Egyptian and international left are, who claim that this coup d'état was an "advance for the revolution" or even a "Second Egyptian Revolution". In fact, as the RCIT explained in numerous documents and articles, the coup led by General al-Sisi was a counter-revolutionary setback for the Egyptian working class. (2) It is necessary to point out that one of the initiators of the appeal below – the *Revolutionary Socialists* – is a prominent force amongst those who deny until today that the reactionary takeover of 3<sup>rd</sup> July was a reactionary coup. Instead, the *Revolutionary Socialists* – a centrist organization affiliated to the Cliffite SWP(UK) – claims that the overthrow of the Morsi government was a result of the revolutionary masses' struggle. Therefore they shamefully neither condemn the coup d'état nor do they support the mass protests against the coup (which are currently led by the bourgeois-Islamist Muslim Brotherhood). However in the past weeks the reactionary character of the coup has become so obvious that even the *Revolutionary Socialists* are forced to admit the existence of a danger of "military fascism". (3)

The result of this is complete confusion and a politics – so typically of centrism – of zigzags. This is also reflected in the confused formulations in the first paragraph of the appeal below which speak about "the downfall" of the Morsi government – instead of naming it a coup. Worse, it creates a reactionary amalgam by confusing "the downfall of Mubarak, Tantawi and Morsi in successive revolutionary waves beginning on 25 January and finishing on 30 June". In so doing, they treat the revolutionary overthrow of the Mubarak dictatorship in January/February 2011 as the same as the recent counter-revolutionary coup d'état by the army command against the Morsi government.

The truth is that – contrary to the reactionary myth propagated by many of the petty-bourgeois left – the masses oppose the military coup d'état. This is reflected in the square occupations and the daily mass demonstrations against the new regime. It is also expressed in an actual opinion poll which shows that – despite the increasing repression by the military-imposed regime – 69% of the people oppose the forceful removing President Morsi from office while only 25% support the coup. It is characteristic that amongst those who support the coup 55% are supporters of Hosni Mubarak and the former regime. (4)

As we stated in our previous statements, the task today

is to organize the working class resistance in order to defeat the al-Sisi regime. It is necessary to defend the pro-Morsi demonstrations against the repression of the regime and to apply the united front tactic towards these forces in order to break them away from the bourgeois leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. Revolutionaries should advocate the formation of action committees in order to organize the masses independently of the Muslim Brotherhood and to organize a general strike to bring down the military-imposed regime. The RCIT considers the slogan of the *Revolutionary Constitutional Assembly* an important tactic in order to tackle the massive democratic illusion. Another important task is to agitate amongst the soldiers in order to split the army between the lower ranks and the reactionary officer corps. The strategic goal which has to be prepared in propaganda now is the struggle for a *workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor* committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs. It is around these lines where a *revolutionary organization* in Egypt should be built in the current phase. The RCIT will support the Egyptian revolutionaries in this historic task.

### Footnotes

(1) See <http://menasolidaritynetwork.com/2013/08/12/egypt-appeal-for-solidarity-after-steel-workers-arrested-by-army/> and <http://rev-soc.me/workers-farmers/nrfd-dwn-ljysh-ly-ml-lswys-llslb-wntlb-blfrj-llwry-n-lml>

(2) See Michael Pröbsting: The Coup d'État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism". A Balance Sheet of the coup and another Reply to our Critics (LCC, WIVP, SF/LCFI), 8.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism); Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the reactionary military regime!, 27.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime); RCIT: Revolution and Counter-revolution in Egypt (Editorial for RevCom#12), 22.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/editorial-revcom-12>; Michael Pröbsting: The Military's Coup d'État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics, 17.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat); Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left's ignorance. Notes on the role of US imperialism in the military's coup d'état and the failure of the Egypt left, 11.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup); RCIT: Egypt: Down with the Military Coup d'État! Prepare Mass Resistance! 8.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat); RCIT: Tasks of the Revolution in Egypt, 2.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution). All articles except the two latest one have been published in the RCIT's international journal *Revolutionary Communism* No. 12 (July/August 2013).

(3) For a lengthy criticism of the *Revolutionary Socialists* positions see Michael Pröbsting: The Coup d'État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism". A Balance Sheet of the coup and another Reply to our Critics (LCC, WIVP, SF/LCFI), 8.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism) as well as Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S.



Support for the Military Coup and the Left's ignorance. Notes on the role of US imperialism in the military's coup d'état and the failure of the Egypt left, 11.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/world-wide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup](http://www.thecommunists.net/world-wide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup).

(4) Middle East Monitor: Study shows opposition to Morsi ouster rises to 69%, 11 August 2013 13:18 <http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/6850-study-shows-opposition-to-morsi-ouster-rises-to-69>

\* \* \*

### **We reject the army's attack on Suez Steel workers and demand their immediate release**

Nearly a month and a half has passed since the fall of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood from power, thanks to the action of the masses who did not feel any difference between the policies of the Brotherhood and those of Mubarak. Both opposed the masses and their demands for bread, freedom and social justice. Despite the downfall of Mubarak, Tantawi and Morsi in successive revolutionary waves beginning on 25 January and finishing on 30 June, Minister of Defence General Abd-al-Fattah al-Sisi, President Adli Mansour and Prime Minister Hazem Beblawi have not learnt their lesson. Instead, they divert the masses and make the "war on terrorism" a pretext for dropping demands for social justice during the transitional period.

Striking workers have been in the front ranks of the struggle by the masses since the strike in Mahalla in 2006. It was they who threw down Mubarak, and after him Tantawi and Morsi who saw during his period in office the largest proportion of workers' strikes to demand their rights. Yet the new government of Mansour and Beblawi is dealing with strikers with the same repressive policies, and today arrested two of the leaders of the Suez Steel workers' strike (Amr Yusif and Abd-al-Ra'uf, with the knowledge of the police, while the armed forces surrounded the factory.

The origins of the dispute go back to the signing of a collective agreement between the company and the workforce in February 2012, in the wake of workers' protests. The agreement included provisions to pay workers a profit-sharing bonus, and agreed a pay structure, health care and bonuses. The dispute is about the implementation of a number of provisions in the agreement, most importantly the profit-sharing bonus, as the owner claims that the company is making a loss and that he owes money to a number of banks. When the workers asked at a Ramadan breakfast recently for other bonus payments in place of the profit-sharing bonus, he just kept on talking about his losses. The workers countered by saying that the company has increased its factories to four units, and that it also donated 3 million Egyptian pounds towards paying off the Egyptian national debt.

Workers were surprised when, the following day, 12 of their colleagues had been dismissed. After that, discussion and negotiation took another form, and the workers presented their demands in full, but management refused to answer any of them, saying they must get back to work and then negotiations could begin. The workers refused, and continued their strike for the second day, when the police arrested two of the workers and the army surrounded the factory.

The recent rise in workers' strikes and protests shows

that the Egyptian revolution is not over yet, and that the struggle of the working class will continue until the revolution's demands are met. The organisations signing this statement confirm their support for all workers' strikes, and their adoption of workers' legitimate demands. We call on workers' organisations, political groups and trade union leaders in other workplaces to show solidarity with their colleagues at Suez Steel and to confront the regime's attacks on workers, which will move tomorrow to Tenth of Ramadan, Alexandria and Port Sa'id.

We also condemn the siege of the workers' sit-in at the factory, and the arrest of strikers, and demand that Minister of Labour Kamal Abu Aita swiftly deals with the situation. We demand the immediate release of the arrested workers, the army's withdrawal from the factory and that workers' demands are met.

#### **Signatories:**

The Revolutionary Socialists  
Hisham Mubarak Law Centre  
The Campaign for Workers' Demands  
Platinum Maritime Services Workers (Red Sea Ports)  
The Independent Union of Public Transport Workers  
The Independent Union of Cairo Airport Workers  
The Textile Workers League  
The Mahalla Workers' League  
The Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights  
Khamsin Centre  
The Suez Seamen's League

#### **What you can do:**

- Rush messages of protest to General Abd-al-Fattah al-Sisi, Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces, demanding the immediate release of the two arrested workers. Email General al-Sisi here [mod@afmic.gov.eg](mailto:mod@afmic.gov.eg) copy in Kamal Abu Aita, Minister of Labour ([minoffice@mome.gov.eg](mailto:minoffice@mome.gov.eg)) and the Egyptian Ambassador to the UK ([eg.emb\\_london@mfa.gov.eg](mailto:eg.emb_london@mfa.gov.eg)) or your country.
- Send messages of solidarity to the Suez Steel workers via [menasolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:menasolidarity@gmail.com) or by our Facebook page, or leave a comment under this article ■



Cartoon by Carlos Latuff

## Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the military regime!

### No political support for Morsi and the Muslim brotherhood! For independent working class mobilization with a revolutionary perspective!

By Yossi Schwartz, *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*, 27.7.2013

Yesterday (Friday 26.7.2013) the Muslim Brotherhood supporters and the supporters of the military coup that deposed president Morsi held opposing demonstrations that clashed in different cities in Egypt. At least several dozen have died only in the last 24 hours. It is possible that the army will clamp down even more brutally in the next days.

The clashes came after mass protests were called for by the army chief and deputy Prime Minister General General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi – the real strong man in Egypt since the coup on 3<sup>rd</sup> July – who urged them to strengthen a military “mandate” to stop “violence and terrorism took to the streets”. The main banner stretched across the entrance to Tahrir Square where the pro-army rally was held read: “The people, the source of all power, mandate the army and police to purge terrorism” (1)

The pro-Morsi crowd has been rallying against the overthrow of the elected president since July 3.

Reports said Morsi was being detained for 15 days pending investigations on allegations of spying for Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. (2) In reality his real crime was that he worked with the military, the police and with the imperialists against the revolution. This accusation underlines ones more the pro-imperialist and pro-Israeli character of the army and its puppet-government.

So far around 100 people, mainly supporters of Morsi, have been killed by the pro-imperialist army that has called to turn the weapons against Morsi supporters who are denounced as terrorists by the terrorizing army.

On Thursday, Mohammed Abdul Aziz, a spokesman for the *Tamarod* (“Rebel”) youth movement that helped rally millions in anti-Morsi street protests before the army moved against him, said: “Tomorrow we will cleanse Egypt.”

#### A setback for the Egyptian Revolution

According to media reports the army command used all means including the media to massively mobilize people to their pro-coup rally. However the turn-out was only a small fraction of multi-million demonstrations against the Morsi government on 30<sup>th</sup> June.

All these recent developments – the killing spree against the pro- Morsi demonstrators, the military bureaucracy claiming that “The people mandate the army and police to purge terrorism”, its supporters call “to cleanse Egypt”, the massive weakening of independent working class mobilizations – all this should make clear even to the most confused leftists:

\* The pro-imperialist army command has staged a coup d’état and established a bonapartist regime controlled by the military.

\* This coup d’état is a setback, a defeat for the Egyptian Revolution and not an advance.

\* From this follows that the main task in the present political conjuncture is to rally in defense of democratic rights against the consolidation of the reactionary military regime.

#### The main enemy today is the army and its puppet-government!

The interest of the working class is to get rid of the army generals and its puppet-government by splitting the army along class lines and fighting for a workers’ and peasants’ government that will expropriate the major foreign and local companies and banks under workers control.

With this perspective in mind the first question to be asked is: Who is the immediate and more dangerous enemy of the revolution? Is it the army or the Moslem Brotherhood? The clear answer is: the army. It is in power and it has created a bonapartist regime. It will try break mass protests, strikes and any other independent mass actions. The military coup was organized to stop the massive mobilization of 15-17 million people – many of them workers and poor. (3)

The fact that the *Tamarod* is working with the army as well as the trade union bureaucracy and the Communist Party of Egypt shows once again that these middle class forces that so far have led the movement have taken the pro-imperialist side. These petty-bourgeois leaders form the worst possible popular front with the pro-imperialist army command similar to the Stalinists and liberals support for the bloody military coup d’état in Algeria in December 1991.

As we already explained in past articles, the *Revolutionary Socialists* in Egypt and the British SWP failed to oppose the coup d’état of 3<sup>rd</sup> July but hailed it as an advance of the revolution. (4) After facing the bloody reality of the coup regime in power for three weeks, the Cliffites are coming under increasing pressure. As a result they called on the workers and the masses not to join the pro-Army rally on 26<sup>th</sup> July explaining that giving the army a popular mandate to finish off the Muslim Brotherhood will inevitably lead to the consolidation of the regime which the revolution arose to overthrow. However they refuse to call for mass mobilizations against the army-regime or to call for a united front with the Muslim Brotherhood. This is a 180-degree turn around since only one year ago they opportunistically called for a vote for Mursi! (5)

We call on the workers movement and the left to break with the pro-army leadership and to mobilize for actions of resistance. (6)

There are already some, albeit small, signs for a break of a section of the workers movement with such a popular frontist orientation. For example Fatma Ramadan, member of the Executive Committee of the *Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions*, denounced in a statement the

support for al-Sisi pro-coup rally on Tahrir Square on 26<sup>th</sup> July by the majority of his trade union leadership as well as the government' *Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF)* and the *Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress*. She opposes both the Morsi government as well as the military regime. (7)

There has also been a small rally on 26<sup>th</sup> July in Cairo at the Sphinx Square to express their rejection of the army and Morsi. "*Down with all those who betrayed: The army and the Brotherhood,*" read their signs. (8)

Revolutionaries in Egypt should call for mass mobilizations against the coup d'état. They should fight inside the workers movement as well as the youth organizations not to support the army command and its puppet government but instead to turn against it. Such a call for a united front for the practical purpose to defeat the coup d'état must also reach out to the Muslim Brotherhood – which at the moment is the main force on the street against the coup – without giving them any political support. Such a tactic aimed at defending democratic rights against the army command and at breaking workers and poor who still have illusions in bourgeois forces must be combined with propaganda for a revolutionary working class perspective.

One of the demands that can unite the anti-imperialist forces is for a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly* defended by armed militias of workers peasants and the poor. The liberal pro-imperialist government imposed by the army must be replaced by a workers government supported by the peasants and the poor.

### A coup in the service of US imperialism

Yesterday while I was in the weekly demonstration in Sheikh Jerah (in Jerusalem in Occupied Palestine/Israel) against the stealing of Palestinians houses by the settlers back by the Zionist apartheid state, the Palestinian leaders of the demo spoke against the coup and praised Morsi.

At the same time the left Zionists and those who call themselves post-Zionists supported the coup and made an analogy between the Allies and the Nazis during WWII. They argued that, like in the war when it was necessary to support the Allies, it was necessary to stand with the army in Egypt.

This line is wrong for a few reasons. First of all while the Muslim Brotherhood is a reactionary movement dreaming of returning to the old glorified days of Islamic rule (that indeed was more progressive than feudal Europe with their crusaders), it is not a Nazi movement nor was Morsi in power a fascist dictatorship. It was a bourgeois elected government in a religious form. The crimes it committed was in the service of capital. For this reason it is necessary to call for the release of Morsi without calling to reinstitute him in power.

Secondly while Nazi Germany was an imperialist state and for this reason the revolutionary position was for a revolutionary defeat for both camps and while defending the Soviet Union that was still a degenerated workers state, Egypt is a semi-colony of US imperialism. In a clash between an imperialist state and a semi-colony regardless of its regime the interest of the working class is to defend unconditionally the semi-colony. The Egyptian army trained and financed by US imperialism represents

the interests of the real masters of Egypt – US-American imperialism. Those who took to the streets in support of the call of the army are acting – whether they understand it or not – in the interests of the imperialists. The army called on them to go out to the streets to attack the Muslim Brotherhood as a way to get support for the real imperialist masters of Egypt. The fact that the army that works with Israel is accusing Morsi of spying for Hamas by itself underlines once more that the Egypt army is a dangerous enemy not only for the Egyptian but also the Palestinian people in Gaza.

### Build a Revolutionary Party!

As we have stated in our resolution on the coup d'état, it is absolutely urgent to build an authentic revolutionary workers party to fight against the disastrous influence of the petty-bourgeois left inside the mass movement. The revolution in Egypt can only succeed if the working class can build such a revolutionary leadership in time. The RCIT urges revolutionaries in Egypt to work out and unite around a revolutionary Action Program as part of an international struggle for the *Fifth Workers International*. An important step in building a revolutionary party will be the struggle to win the independent trade unions and other workers organization to break with the Nasserite and liberal forces and to form an independent *Mass Workers Party*. Authentic socialists would fight for a revolutionary Action Program as the basis of such a Workers Party. We are willing to support any step which leads towards the formation of a Bolshevik organization.



Michael Pröbsting speaks at final rally at solidarity demo on 18.8.2013

In the present situation the RCIT raises the following slogans:

\* *Down with the military coup d'état! No support with the army's puppet regime! No to the repression of Muslim Brotherhood supporters! But also no to a return of Mursi to power!*

\* *Prepare for mass mobilizations and a general strike against the army command and its puppet regime!*

\* *For Action Committees in each factory, workers neighborhood and village to be organized on district and national level to coordinate the protest activities!*

\* *For self defense committees! Split the army to win the soldiers for revolution!*

\* *For a Revolutionary Constitutional Assembly!*

\* *Working class and socialist organizations: Break with the National Salvation Front!*

\* *Cancel the debts!*

\* *For a workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs!*

\* *Build a revolutionary organization! All Workers Organizations should break with the bourgeois opposition forces and form an independent Mass Workers Party based on a revolutionary program!*

#### Footnotes

(1) Al-Jazeera: Egypt suffers night of deadly violence, 27 July 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/201326223842190578.html>

(2) Selim Saheb Ettaba: Dozens killed in clashes at Morsi rally in Egypt, AFP, 27.7.2013, <http://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a-/world/18170794/dozens-killed-in-clashes-at-morsi-rally-in-egypt/>

(3) For the RCIT's analysis and tactics for the mass mobilizations against the Morsi government see our statement: Tasks of the Revolution in Egypt, 2.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution)

(4) For the RCIT's critique of the capitulation of important sectors of the Egypt Left as well as the confusion of international leftists see our articles: Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left's ignorance. Notes on the role

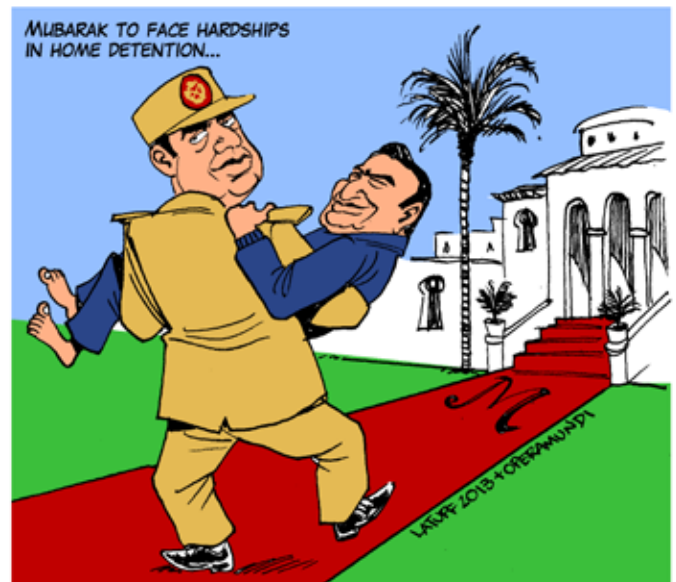
of US imperialism in the military's coup d'état and the failure of the Egypt left, 11.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup/); Michael Pröbsting: The Military's Coup d'État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics. A reply to the criticism of the WIVP and the LCC on the meaning of the Military's Coup d'État and the slogan of the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly, 17.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat)

(5) Statement from Egypt's Revolutionary Socialists: Not in our name! 25.7.2013, published by the Socialist Workers Party (Britain), <http://socialistworker.co.uk/art/33983/Statement+from+Egypt%E2%80%99s+Revolutionary+Socialists%3A+Not+in+our+name!> The right wing centrists of the IMT led by Alan Woods are also completely incapable of understanding the reactionary nature of the coup. They rather call it 'The Second Egyptian Revolution'! "The Egyptian workers and youth are learning fast in the school of Revolution. That is why the June uprising was far broader, deeper, faster and more conscious than the First Revolution that occurred two and a half years ago. But they still lack the necessary experience and revolutionary theory that would enable the Revolution to achieve a rapid and relatively painless victory. (...) The open counterrevolutionaries of the Muslim Brotherhood have been driven from power but because of the limits of its purely spontaneous (i.e. unorganised) nature, the Revolution has failed to take power. On the one hand the Islamist reactionaries are organising a counterrevolutionary rebellion that threatens to plunge the country into civil war. On the other hand, the bourgeois elements, generals and imperialists are manoeuvring to rob the masses of the victory that was won with their blood." (International Marxist Tendency: Egypt, Brazil, Turkey: Tremors of World Revolution, 24 July 2013, <http://www.marxist.com/the-unfolding-process-of-world-revolution-the-masses-enter-the-scene-of-history.htm>)

(6) See also the RCIT's Statement: Egypt: Down with the Military Coup d'État! Prepare Mass Resistance! 8.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat)

(7) Fatma Ramadan: Al-Sisi's "Permission" is a Deadly Poison, 26 July 2013, <http://menasolidaritynetwork.com/2013/07/26/egypt-do-not-let-the-army-fool-you-independent-union-leader-speaks-out/>

(8) Dahlia Kholaf: Jubilant mood among anti-Morsi demonstrators. Al Jazeera, 26 July 2013 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/2013726214714377337.html> ■



Cartoons by Carlos Latuff

# Egypt Coup: The Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism"

## A Balance Sheet of the coup. Another Reply to our Critics (LCC, WIVP, SF/LCFI)

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 8.8.2013,

It is now little more than one month ago that the Egyptian army command led by General Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi overthrew the Morsi government via a coup d'état and took power. Al-Sisi leads a reactionary coalition with the "deep state" – the old repressive state apparatus from the Mubarak-era – at its core and which incorporates the pro-Western liberal opposition as well as a number of petty-bourgeois leftists and trade union bureaucrats. It is backed by the imperialist Great Powers and the Gulf monarchies and supported by the Apartheid State Israel.

Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July the army killed – according to different estimations – between 300 and 500 people. On a single day, the bloody Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July, the military and police orchestrated a massacre which left at least 120 demonstrators dead and a further 4,500 people injured. The progressive mass movement against the bourgeois Islamist Morsi government – which rallied at its height millions of people at the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration – has disappeared as an independent movement and their leaders succumb to the new Bonaparte General Al-Sisi. Kamal Abu-Eita, president of the *Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions*, has been appointed by the army command as Minister for Manpower and calls for an end to all strikes.

The developments since the counterrevolutionary coup on 3<sup>rd</sup> July mean that the Egyptian Revolution has suffered a setback. This setback can be reversed and the military-imposed regime has not consolidated its power until now. But at the moment they are in the offensive and the workers movement must see this danger in order to develop the necessary tactics of mobilizing the working class for the defense of the democratic achievements and to defeat the putschists.

This coup is one of the most important events in the current world situation and therefore a crucial question for the perspectives of the class struggle not only in Egypt but the whole Middle East region and internationally. The 3<sup>rd</sup> July coup represents a model for the counter-revolution how the forces of the old regime with the imperialists backing might try to liquidate the Arab Revolution under the disguise of secularism and democracy. Engels once defined communism as the "insight into the nature, the conditions and the consequent general aims of the struggle waged by the proletariat." (1) Without understanding the new conditions for the working class struggle which have been created via the reactionary military coup, it is impossible for revolutionaries and the vanguard of the workers movement in Egypt and international to find the correct road to the socialist program in Egypt today.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* has elaborated its assessment of the events in Egypt in a number of articles and statements. (2) We supported the progressive mass mobilizations against the bourgeois-Islamist Morsi government which took place before the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The RCIT called in this period to participate in

these mobilizations in order to advance them towards a revolutionary general strike to overthrow the Morsi government. We warned against any political support for the bourgeois-liberal *National Salvation Front*. We also warned of the danger of a military coup and stated that – contrary to many leftists view – the army command is no friend but an enemy of the masses. We called for the formation of action committees in each factory, workers neighborhood and village as well as self defense committees to be organized on district and national level to coordinate the revolutionary activities. We argued that the goal must be to creation of a workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs.

With the military's coup d'état on 3<sup>rd</sup> July the situation changed fundamentally. It overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood government which has its main base amongst the religious middle class but which has also substantial support amongst the urban and rural poor. The army and the imperialists had decided to get rid of the Morsi government because it had failed in its task to pacify the country after the 2011 revolution in the interests of imperialism and the big bourgeoisie.

After the coup the army command and its puppet government became the main enemy. Since then the central task is to organize mass mobilizations against the new military-imposed regime in order to defend the limited gains of the unfinished democratic revolution of February 2011. Today it attempts to suppress the Brotherhood. Tomorrow it will look for the trade unions and the left. This is why the main enemy today is the military-imposed regime. The most urgent task now is the defeat of the military regime by the working class struggle.

Revolutionaries should call for the formation of *Actions Committees* to organize the defensive struggle against the putschists. They should participate in the mass demonstrations and square occupations and argue for an extension of the struggle to the enterprises in order to prepare for a *general strike*. Revolutionaries should call for a broad united front to defeat the coup regime. Such a united front orientation should focus on the workers organization but must of course also include the Muslim Brotherhood since they are currently organizing the only existing mass mobilizations against the coup. Revolutionaries would limit such a united front only to the practical struggle against the military-imposed regime and the defense of the democratic rights. They must not support any call for a return of Morsi to power. They should raise the slogan of a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly* to be organized and controlled by the revolutionary masses. Such an assembly must be protected by workers and popular militias against any interference by reactionary forces.

The RCIT calls to combine such a program with the perspective of *a workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs!*

It is around these lines on which a *revolutionary organization* in Egypt should be built in the current phase. At the same time revolutionaries should call all workers organizations to break with the bourgeois forces and form an independent *Mass Workers Party* based on a revolutionary program!

Naturally not only the RCIT but many organizations of the workers movement have elaborated their assessment of the events in Egypt. In this document we will also deal with a number of positions and arguments of other organizations. More than one month of Bonapartist rule of General al-Sisi allows us to assess the evaluation and tactics of various groupings in the workers movement.

In this context we will also reply to various arguments and criticism which have been put forward against the RCIT's assessment and tactics of the military coup in Egypt in a context of a public debate between several organizations like the *Liaison Committee of Communists* (LCC, with groups in New Zealand, USA, Zimbabwe), the *Workers International Vanguard Party* (WIVP, South Africa) and *Socialist Fight* (Britain) which is part of the *Liaison Committee for the Fourth International* (which has also groups in Brazil and Argentina). (3) We think such a debate is urgent because the revolutionary program is not an abstract truth or a dead letter but has to be constantly tested, defended and if necessary refined according to the developments of the class struggle.

### **I. One month after the coup: Have we seen an advance or a setback for the Egyptian Revolution?**

Obviously the most important question for the workers movement and the socialist forces in Egypt and internationally is the question how to assess the coup. As we discussed already several times, most progressive forces in Egypt praised the coup and saw it as an expression of the victorious march forward of the masses. The biggest danger for the workers and socialist movement is to confuse a defeat with a victory, a setback with an advance, a counter-revolution with a revolution. This is exactly what most of the Egyptian as well as the international left are guilty of and what demonstrates their bankruptcy. What we have seen is an critical or uncritical adaption to the military coup d'état by most of the left hailing the overthrow of the Morsi government and the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimin*) as an "execution of the will of the Egypt people". Marx and Engels once denounced sarcastically the program of the German opportunist workers leaders Ferdinand Lassalle as "*Royal Prussian Governmental Socialism*". (4) Similarly we can call the petty-bourgeois left's adaption to the army command as "*army socialism*".

Such "socialism" is in fact a betrayal of the working class interests. It represents a major obstacle for the formation of an authentic revolutionary response by the working class vanguard so that it can find a way out of the misery. Without a fundamental clarity over the question who is

the ruling class respective its hegemonic executioner and thus who is the main enemy in a given situation, any organization is doomed to fail terrible in such a highly sharp class struggle situation as we see it currently in Egypt.

### **The Left's Failure to understand the Meaning of the reactionary Coup**

Let us briefly recapitulate how a number of progressive organizations viewed the military' coup d'état on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. To understand its failure one has to bear in mind that the left in Egypt – as all over the world – usually adapts towards the petty-bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the labor bureaucracy. These layers in turn subordinate to factions of the domestic and/or foreign bourgeoisie.

Most left-wing forces in Egypt were in close collaboration with the *National Salvation Front* led by the pro-Western liberal Mohammed ElBaradei for quite some time. As is widely known the NSF welcomed the coup from the beginning. In fact – as we will see later – it was involved in a conspiracy with the army command for at least half a year in order to prepare the coup. Today ElBaradei is vice president of the military-imposed government.

As we already quoted in the first RCIT statement on the coup d'état, the petty-bourgeois youth movement *Tamarod* also openly supports the coup d'état and defends it as an act of "*revolutionary legitimacy that has reflected the people's will against the tyrants who do not want stability in Egypt.*"

(5) Tamarod even supported General Al-Sisi's call for mass demonstrations on 26<sup>th</sup> July to mandate the army and police to crackdown on "*violence and terrorism*". It said that it supports the military in its "*war against terrorism.*" (6) On its official Facebook page, Tamarod called on its supporters to heed the armed forces' call for protests. "*We call on all the Egyptian people to gather in all the squares next Friday to call for the trial of Mohamed Morsi, support the Egyptian armed forces in the coming war against terrorism and cleansing the land of Egypt. The army and the people will fight terrorism.*" (7)

The Egyptian Communist Party is deeply enmeshed in a popular front with the bourgeois-liberals and supports El-Baradei. Already in the times of the Mubarak dictatorship it saw the Islamists as the main enemy. As a result, the Stalinist cadre – as the Egyptian academic Hazem Kandil put it splendidly – "*made their peace with the regime a long time ago. Their excuse was that Islamization poses the biggest threat to Egypt, and that commitment to secularism binds them to the supposedly liberal ruling group. They therefore agreed to play according to the regime's rulebook, which allowed them to write and lecture, while forbidding them from building a real base among the working class.*" (8)

It is therefore not surprising that the Stalinists praised the army's coup from the first day enthusiastically. It wrote: "*Our party salutes the Egyptian masses, heroes in their grand victory over the forces of tyranny, backwardness and communalism (...) Our valiant armed forces have reaffirmed their profound devotion and total loyalty to our people and its right to live in dignity and freedom. They have thus responded to the people's demand and joined the revolutionary struggle (...) Our party calls for an absolute priority [by a 'technical' government of transition and a new constitution] to meet the demands of the laboring classes (...) Our party demands equally that Morsi be brought before justice along with the pillars of his governing*

*clique and the terrorist allies involved in a politics of terrorism against the Egyptian people.” (9)*

Salah Adli, the party's General Secretary, stated: *“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.” (10)*

The fake-Trotskyist *Revolutionary Socialists* – which is aligned with the centrist SWP (Britain) and praised by many other centrists internationally – in turn adapts to the petty-bourgeois left-liberals of Tamarod and via this to the NSF. (11) As a result it too hailed the military coup d'état as a *“new wave of the Egyptian revolution”*: *“What happened on June 30 was, without the slightest doubt, the historic beginning of a new wave of the Egyptian revolution, the largest wave since January 2011. (...) What has happened in Egypt is the height of democracy, a revolution of millions to directly topple the ruler.” (12)* As we will see later, the brutal reality of the military-imposed regime since then has forced the *Revolutionary Socialists* to reduce its enthusiasm for the coup d'état.

Many of the international centrist tendencies also failed to understand the meaning of the coup d'état and to draw the correct conclusion for their tactics. The SWP's *International Socialist Tendency* backs uncritically the line of their Egyptian group.

The shameful cheerleading for a reactionary army coup

was however not restricted to Egypt. Painting a counter-revolutionary coup d'état as *“the Second Egyptian Revolution”*, the *International Marxist Tendency* (IMT) of Alan Woods doesn't know any limits to the praising of the coup d'état:

*“Morsi has fallen. The magnificent movement of the masses has once more shown to the entire world the authentic face of the Egyptian people. It shows that the Revolution, which many even on the Left believed to have stalled, still possesses immense social reserves. Despite all the lying propaganda that tries to present the Revolution as a “coup”, this was a genuine popular insurrection, which spread like wildfire through every city and town in Egypt. This was the Second Egyptian Revolution. (...) By constantly harping on the fact that it was the military that removed Morsi, they are striving to divert attention away from the fact that it was the masses who brought about the overthrow of Morsi. This was not a coup. On the contrary, it was imposed on the military by the masses. The generals have made it clear that they do not want to take over the government. That is hardly surprising. One only has to take one look at the heaving mass of humanity in Tahrir Square to understand the impossibility of the army controlling such a vast movement. Instead, the generals decided to ride on the back of the tiger. The problem is that a man who rides on the back of a tiger will encounter serious difficulties when he tries to dismount.” (13)*

After the massacre on 8<sup>th</sup> July, when the army killed more than 50 pro-Morsi demonstrators who staged a sit-in in front of an army headquarter in Cairo, the IMT justified the army repression by calling the Muslim Brotherhood the *“Vendee”*, i.e. the most counter-revolutionary force against the Revolution. In a situation where the army command



Heroic Egyptian woman tries to stop a military bulldozer from running over a wounded youth (Photo by Mohammed Abdel Moneim of AFP/Getty)

is consolidating its reign by brutally driving its Islamist opponents from the streets, the IMT calls for the defeat of the Morsi supporters as the precondition for the advance of the revolution! (14)

The "International Committee of the Fourth International" of the late Ernest Mandel avoided making a fool of themselves as did the IMT. Nevertheless one month after the coup d'état these right-wing centrists have only been able to publish a superficial hodgepodge. They declared that "neither Morsi nor the army represents the aspirations for freedom and social justice", that "a period of great uncertainty for the revolutionary process has therefore opened" and that the "construction of a democratic pole, of those on the left and those favourable to social justice, to advance" is necessary. (15)

The Mandelites is silent on the questions if the military-imposed regime is the main enemy since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July or not, what are now the main demands and tactics and what should be the attitude of socialists toward the pr-Morsi demonstrations. This means it is useless for the workers vanguard to find a political orientation in such difficult times.

#### **After one month only politically blind people can deny that this was a reactionary coup d'état**

The RCIT characterized the military takeover from the beginning as a reactionary coup d'état and emphasized the necessity to fight against it. However many leftist "refrains from saying the 'C' word" as the Indian academic Mahmood Mamdani correctly describes the left's hesitance to call the coup by name. (16)

The truth is that this is a coup d'état which was organized long in advance, backed by the Egyptian ruling class as well as by the US imperialism, Israel, the Gulf monarchies and the Assad dictatorship in Syria.

While the Egyptian Stalinists, the RS as well as Alan Woods hallucinate about the victory of "the Second Egyptian Revolution", this was not a coup which was spontaneously organized as a reaction to the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration, but rather prepared in advance. Today even pro-coup and pro-imperialist sources admit that the coup d'état was prepared by the army and the *folool* (remnants of the Mubarak regime) for some time with the support of the bourgeois-liberal opposition and the petty-bourgeois Tamarod movement. In fact, preparations started already in November 2012.

The *Wall Street Journal*, a central mouthpiece of US imperialism which supports the military's coup d'état and call the generals to follow the road of the mass murder and dictator Pinochet in Chile reports: (17)

*"In the months before the military ousted President Mohammed Morsi, Egypt's top generals met regularly with senior aides to opposition leaders, often at the Navy Officers' Club nestled on the Nile. The message: If the opposition could put enough protesters in the streets, the military would step in—and forcibly remove the president. "It was a simple question the opposition put to the military," said Ahmed Samih, who is close to several opposition attendees. "Will you be with us again?" The military said it would. Others familiar with the meetings described them similarly. By June 30, millions of Egyptians took to the streets, calling for Mr. Morsi to go. Three days later, the military unseated him. (...) The secret meetings between the military and secular opposition parties were key to the political chess game*

*leading to Mr. Morsi's departure. The meetings represented a strange-bedfellows rapprochement between two groups long at odds: Egypt's opposition, and the remnants of the Mubarak regime. (...) With Mr. Morsi out, Mubarak-era figures and institutions are gaining influence. The military chose a Mubarak-era judge as interim president. Other Mubarak-era judges are set to head efforts to draft a new constitution.*

*Egypt's opposition and Mubarak-era officials began to mend ties in November, after Mr. Morsi issued a constitutional declaration giving himself sweeping powers in what was widely considered a power grab. Opposition parties united under the banner of Mr. ElBaradei's National Salvation Front.*

*Mubarak-era loyalists had long distrusted Mr. ElBaradei. But after Mr. Morsi's declaration, the ice thawed. Some influential Mubarak-era figures joined Mr. ElBaradei, including Hany Sarie Eldin, the lawyer for imprisoned steel magnate and Mubarak regime heavyweight Ahmed Ezz.*

*Mr. Eldin's joining "sent a message to powerful businessmen who were skeptical about the revolution and ElBaradei that they could trust him," said Rabab al-Mahdi, a political-science professor at American University of Cairo who is close to NSF leaders.*

*The two sides needed each other. Opposition parties had popular credibility, unlike Mubarak-era officials. Mubarak figures brought deep pockets and influence over the powerful state bureaucracy.*

*Some of these figures "are the ones who continue the methods of the so-called deep state," said Ms. Mahdi. "They are the ones who know who are the election thugs, how to hire them," she said. They know "which public-sector managers have the biggest networks of employees." As Mr. Morsi's ouster neared, there were increasing meetings between the military and opposition. They included senior aides to Mr. ElBaradei, former presidential candidate and Arab League chief Mr. Moussa, and another presidential candidate, Hamdeen Sabahy, according to Mr. Samih, and other people close to top NSF members." (18)*

As the New York Times reports, the unholy alliance of army, folool, big business, liberal opposition and Tamarod prepared the coup by a series of measures which led to massive shortages and insecurity for the masses in daily life.

*"The apparently miraculous end to the crippling energy shortages, and the re-emergence of the police, seems to show that the legions of personnel left in place after former President Hosni Mubarak was ousted in 2011 played a significant role — intentionally or not — in undermining the overall quality of life under the Islamist administration of Mr. Morsi. (...) But it is the police returning to the streets that offers the most blatant sign that the institutions once loyal to Mr. Mubarak held back while Mr. Morsi was in power. Throughout his one-year tenure, Mr. Morsi struggled to appease the police, even alienating his own supporters rather than trying to overhaul the Interior Ministry. But as crime increased and traffic clogged roads — undermining not only the quality of life, but the economy — the police refused to deploy fully. (...) Mr. Sawiris, one of Egypt's richest men and a titan of the old establishment, said Wednesday that he had supported an upstart group called "tamarrod," Arabic for "rebellion," that led a petition drive seeking Mr. Morsi's ouster. He donated use of the nationwide offices and infrastructure of the political party he built, the Free Egyptians. He provided publicity through a popular television network he founded and his major interest in Egypt's largest private newspaper. He even commissioned the production of a popular music video that played*



heavily on the network. (...) Ms. Gebali, the former judge, said in a telephone interview on Wednesday that she and other legal experts helped tamarrod create its strategy to appeal directly to the military to oust Mr. Morsi and pass the interim presidency to the chief of the constitutional court." (19)

Contrary to the leftist praising of the army coup as an "execution of the people's will", the military-imposed regime is fully supported by the big capitalists. The Economist – another central mouthpiece of the capitalists – reports: "Big business has broadly rallied to the new regime." (20)

### Egypt's army command as a major player of the capitalist class

The Egypt's army command is not only the backbone of the repressive state apparatus and as such an important component of the ruling class. In addition, it also plays a major economic role as a powerful state capitalist. It is "a state within a state".

The army generals sold vast swathes of military land to finance some major urban developments near Cairo. In return for selling military property on the Nile Delta and Red Sea coast with idyllic beaches and exquisite coral reefs, military officers became key shareholders in new tourist developments.

The army command also owns at least 16 enormous factories that produce not just weapons, but an array of domestic products from dishwashers to heaters, clothing, doors, stationary pharmaceutical products, and microscopes. Amongst them are big corporations like *Abu Zaabal* (Engineering Industries), *Benha* (Electronic Industries) and *Maadi* (Engineering Industries). It also builds highways, housing developments, hotels, power lines, sewers, bridges, schools and telephone exchanges. In addition the military is also Egypt's largest farmer, running a vast network of dairy farms, milk processing facilities, cattle feed lots, poultry farms, fish farms. (21)

Much of the military state capitalist's size is unclear because the army command makes sure that there are no real published accountings. There is simply no civilian control. Even when Mohammed Morsi became president, he had to agree – as part of the Muslim Brotherhood's rotten deal with the army command – that there would be no civilian oversight of the military budget.

There are different assessments about the economic weight of the army state capitalist sector. Some report that the Egyptian military control anything from 15% to 40% of the economy. (22) Joshua Stacher, an Egyptian-military expert and assistant professor at Kent State University in Ohio, estimates that as much as one-third of Egypt's economy is under military control. (23)

From these figures it becomes clear the army command is one of the biggest groups of the capitalist class in Egypt. The damage to the production caused by the revolutionary instability of the last two years, the collapse of the tourism industry etc. all these are major reasons for the army command to liquidate the cause of the instability – the revolutionary ferment in the society – and to reestablish law and order.

So contrary to the petty-bourgeois left's phantasm, the army command is not executing the will of the people. Rather it is a state capitalist with very concrete profit interests which it is determined to increase.

### Military-imposed government attempts to liquidate the revolutionary wave

As we stated repeatedly the military coup was directed from the beginning to liquidate the revolutionary ferment in the society and to reestablish stable conditions for business and the imperialists. For this the ruling class had to cancel its deal with the Muslim Brotherhood – not because the latter was not willing to serve the capitalists interests but because *it was not capable to do so* under the given circumstances. Therefore the Morsi government was not longer needed. (More on the Muslim Brotherhood and the Morsi government below).

During the decades of the Nasser-Sadat-Mubarak dictatorship, it was very dangerous for the working class to strike. Immediately after the revolution in early 2011, the number of strikes increased. However there was a breakthrough in the number of strikes as soon as the army was no longer responsible for running the government and a civilian government – led by Morsi – took over. The army command and its imperialist backers had agreed to a deal with the Muslim Brotherhood in the hope that the latter could create a successful democratic counterrevolution towards stabilization of the political situation. This obviously failed.

Under the Morsi government the number of strike increased dramatically. A study about labor movements during 2012 – published by the *Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights* in April 2013 – shows that most of the year's 3,817 labor strikes and economically motivated social protests happened following Morsi's election. There was an average of 185 protests or strikes per month between January and June 2012 (the period in which the army command ran the country) In contrast, workers staged an average of 452 monthly protests or strikes between July and December 2012 following Morsi's inauguration. There have been over 2,400 protests or strikes in the first quarter of 2013 alone, specifically between January and March.

Most protests came from the governmental sector, which witnessed 1,355 demonstrations and strikes, accounting for 35.5% of 2012's total. Private sector workers accounted for 10.3% with 393 protests while public sector employees made up 5.8% with 221 protests. Freelancers and self-employed workers held 182 protests, accounting for 5%. Citizens protesting against rising prices, lack of fuel, electricity problems, and other economic problems held 1,656 protests; the remaining 43.4%. The authors of the study concluded: "The statistics demonstrate the doubling of protest movements since July following President Morsi's inauguration which reflects the will of workers to have their voice reach the new president". (24)

This revival of class struggles showed to the ruling class that the Morsi government was unfit to stabilize the country. The *Al-Ikhwan* government came itself under increasing pressure since its own social basis – the lower middle class, the professionals etc. – suffered from the declining economic and social conditions. Thus the Morsi government tried to generate new sources for financial and political support by intensifying relations with China and Iran in order to counter the country total dependence on US imperialism. It also increased its reactionary Islamism agenda to pacify its core constituency (introducing the Sharia law in the constitution).

The new, military imposed Bonapartist regime tries to stabilize the political situation mainly by four policy tools:

- \* expanding the repressive state apparatus and reestablish the hegemony of the *folool*
- \* integrating the bourgeois-liberal opposition and even elements of the labor bureaucracy as a subordinated force to the army and the *folool*
- \* transforming the progressive mass protests against the Morsi government into an accoutrement to reactionary law and order policy of the new military-imposed regime.
- \* increasing the repression against the *Al-Ikhwan* in order to force it either to submission or to smash them.

### Expanding the repression apparatus

Let us illustrate the expansion of the repression apparatus with a number of examples. Immediately after taking power on 3rd July the army command has started a wave of massive repression mainly against the Muslim Brotherhood. In the month since then it has killed at least 300 people (other sources speak of more than 480 people), injured over 10,000 and arrested more than 2,000 people for political reasons but without any legitimate charges. This wave of repression was mostly directed against the *Al-Ikhwan* as the most significant force who opposes the coup, but not exclusively. Esam Al-Amin, writing in *Counterpunch*, reports: "*Al-Wasat (Center) Party leader Abulela Madi and his deputy Esam Sultan were arrested on July 29 and later charged with incitement and conspiracy to murder. According to Madi's son, both political leaders were told at the time of their arrest that if they were to publicly support the coup they would not be arrested. Both summarily rejected the offer and went to prison.*" (25)

In addition the 3<sup>rd</sup> July regime has already started to expand the repression apparatus and its powers. It is highly significant but mostly underreported that on 29<sup>th</sup> July Egypt's interior ministry Mohamed Ibrahim announced the resurrection of Egypt's state security investigations service wing of the police force under President Mubarak – the *Mabahith Amn ad-Dawla*. This unit is a symbol of police oppression, which was supposedly closed in March 2011. It has the task "*to combat terrorism and monitor religious activity*". (26)

Mohamed Ibrahim added that experienced police officers, i.e. notorious experts in torture, sidelined in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution would be brought back into the fold. In addition, soldiers were granted the right to arrest civilians.

On the same day, Egypt's interim prime minister was given the power to place the country in a state of emergency – a hallmark of Egypt under Mubarak. Patrick Kingsley in *The Guardian* rightly observed: "*Ibrahim's announcement the next day [after General Abdel Fatah al-Sisi asked for the public's backing to fight what he termed as terrorism] hinted that he felt he had implicit public support for a crackdown on not just terrorists but religious and secular activism of all kinds.*"

It is characteristic that many police and army officers feel now more self-confident after the coup of General Al-Sisi. *The Guardian* quotes a police officer: "*'Our pride is back,' one middle-ranking Cairo-based police officer told the Guardian, adding that state security's notorious treatment of detainees was reasonable given that, in his view, the detainees were unlikely to be innocent.*"

Aida Seif el-Dawla, a prominent Egyptian human rights activist, and the executive director of a group that frequently supports victims of police brutality, commented: "*It's a return to the Mubarak era. (...) These units committed the most atrocious human rights violations, (...) incommunicado detentions, killings outside the law. Those were the [units] that managed the killing of Islamists during the 1990s. It's an ugly authority that has never been brought to justice.*" (27)

Even the pro-coup mouthpiece of the US ruling class – the *Wall Street Journal* – is forced to recognize: "*Egypt's interim civilian government moved toward reviving the police state that characterized the widely hated regime of longtime former President Hosni Mubarak.*" (28)

### Integrating and political beheading of the liberal opposition

We characterize the military-imposed regimes as Bonapartist. It is based on an alliance between the army and the *folool* who constitute its core and with the bourgeois-liberal camp around the National Salvation Front of ElBaradei as an important but subordinated ally. Sectors of the labor bureaucracy have been incorporated too as it is reflected in the nomination of Kamal Abu-Eita, president of the *Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions* and a member of the Nasserite *Al-Karama* Party, as Minister for Manpower. His task is to end the strike wave which shattered Egypt in the past 12 months and he already called for an end to all strikes.

It is not excluded that the 3<sup>rd</sup> July Bonapartist regime might also attempt to integrate sectors of the Muslim Brotherhood. Since it is the largest and best-organized party in Egypt, the regime has to try to pacify at least a part of them. The US administration also pressurizes Al-Sisi to do so because they fear that a civil war might be provoked with unforeseen consequences not only for the country but for the whole region. There are already reports about secret negotiations between the army command and *Al-Ikhwan* leaders. (29)

However it is clear that even in the case of some reconciliation, sectors of the Brotherhood would only be allowed to play a subordinated role in the military-imposed regime. Esam Al-Amin reports about a secret proposal the regime made to the *Al-Ikhwan* leaders: "*According to a well-placed source close to the MB, by the fourth week, the military sent a proposal to a senior MB leader and former minister. It called for the MB to immediately disband their sit-ins, end their demonstrations, recognize and accept the new political reality (i.e., the military coup), and admit to their mishandling of ruling the country. In return, the military promised to release all MB prisoners, drop the charges, and allow the group to participate in the political process. The intermediary further told the MB leadership that in the next parliamentary elections the group would only be allowed to win 15-20 percent of the seats, while all the Islamic parties combined would not exceed 30 percent, a warning sign of fraudulent elections. The interlocutor then made it clear that the proposal was not subject to negotiation, but was a matter of 'take it or leave it.' He warned that if the proposal was rejected, the military not only would crackdown heavily on the group to end their protests, but also that their group and affiliated party would soon be dissolved and outlawed.*" (30)

Various progressive forces are completely confused about the character of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July regime because it claims to rep-

resent the will of the mass movement against the Morsi government and because it raises the banner of democracy and secularism. Indeed, this camouflage is a necessary element of the Bonapartist regime in order to channel the progressive mass movement against the previous Morsi regime.

However, General Al-Sisi has managed to debilitate this movement. Given the collective betrayal of the mass movements leadership (mainly NSF-ElBaradei, Tamarod, trade union leaderships), the new regimes has been able to demobilize the movement and to transform any mobilization into an uncritical cheerleading for the new Bonaparte as was most powerfully demonstrated at the reactionary mobilizations on 26<sup>th</sup> July which gave the regime *"the mandate to fight terrorism"*.

In reality, if the regime can consolidate its power and crash the protests of the Muslim Brotherhood, it will turn next against the workers movement and the progressive movements and force it to surrender or to be smashed too.

Hence the Bonapartist 3<sup>rd</sup> July regime is an enemy for the whole working class and all oppressed. This is why a broad united front for joint actions – which should include the *Al-Ikhwan* – against the regime and its repression is the task of the day.

#### **How do the imperialist enemies assess the military coup?**

It is not only Egypt's ruling class which is fully behind the coup d'état but also the imperialist powers. In fact there would have been no coup by the army without the Obama administration's approval in advance since the Egypt military is financed by and completely dependent of US imperialism. (With \$1.5 billion in annual aid Egypt is the second-biggest recipient of US military aid world-wide, only behind Israel.) The RCIT has pointed out from the beginning that the coup took place and was in the service of the US and other imperialist power.

In the last weeks the huge degree of the US administration's involvement in planning and executing the coup has become more and more public. US imperialism was directly involved in organizing the coup. The *New York Times* reports that the final step to launch the coup was taken after Morsi's top foreign policy adviser, Essam el-Haddad, spoke to the United States ambassador in Egypt, Anne W. Patterson, as well as to Susan E. Rice, the US national security adviser. Rice told Morsi that the military takeover was about to begin. (31)

While people like Alan Woods who are so disconnected from the reality of class struggle that they characterize the military coup as *"a nightmare for the bourgeoisie"*, both the Egyptian bourgeoisie as well as the imperialist powers are well aware that the coup serves their interest. (32)

The Obama administration refused to characterize the coup as such, so that it is able to continue the financial support for the Egypt regime. On 1<sup>st</sup> August US secretary of state John Kerry during a trip to Pakistan officially sanctioned the coup – in truly Orwellian language – as a *"restoration of democracy"*: *"The military was asked to intervene by millions and millions of people, all of whom were afraid of a descent into chaos, into violence. (...) And the military did not take over, to the best of our judgement - so far. To run the country, there's a civilian government. In effect, they were*

*restoring democracy."* (33)

Another leading representative of Western imperialism, former British Prime Minister and Special Envoy for the Middle East Quartet Tony Blair, also justified the coup and urged the West to *"engage with the new de facto power and help the new government make the changes necessary"*:

*"Now the army is faced with the delicate and arduous task of steering the country back on to a path towards elections and a rapid return to democratic rule. We must hope that they can do this without further bloodshed. Meanwhile, however, someone is going to have to run things and govern. This will mean taking some very tough, even unpopular decisions. It is not going to be easy. What is happening in Egypt is the latest example of the interplay, visible the world over, between democracy, protest and government efficacy. Democracy is a way of deciding the decision-makers, but it is not a substitute for making the decision. (...) I am a strong supporter of democracy. But democratic government doesn't on its own mean effective government. Today, efficacy is the challenge. (...) So what should the west do? Egypt is the latest reminder that the region is in turmoil and won't leave us alone, however we may wish it would. Disengagement is not an option, because the status quo is not an option. Any decision not to act is itself a decision of vast consequence. At its crudest, we can't afford for Egypt to collapse. So we should engage with the new de facto power and help the new government make the changes necessary, especially on the economy, so they can deliver for the people. In that way, we can also help shape a path back to the ballot box that is designed by and for Egyptians. (...) Our interests demand that we are engaged. We have to take decisions for the long term because short term there are no simple solutions."* (34)

This position of the imperialists is also reflected in a number of influential bourgeois commentators. Thomas Friedman for example – a leading US columnist – urged the Obama administration to support the Al-Sisi regime: *"This is no time for America to be punishing Egyptians or demanding quick elections. Our job is to help the new government maximize the number of good economic decisions it makes, while steadily pressuring it to become more inclusive and making it possible for multiple political parties to form. If that happens, Egypt will have a proper foundation to hold democratic elections again. If it doesn't happen, no number of elections will save it."* (35)

#### **Support by imperialist Israel and the Gulf monarchies**

The reactions of the Israeli state are another clear indication that the coup brought the army command as a strongly committed pro-US and pro-Israeli regime to power. We already reported in another article about the approving comment from Tzachi Hanegbi, an advisor for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Recently the Israeli ambassador in Cairo, Yaakov Amitai, congratulated the new regime and said: *"Al-Sisi is not a national hero for Egypt, but for all Jews in Israel and around the globe."* He added that Israel is looking forward to the launch of new relationships with Egypt as well as joint efforts in the war on terror. (36)

The Israeli government wants to seize the opportunity to start a counterrevolutionary wave to roll back the Arab Revolution. In opposite to *"army socialists"* like Alan Woods, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu understands that this is a government which is not riding on the back of a revolutionary tiger (to use the unfortunate phrase of Alan Woods), but that it is a counter-revolution-

ary tiger which can help the ruling classes to defeat the Arab revolution. Thus Netanyahu is pushing for the West to adopt a new "Marshall Plan" for the Egyptian economy to help the coup plotters to succeed. (37)

The reasons for Israel's cheers are clear: the Al-Sisi regime has made clear from the first day that it supports the efforts by Israel as well as the USA and their Palestinian lackey Abbas to isolate Gaza and to smash Hamas. As we reported in a past article, the regime closed completely the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza and deported Palestinians arriving in Egypt. It is highly symbolic that the army command formally arrested Morsi on allegations of spying for Hamas. Despite the hallucination of many Egyptian and Western leftists, the Al-Sisi regime is not the executor of the people's will, but a staunch henchman of US imperialism and Zionism.

It is also characteristically that the first and most enthusiastic supporters of the coup d'état were several Gulf monarchies. Immediately after the coup Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates gave the new regime loans totaling \$12 billions. Again, the reasons are clear. The Gulf rulers have been frightened by the Arab Revolution since the beginning. Not surprisingly the Saudi king offered the Tunisian dictators Ben Ali exile after the victory of the Revolution in January 2011. In opposite to the centrist muddle heads the ruling class of the Gulf states understands that the military coup d'état in Egypt is a counter-revolutionary strike against the Egypt Revolution and – so the rulers hope – the whole Arab Spring.

In addition the Gulf monarchies are glad to have got rid of the Morsi government which built closer relations with Iran – a major rival for them in the region. And last but not least, Morsi was a symbol hateful for the monarchs given that he was an elected president.

#### **Russian and Chinese imperialism are glad about the coup d'état**

While we see in the Syrian civil war a combination of the domestic popular revolution with inner-imperialist rivalry – mainly NATO versus Russia (and China to a limited degree) – this seems to be different in the case of the Great Powers position on the Egypt coup. (38) Not only the Western Powers but also Russia and China reacted positively to the coup. (39) Soon after the coup China's foreign ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, stated: "China respects the choice of the Egyptian people. We also hope that all parties concerned in Egypt can avoid using violence and properly solve their disputes through dialogue and consultation and realise reconciliation and social stability." (40)

Similarly the Russian government reacted welcoming to the coup and offered the Al-Sisi regime economic aid: "According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, Egypt may ask Russia for economic aid. Moscow is prepared to consider a request to that end. The authorities of Egypt may turn to Russia for economic aid, and Moscow is ready to consider its granting, Deputy Foreign Minister and Special Presidential Envoy for the Middle East Mikhail Bogdanov said in an interview with RIA Novosti." (41)

What is the cause for the Russian and Chinese imperialists' positive reception of the coup? We think that there are two main reasons. First – and this is particularly true for the Putin government – they are relieved to get rid of the

Morsi government which supported tactically the Syrian Revolution against the Assad dictatorship. The Al-Sisi regime has already made clear that it will not continue such a policy.

However the more general reason can be found – similar to the motives of the Gulf monarchies – in Moscow's and Beijing's understandable hostility against the democratic revolutions in the Arab world from the beginning. As we know the Putin regime as well as Stalinist-capitalist rulers in China are obliged to follow a state-capitalist authoritarian type of rule. They are less rich than their Western imperialist counterparts who can afford to bribe wide layers of the middle class and the labor aristocracy and hence ensure a material base for their rule via the form of bourgeois democracy.

For this reason both Moscow and Beijing feared from the beginning of the Arab Revolution that it could provoke similar democratic revolutions in their own empires. And indeed we did see some democratic mass mobilizations in Russia against the Putin regime (albeit they were strongly dominated by middle class forces).

Unsurprisingly Alexei Pushkov, the chairman of the State Duma's International Affairs Committee, reacted to the coup by stating: "The Arab Spring has only led to chaos in Egypt and a bloody foreign-backed drama in Syria, war in Libya, a mess in Tunisia and war in Mali." (42)

A senior diplomat of a leading European Union country recognized the imperialist united front of support for the Egyptian coup. Speaking on condition of anonymity, he is quoted with the following words: "It as a sad irony that Russia, Saudi Arabia, America and Europe are broadly in the same camp on what happened in Egypt; while Africans who suffered centuries of colonialism, being patronised for their alleged backwardness, are the only ones really giving a clear, pro-democratic message." (43)

Similarly the Chinese state media used the Egypt coup to prove the superiority of dictatorships and the failure of "Western-style democracy". Chinese state news agency Xinhua commented that Egypt's chaos was proof that the "export of democracy is not a guarantee to cure all diseases, and it cannot solve the difficult issues that different countries face as they develop. (...) Some Western countries should use the situation in Egypt as an example, to seriously reflect, wake up, and not readily criticize other countries. This is also saving a bit of face for them". Other official papers wrote in a similar spirit. (44)

#### **The Assad regime is relieved too**

As we have already noticed in an earlier statement, the reactionary Assad dictatorship immediately reacted positively to the Egyptian coup. The Syrian ruler was glad to see a government fallen which was – in opposite to Assad himself – elected in bourgeois-democratic elections as well as a, albeit lukewarm, supporter of the Syrian Revolution: "Whoever brings religion to use in politics or in favour of one group at the expense of another will fall anywhere in the world. (...) The summary of what is happening in Egypt is the fall of what is called political Islam." (45)

Similar to their pro-Zionist persecution against Palestinians and Hamas, the 3<sup>rd</sup> July regime also persecutes Syrian exiles in Egypt. According to Egypt's *Ahram Online* 276 Syrians were deported from Cairo International Airport

# Map of Egypt



within a few hours of their arrival in the country on 8th July. The airport authorities had also refused entry to 189 Syrians the previous day. Shortly before the arrival of the passengers from Damascus and Beirut, Egyptian authorities had "imposed new conditions for admission into the country". Prior to the coup against President Morsi, Syrian nationals enjoyed unconditional entry to Egypt, while entry visas and security permits are now mandatory. (46)

Another report indicates that the regime is inciting an anti-Syrian resentment in the media and amongst the population: "A new wave of anti-Syrian sentiment has begun sweeping through parts of the country. After some Syrians may have participated in pro-Morsi demonstrations, Syrians in Egypt have told me that they are being branded as "pro-Ikhwaan" as a whole, as well as being accused of contributing to prostitution. (...) Egypt is also making it nearly impossible for any additional Syrians to enter the country. A visa is now required, and obtaining it from Syria requires getting cleared by Syrian security... we all know what that means in Syria." (47)

So we see that – instead of the myth upheld by various pro-Assad leftists who claim that their hostility against the Syrian Revolution would represent a kind of anti-imperialism – the dictator of Damascus welcomes the pro-US coup. Why is this the case? This is because the central issue of the Syrian Revolution is not the threat of an imperialist colonialization of the country – albeit the civil war is obviously intermixed with inner-imperialist rivalry between NATO and Russia. The central issue is rather the democratic popular uprising against the dictatorship. As long as he and his ruling clique can stay in power, Assad has no quarrels whatsoever with US imperialism. Therefore Assad welcomes the military coup in Egypt because it doesn't matter for him that the grip of US imperialism is strengthened in the Middle East. What matters to him is the weakening of the rebel movement in Syria. (48)

It also shows something else: Western imperialism might sometimes tactically use its influence amongst the bourgeois leadership of the Syrian rebels in order to advance

their interests and it would like to see a regime in Damascus which is more directly subordinated to Washington. But for Western imperialism (as well as for Russian and Chinese imperialism) these interests are subordinated to a much more important goal: The roll back and if possible the liquidation of the revolutionary process in Syria and the whole Arab world. Because it is such a revolutionary wave which is most threatening both to the Western as well as the Eastern imperialist powers. It is this common interest which makes it possible for them to reach agreements and compromises.

## II. The Assessment of the Coup: Discussing the arguments of our critiques

After giving an overview of the characteristics of the military-imposed 3rd July regime we will now discuss the arguments of our critiques.

### Comment on *Socialist Fight's* critique on the term "Arab Revolution"

Comrade Downing and the SF/LCFI understood much better the character of the coup d'état in Egypt than most of the left. However a weakness we see in the SF comrades publications on the Arab Revolution is their constant denial that one can characterize this historic event as a "Revolution". This is simply strange for an organization which adheres to the tradition of Marxism! While it is of course true that the uprisings and civil wars in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria etc. were neither led by a revolutionary party nor did they succeed in a socialist revolution until now, it is well known that Marxists use the term "Revolution" also in a wider sense: to describe mass movements which strive to overthrow a reactionary regime and thus imply the potential – which can be realized if they are led by a revolutionary workers party – to drive forward the process of permanent revolution to the successful seizure of power by the working class in alliance with the poor peasantry and the urban poor. (49)

This was the understanding of the Marxist classics. How else could Trotsky speak about the "Indian Revolution" in 1939 despite the fact that neither soviets nor a revolutionary party existed, or about the "Spanish Revolution" in 1930/31 when the masses overthrew the monarchy but again without soviets or a revolutionary party?! (50) We fear that the SF comrades' refusal to speak about the Arab 'Revolution' betrays a sectarian approach towards the "backward" masses who are led by petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces. The comrades don't recognize the essence of such an event of historic proportions when millions of Arab workers, peasants and lower middle class take part in uprisings and mass mobilizations against capitalist misery and suppression of democracy since two and a half years. They have shattered a region which until 2011 was under total control of US imperialism and its lackey dictatorships. In some cases like Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen they succeeded in bringing down the bourgeois dictators, albeit the democratic revolution is still unfinished and will remain so as long as the working class in alliance with the peasants and lower middle class will take power to carry through the socialist revolution.

Lenin once remarked that one of the fundamental require-



ments of the materialist dialectic is to *"the deepening of man's knowledge of the thing, of phenomena, processes, etc., from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence."* (51) It is highly unfortunate that the SF comrades fail in recognizing the essence of the Arab Revolution.

The comrades might object that the masses lack a socialist consciousness. But where should they have got it from? After many decades of bourgeois dictatorships they need time to learn. And they will learn!

The SF comrades must not judge the Arab Revolution by the revolutionary or non-revolutionary consciousness of the masses. They have to recognize the contradictions between the different cases, the course of the struggle arising out of this and the potential for the enhancement of the class consciousness. They should remember Marx's famous saying in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: *"Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production."* (52)

### On Socialist Fight's Incomprehension of the Syrian Civil War

A much bigger defect in the SF comrades' politics is their ongoing support for the counterrevolutionary Assad regime in Syria. In a response to the RCIT's article *"The Military's Coup d'État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics"* Gerry Downing, a leading cadre of the British group *Socialist Fight* and the *Liaison Committee for the Fourth International* affiliated with it, quotes the following observation in our document:

*"Those who claim the Islamists are the most immediate danger to the Revolution and not the so-called "secular" army command should also consider the following: Are they not in danger of unintentionally coming close to repeat the logic of those Stalinists who claim that the Islamists in the rank of the Syrian rebels are the most immediate threat since they want to impose an Sharia theocracy instead of understanding that it is the "secular" Assad dictatorship which is the most immediate enemy of the Syrian workers and peasants?!"* Comrade Downing goes on to criticize: *"The Syrian 'Islamicists' are supplied with weapons and money and every assistance by Imperialism to overthrow Assad, the Egyptian MB were overthrown by Imperialism, with the grateful support of all US allies. That really does make SOME FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE for Marxists. And I am not entirely convinced by the quote that there was fear of Morsi backing Iran, had he not severed ties with Assad to appease the US and was this not an attempt to ward off the impending coup?"* (53)

What comrade Downing fails to understand are the concrete contradictions of the different classes as well as the unevenness of the class struggle. *"The Syrian 'Islamicists' are supplied with weapons and money and every assistance by Imperialism to overthrow Assad?"* Well, it can not have failed the notice of comrade Downing that it is not "imperialism" which supports the rebels but if any imperialist power gives them assistance it is the US and Western European imperialists. The Russian imperialists and to a lesser degree the Chinese on the other hand massively support the Assad regime with weapons and money.

It is important that Marxist stop understanding imperialism in a Kautskyan way as a monolithic "ultra-imperialist" bloc. Imperialism is rather characterized by rivalry between different Great powers. Of course there can be historic periods where this rivalry is stemmed by the desire to roll back class enemies – like the degenerated workers states during the "Cold War" 1948-91 – as well as the existence of an absolute hegemon in the imperialist camp (USA). But since the collapse of the Stalinist states the dominance of US imperialism is more and more challenged and the rivalry between the Great Powers increases. This rivalry has even more increased with the historic crisis of capitalism, the emergence of China as a new imperialist power and the opening of a new historic revolutionary period in 2008. (54)

Furthermore: it is undoubtedly true that US imperialism (as well as several Western European powers) try to utilize the civil war in Syria for their advantage. They want to advance their direct influence and put their people in place given the total dominance of the Assad clique which is a stooge of Russian imperialism. For this they have cultivated closer ties with sections of the rebel movement leadership and give them limited material support. But comrade Downing fails to understand the nature of this support and its limitations.

Can any serious person deny the fact that US imperialism is deeply worried with the increasing strength of petty-bourgeois Islamist forces amongst the rebels?! These Islamists are deeply hostile to US imperialism (Al-Nusra Front and others) and have been put by the US administration on its "Terrorism list". This is not accidental since it is such people who fought them in Iraq, who drive them out of Afghanistan and who stormed Western embassies and killed the US ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, in September 2012. Yes, the US imperialists try to buy some influence amongst the bourgeois rebel leaders of the SNC and the FSA so that the Obama administration gains a foot in any future outcome of the Syrian civil war. But the limited degree of the Western support becomes evident by the fact that the rebels armory is outnumbered and technologically inferior to the armory of Assad's army. Remember the civil war in Afghanistan in the 1980s when US imperialism had a serious interest to support the reactionary Mujahedeen against the PDPA/Soviet forces? At that time the CIA sent the rebels the most advanced weaponries like the famous Stinger missiles.

Comrade Downing says that Morsi had *"severed ties with Assad to appease the US and was this not an attempt to ward off the impending coup."* But the truth is that nearly the whole Sunni Muslim popular masses (including most Palestinians) are in uproar and in solidarity with the Syrian Revolution since the beginning! The Sunni Muslims in Syria – the huge majority in the country – have been discriminated by decades of the sectarian rule by the Alevi-based Assad clique. An uprising in 1982 in Homs by the Sunni-based Muslim Brotherhood was drowned in blood leaving tens of thousands dead. In fact it is the reciprocal reactionary sectarianism of sectors of the Islamist Syrian rebels which drives sectors of the Syrian religious minorities into the hand of the Assad regime.

If Morsi had severed ties with Assad "because of US pressure" why is the new military regime – which is without doubt much closer to the Obama administration than

Morsi – repressing the Syrian refugees and exiles?!

We fear that Comrade Downing and the SF/LCFI is victim of a totally schematic, undialectical mode of thinking which leads them to a complete misunderstanding of the Syrian civil war and hence to joining the wrong side of the barricades. It is high time, that the comrades correct this serious failure!

**Some "army socialists" start to feel uneasy and invent a "Third Camp"**

As we have shown above most of the left in Egypt welcomed the coup d'état and thereby betrayed the working class. However it is telling that some of them – like the Clifite Revolutionary Socialists or the 6th April Youth Movement – are now forced to recognize that the coup d'état might not have been such an advance of the revolution and that it rather implies massive dangers. Thus they refused to call for Al-Sisi's bonapartist mobilization on 26<sup>th</sup> July.

The editors the progressive democratic ezine *Jadaliyya* recently published a statement saying: "The Muslim Brotherhood's record in power may have been so horrendous as to justify Morsi's impeachment. But even so, what is undeniable is that the military's violent campaign against Brotherhood supporters and the propagation of xenophobic discourse against its activists, as well as any explicit or implicit endorsement of such efforts stand in complete contradiction with the professed principles of the January 25 Revolution. They also defy the vision of a humane, just social order that many individuals have sacrificed their lives or body parts for the past two and a half years. There can be no freedom in a country where media outlets are shut down because they fail to toe the official line and where individuals face the threat of arrest, slander, and violent retribution for their political views. There can be no justice in a country where a former president and his associates are being held accountable for suspected wrong-doings through a process dominated by the very system that has killed unarmed protesters, conducted virginity tests, and have long subjected Egyptians to torture, humiliation, and abuse. There can be no dignity in a country where the coercive apparatus of the old Mubarak regime is reconstituting itself under the guise of a counter-terrorism initiative. The Muslim

Brotherhood's leaders are guilty for failing to build an Egypt that lives up to the demands of the January 25 Revolution. But their former allies among the officers who are ruling today are just as guilty." (55)

The more left-wing Clifite Revolutionary Socialists go further and write: "[The army] want finally to restore "stability" – that is to say, the return of order and the return of the regime. They want to finish off the revolution, and they will use the Brotherhood to do it. (...) The masses going into the street on Friday is damaging to the revolution, whatever the participants in the protests might think. Giving the army a popular mandate to finish off the Muslim Brotherhood will inevitably lead to the consolidation of the regime, which the revolution arose to overthrow. We must use the downfall of the Brotherhood to deepen the revolution, not to support the regime." (56)

A few days later the RS stated: "We call to all of the proud revolutionary and social forces, to the free people among the workers and students and professionals and farmers and everyone else. We call upon you to participate in building a fighting revolutionary front so we can together confront both this increasing military fascism, as well as the opportunism and the crimes of the Brotherhood. (...) The omens of a return of Mubarak's dictatorial regime are lost on no one. (...) We call upon you to participate in building a fighting revolutionary front so we can together confront both this increasing military fascism, as well as the opportunism and the crimes of the Brotherhood." (57)

It is bizarre to the extreme that the RS comrades fail to understand that they talk now about the "omens of a return of Mubarak's dictatorial regime" and about the "increasing military fascism" by the hands of the same army command whose coup they praised only a few weeks ago! When the RS correctly state: "Giving the army a popular mandate to finish off the Muslim Brotherhood will inevitably lead to the consolidation of the regime, which the revolution arose to overthrow" does it not come to mind of the comrades that by welcoming the coup, the RS leadership itself helped to give the army command such a mandate?!

An international supporter of the RS – the US-based International Socialist organization (ISO) – also had to admit recently: "Since Morsi's ouster, however, the security apparatus and remnants of the old Mubarak regime, known as the feloul, have regained some of their former support." (58) So how

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could the army have "regained some power" if the coup was an advance of the revolution as they claimed in their uncritical reprinting of the RS statements since weeks?!

However, failing to understand the betrayal of their "army socialism", the petty-bourgeois left is still incapable of finding the correct path in the class struggle. Instead of joining the real existing mass mobilizations – which take place under the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood – against the coup, they are creating their own, little Third Camp. Claiming to oppose both the military-imposed government as well as the Muslim brotherhood, they call for rallies independent of both sides.

However, we think these rallies – since they are undertaken as an alternative to participate in the mass mobilizations against the coup – are self-isolating, very small events. In reality it only means that these leftists are not willing to take a side in the ongoing conflict between the coup regime and the pro-Morsi mass mobilizations which are under constant murderous attack by the army and police. A journalist from the Guardian count about 75 participants in such a Third Camp rally and reports: "A new protest movement called the Third Square has begun to assemble in a square in west Cairo – rejecting the authoritarianism of both the army and Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, and calling for a return to the true democratic values of the 2011 revolution. "Down with the Murshid [the Brotherhood's leader], down with military rule. No to the killers in state security," chanted around 75 Third Square protesters on Sunday night. "We are here to complete the January 2011 revolution, to break down Mubarak's system," said Mahmoud Omar, a doctor. "We need to start a new democracy in Egypt. The Brotherhood model took us away from the revolution's goals – while we already had 60 years of living under the military." Mohamed Sobhi, another protester, added: "They are two sides of the same coin." (59)

We repeat: first, the RS and others have hailed the counter-revolutionary coup as an "advance of the revolution". Now, as it becomes so obvious that this is no advance but rather the reaction raising its head, they refuse to correct their mistake, refuse to join the mass mobilizations against the coup and instead assemble with a few dozens or hundreds people to constitute a sectarian, isolated Third Camp. And all this at a time when hundreds of thousands and millions of people protest on the streets against the coup under the leadership of the *Al-Ikhwan!* This reflects the massive setback and discrediting of the petty-bourgeois left.

### Can a Military Coup ever reflect an Advance of the Revolution?

Let us now briefly deal with the question if a military coup can ever reflect an advance of the revolution. While a military coup is never the method of revolutionaries to undertake the socialist transformation of the society, the concrete meaning of a military coup naturally depends on the concrete situation and the relation between the different class forces. Since the army's officer corps represents the core of the bourgeois state apparatus, military coups usually represent the attempt of the ruling class (or sectors of it) to suppress the toiling masses by force.

There can be however circumstances where the class contradictions between the ruling class and the middle class and the popular masses lead to sharp conflicts inside the army's officer corps. In such cases it can happen, that

lower-ranking officers – coming usually from the middle class – rebel against the ruling regime. Such was the case in several military coups like the rebellion of the *Free Officers* movements in Egypt (1952) or Iraq (1958) against the monarchies which were lackeys of the imperialist Great Powers. Another example is the so-called *Carnation Revolution* on 25th April 1974 in Portugal when low-ranking officers organized in the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* overthrew the reactionary *Estado Novo* dictatorship. The downfall of this regime which ruled Portugal since 1926 opened a revolutionary period in which the masses played a highly active role and only failed in a successful socialist revolution because of the betrayal of social democracy and the Stalinist PCP. A more recent example of such an attempted coup d'état was the failed *Operation Zamora* of Hugo Chávez and his *MBR-200* movement in Venezuela in February 1992.

This brief description however makes it immediately obvious why the 3<sup>rd</sup> July coup in Egypt has nothing in common with these examples. These were coups of low-ranking officers against a dictatorship and the army command loyal to it and which were closely aligned to the imperialist powers. In Portugal they finished half a century of dictatorship and opened a period of sharp class struggle.

In Egypt 2013 on the other hand it was the army command in alliance with the big bourgeoisie and US imperialism which overthrew the bourgeois-democratically elected Morsi government whose core constituency is the middle class and which was threatened by a workers and peasant uprising. The coup strengthened the bourgeois rule, opened a wave of repression and pushed back – at least temporarily – the workers struggles.

So while in Portugal 1974 the military coup reflected an advance of the revolution, in Egypt the situation is unfortunately the opposite: the coup reflects an advance of the counter-revolution.

### LCC: Mistaking a counterrevolutionary military coup for an "advance of the Arab revolution"

It is highly unfortunate that the comrades of the LCC repeat to a certain degree the nonsense of the opportunist left which claims that the military coup was "an advance of the revolution". While they are of course miles away from the popular-frontism of the RS and the social-democratized caricature of Marxism à la Alan Woods/IMT, the completely fail to grasp the dynamics of the class struggle in Egypt and its consequences for the Arab Revolution.

In a longer article we replied to the LCC assessment of the Egypt coup and explained with a number of facts that the coup was prepared long in advance and that it was supported respectively welcomed by the Egyptian bourgeoisie, US imperialism and Israel. We explained that it makes an important difference for the class struggle if the bourgeois Islamist Morsi government is overthrown by the masses or the military: "The RCIT says: if the revolutionary masses which were on the streets on 30<sup>th</sup> June would have overthrown the Mursi regime, it would have been a tremendous step forward in the revolutionary process. If however the Mursi regime is overthrown by a military coup d'état which enables the ruling class and the imperialists to determine more directly the composition and policy of the Egyptian government, then we don't have a step forward but a step backward in the revolution-

ary process. This is the only concrete and dialectical understanding of the dynamics of the present situation." (60)

The LCC has published a reply to our document which unfortunately did not even try to refute our arguments but rather deepened their confusion. Their reply deals on one hand with the RCIT's understanding of the slogan of the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly (more on this below) but more importantly with our assessment of military coup.

The comrades write: "Our position is that the term 'coup' is descriptive and does not help in understanding the deeper class relations and power struggles of the Egyptian revolution and the wider Arab Revolution. The danger is that the 'coup' becomes an impressionistic 'fact' that detaches itself from the totality and is then given too much weight in assessing the balance of class forces. The result can be as serious as to mistake an advance in the Arab revolution for a counter-revolutionary retreat. Indeed, you begin your letter by saying (paraphrasing) that the 'coup' is important for the whole of the Arab Revolution. We think that by this you actually mean that the 'coup' is a defeat for the revolution in Egypt and because of Egypt's importance in MENA, a setback for the Arab revolution. This is where our major difference lies. We avoided using the term 'coup' to describe the army seizure of power because this gives too much weight to the deposing of the MB regime that came into existence as a counter-revolutionary deal with the SCAF in its attempt to suppress the advance of the Egyptian revolution.

This appeared to be a 'coup' because the SCAF removed the MB from government; but actually the SCAF continuing to play its role as 'king maker', very much under pressure to suppress the revolution and fulfil its Bonapartist role in balancing between both imperialism and the Egyptian masses. (...) we see this apparent 'coup' as a 'rebalancing' of the Bonapartist trick cyclist, riding the high wire above the classes but in a global imperialist crisis without a safety net. (...) we see the apparent 'coup' as only one aspect of the advance of that revolution in Egypt and MENA. To the extent that elements of the working class and the oppressed have illusions in bourgeois democracy we think that the development of independent worker organisation which confronts the SCAF regime will explode the main class contradiction and detonate the secondary contradiction in the army between the supreme command and the ranks. This is the offensive method of destroying illusions in bourgeois democracy by the victory of revolution over counter-revolution.

It seems to us, however, that since you see the 'coup' as evidence of a defeat, if not retreat, of the Revolution in Egypt and the wider MENA, that while you call in your program for independent class mobilisation up to and including a Workers' State, you really do not have confidence in the movement being able to split and defeat the SCAF on the streets or in the workplaces. You are in effect saying that the movement is in retreat so that the fight for a RCA is the main task of the revolution today. This is the essence of our differences in Egypt. Does the balance of class forces advance of revolution over counter-revolution or not?" (61)

Unfortunately the comrades' analysis is confused from the beginning to the end. The LCC comrades accuse us of "impressionism". We are free to admit that we have the "impression" that the killing of hundreds and the injuring and arresting of thousands of Muslim Brotherhood activists and leaders by the army in order to liquidate the resistance against the coup d'état is not an advance of the revolution. This is the same army which ruled via a dictatorship since 1952. This is the same Muslim Brotherhood

which was suppressed brutally by this army since 1954. This is the Brotherhood whose candidate was elected as president against the candidate of the army and the *folool* in the first bourgeois-democratic elections in 2012. Yes, would the masses have toppled Morsi – as there was the possibility around the 30<sup>th</sup> June – that would have been a massive advance for the revolution! But this opportunity was missed because of the protests' bourgeois-liberal leadership (closely allied with the army command and the *folool*) and the workers movements' and lefts' subordination to the liberals. Instead the army command moved in and took power on 3<sup>rd</sup> July (under the pretext of fulfilling the will of the masses). To speak in a historic analogy of the Russian Revolution in 1917: The LCC comrades don't see the decisive difference between Kerenky toppled by the masses or by a military coup d'état of General Kornilov. For them Kornilov appear to act "under the massive pressure of the masses".

Abram Deborin, the leading Soviet philosopher in the 1920s before the Stalinist purge, once remarked that "*the Marxist must, above all, assess the general direction of the development.*" (62) It is exactly this where the comrades of the LCC fail: to recognize the general direction of the of 3<sup>rd</sup> July regime's development and its consequences for the working class.

#### The Value of the Muslim Brotherhood for the Bourgeoisie

The LCC comrades write: "*the MB regime that came into existence as a counter-revolutionary deal with the SCAF in its attempt to suppress the advance of the Egyptian revolution.*". Yes, but this was a counter-revolutionary deal which was not the preference of the army command and to which it was forced because of the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhoods Morsi. Have the comrades forgotten that the candidate of the army and the *folool* at the presidential elections was Ahmed Shafik, the last prime minister under Mubarak's dictatorship?! This by the way is the same Shafik which went to Abu Dhabi and who was a main figure in the conspiracy which led to the military's coup d'état.

It seems that the comrades lack a class analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood. Here is not the place to deal with the history of the Islamist movement in detail which we did it somewhere else. (63) We shall summarize here only the most important features of the Muslim Brotherhood characteristics.

It is a bourgeois-Islamist force which in its whole history had an organized mass base amongst the urban middle classes, who has a following amongst the poor and who has substantial influence amongst smaller and middle business men. For historic reason they have been largely excluded from the big bourgeoisie and the ruling elite in Egypt. This is the reason why they could command some credibility amongst the popular masses. Given the failure of the workers movement and the left in the democratic revolution, the masses turned towards the Islamists despite the fact that the later joined the uprising in early 2011 only belatedly and hesitantly. Why else did Muslim Brotherhood the win all elections which took place since the overthrow of the Mubarak dictatorship on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011?!

It is this mass following and electoral success which made the *al-Ikhwan* a force with which the army command and US imperialism were prepared to deal with. This is why they struck a deal after the election of Morsi to president. Their hopes were justified insofar as the Brotherhood leadership follows a bourgeois-conservative program and was absolutely willing to compromise with the army and US imperialism.

But as Marxists we know that politics often turns different from the initial plans and programs of its actors. Lenin once remarked: „*We are constantly making the mistake in Russia of judging the slogans and tactics of a certain party or group, of judging its general trend, by the intentions or motives that the group claims for itself. Such judgement is worthless. The road to hell—as was said long ago—is paved with good intentions. It is not a matter of intentions, motives or words but of the objective situation, independent of them, that determines the fate and significance of slogans, of tactics or, in general, of the trend of a given party or group.*“ (64)

Similarly in Egypt today we must not confuse the willingness of the Islamists to serve in the Egypt bourgeoisies' and the US imperialists' interest with their ability to do so. They are under the pressure of their mass base as well as by the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The Morsi government could not deliver the masses bread, employment or security. They tried to appease their religious middle class core constituency with some constitutional legislation concerning the introduction of the Sharia. This in turn enraged the army command as well as the urban liberal middle class and sectors of the working class. In addition the Morsi government tried to loosen Egypt's complete dependence of US imperialism by maneuvering with some other powers (Iran, China, Turkey). In the end, the Morsi government alienated nearly all sectors of the society and provoked mass protests. They lost their value as a force to control the masses and by this they lost their justification to be accepted as a governmental party by the army command and the US imperialists.

The LCC comrades are satisfied to characterize both the army command as well as the Muslim Brotherhood as bourgeois. While this is true, it is not sufficient. Marx once remarked in Volume III of *Capital*: „*But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.*“ (65) Indeed, it is absolutely urgent that revolutionaries are not satisfied with a superficial, ideological view of the conflicting camps in Egypt. They have rather to recognize the different class forces which represent the camps. The army and the fool are closely connected with the Egyptian big bourgeoisie and US imperialism since decades. They are also a tested guardian of Israel (securing the reactionary Camp David Treaty of 1978). The Muslim Brotherhood represents and organizes sectors of the middle class, the poor as well as sectors of the smaller and middle bourgeoisie. They were excluded from political power since their foundation in 1928 (except for one year of Morsi government 2012/13). Under the condition of massive crisis and class struggles such differences can lead to sharp conflicts and even civil war between two bourgeois forces. The LCC comrades fail to understand this, they fail to understand that a victory for the reactionary putschists means a setback for the democratic revolution while a defeat for them means a step forward – irrespective of the nature of the *Al-Ikhwan* leadership.

### Questions to the LCC on the so-called “Advance of the Revolution”

The LCC comrades rightly state: “*This is the essence of our differences in Egypt. Does the balance of class forces advance of revolution over counter-revolution or not?*” and add that they are convinced that the coup represents an advance of the revolution. Now, one month after the coup d'état we ask the LCC comrades: Where do you see the proof that this coup was an advance for the Revolution in Egypt and the Arab world?

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if a bourgeois-democratically elected government is overthrown by the army command? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if the military-imposed government kills hundreds and injures and arrests thousands of Brotherhood activists? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if there are hardly any independent mass mobilizations of the trade unions and progressive youth organizations on the streets since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if the numbers of strikes and workers demonstrations decline massively since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if General Al-Sisi calls for mass demonstrations to give him “*a mandate to fight terrorism*”? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if the military-imposed government revives the notorious departments of the police to “*fight extremism*” who were well known for torture and monitoring during the Mubarak era? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if the military-imposed government clamps down on Hamas and the Palestinians in Gaza? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an advance or a setback for the Revolution if the 3<sup>rd</sup> July government clamps down on the Syrian refugees and rebel activists? We say it is a setback. Do you seriously say this is an advance?!

Is it an indication of an advance or a setback for the Revolution if the progressive organizations since 3<sup>rd</sup> July can mobilize now only a few dozen or hundred for the demonstrations? We say this reflects a setback. Do you seriously say this reflects an advance?!

Is it an indication of an advance or a setback for the Arab Revolution if US imperialism and Israel as well as other Great Powers welcome the coup? We say this reflects a setback. Do you seriously say this reflects an advance?!

Is it not thought-provoking for the LCC comrades that even those leftists who initially welcomed the military coup (like the RS or the 6<sup>th</sup> April youth movement) are staring to become more critical towards the new military-imposed regime? How can the LCC speak about an “*advance of the revolution*” if even the ‘army socialist’ RS is forced to warn of the danger of “*military fascism*”?!

These are clear and straightforward questions and we hope

that the LCC comrades are prepared to answer them.

The LCC comrades criticize the RCIT: *"you really do not have confidence in the movement being able to split and defeat the SCAF on the streets or in the workplaces. You are in effect saying that the movement is in retreat so that the fight for a RCA is the main task of the revolution today."* Indeed we see the military coup and the clamp down since then as a setback for the revolution. One has to be politically blind to deny this. This has nothing to do with "lack of confidence". We have confidence in the masses and their willingness to fight for their rights. But we know that the masses need a leadership to do so successfully and we know that the present leadership has betrayed the masses. We have indeed no confidence in this leadership.

The LCC seem to be unaware of the historical experience that a revolution is not a linear process of constant advance of the class struggle. Otherwise the victory of the revolution would be unstoppable and a revolutionary party would be unnecessary. Unfortunately this is not the case and hence we see in Egypt at the moment a setback and not an advance.

As we did already say, this setback can be reversed. The military-imposed regime has not consolidated its power. There are still mass mobilizations going against the coup. But at the moment it is the army command, the big bourgeoisie and the US imperialists who are in the offensive and not the popular masses as it was till the 30<sup>th</sup> June. The recapture of political power by the army command poses the danger of the liquidation of the achievements of the unfinished democratic revolution since the successful uprising against the Mubarak dictatorship. This danger is today even admitted by the initial left-wing cheerleaders for the coup d'état. How can the LCC still deny this?!

Why is this question so important? It is decisive because if the workers movement is not capable to recognize the danger of a counter-revolution from the hands of the army command, it can not develop the necessary tactics for the defense of the democratic achievements and to defeat the putschists.

We fear that the LCC comrades are completely confused about the situation and the tasks in Egypt. They write: *"To the extent that elements of the working class and the oppressed have illusions in bourgeois democracy we think that the development of independent worker organisation which confronts the SCAF regime will explode the main class contradiction and detonate the secondary contradiction in the army between the supreme command and the ranks."*

As a matter of fact there have been no confrontations between the independent worker organization and the SCAF regime until now because the workers movement has been betrayed and sold out by its leadership to the coup plotters. By the way: this in itself reflects that the coup was a defeat for the working class. However since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July there have been massive and permanent mobilizations and confrontations between the army and the Muslim Brotherhood. What does the LCC say on this? Which tactics do they have for these confrontations? Do they defend the Muslim Brotherhood demonstrations? Most likely no, because they see the coup as an "advance for the revolution" and therefore most likely a defeat for the putschists by the Muslim Brotherhood mobilizations would constitute for them a setback for the revolution. We fear that this shows that a failure in a dialectical understanding of the class

forces in Egypt and the meaning of their struggles pushes the LCC comrades to the wrong side of the barricade. Lacking a revolutionary-dialectical method to concretely understand the class forces in Egypt, the LCC – against their best intentions – are at risk to follow the "army socialists" in taking the side of the putschists against the Muslim Brotherhood mass mobilizations.

What the LCC fails to understand – and the various "army socialists" even more – is the importance of Lenin's famous dictum *"Who whom?"* Who is fighting against whom? Who is overthrowing whom? If the masses overthrow the Morsi government it is an advance. If the army command with the US imperialists behind overthrows it via a coup, it is a setback. This should not be so difficult to understand for so-called socialists. If a mother regularly beats her child, we are on the side of the child and will fight for its liberation from the domestic tyranny. However if the same mother is faced with domestic violence and rape by her husband, socialists will without doubt defend the woman against this threat. They would be criminal if they stay neutral or if they would even hail the male thug and rapist only because the mother herself is a little tyrant.

#### **Before the Coup D'État: Summary of the RCIT's assessment and conclusions for revolutionary tactics**

So let us summarize the meaning of the military coup d'état. Before the 3<sup>rd</sup> July there were progressive mass mobilizations against the bourgeois-Islamist Morsi government as a result of their failure to deliver bread, employment and security to the popular masses. The RCIT called in this period to participate in these mobilizations in order to advance them towards a revolutionary general strike to overthrow the Morsi. We concluded our statement: *"In this situation the RCIT raises the following slogans: For a General Strike to bring down Morsi government! No political support for the National Salvation Front! For action committees in each factory, workers neighborhood and village to be organized on district and national level to coordinate the revolutionary activities! For self defense committees! Split the army to win the soldiers for revolution! Cancel the debts! For a workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs! Build a revolutionary organization! All Workers Organizations should break with the bourgeois opposition forces and form an independent Mass Workers Party based on a revolutionary program!"* (66)

However we already warned in advance about the danger of a military coup: *"One of the key issues of the revolution is how to deal with the Egyptian army. On Monday the Egyptian army has given a 48 hours ultimatum to resolve the current political stalemate."* We warned that such a coup *"could lead to political demoralization of the masses rather than to a revolution. This danger becomes clear from reports from the [enthusiastic] reaction of sectors of the masses at the Tahrir Square to the army's ultimatum. (...) To entertain hopes in the army is a serious mistake reflecting bourgeois illusions. The RCIT warns that the Egyptian army – like all armies in the capitalist society – is not the army of the workers the peasants and the rebelling youth. It is the core of the capitalist state apparatus and it defends capitalism. Therefore this army must be split and replaced by workers and peasants self defense guard. The role of this il-*

*lusion that the army is on the side of the people is leading to the subordination of the revolutionary masses to the capitalist state. The army generals may have reached the conclusion that Morsi does not serve them any more in controlling the masses, but the army high command is the enemy of the masses – not a friend!"* It has now become clear that the army command has already conspired for several months with the ElBaradei/NSF leadership as well as the Tamarod leadership in order to utilize the crisis for a coup d'état. Various Islamists and "anti-imperialist" leftists have concluded from this that the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration was a "Colored Revolution" – a staged show of mass opposition. We totally reject this argument. Of course the leadership did conspire and prepare the open betrayal. But the masses' opposition was not based on manipulation but on the misery and lack of freedom caused by capitalism and administered by the Morsi government.

In fact the 30<sup>th</sup> June is a model for the contradictions in liberation struggles where one has authentic mass movements fighting for their rights but where one has at the same time a treacherous leadership conspiring with the class enemy and preparing the sell-out. As we have shown in our document "*Liberation struggles and imperialist interference*", such contradictory mass struggles have happened many times in the real history of the class struggle. The task of revolutionaries is not to turn away sectarian from such mass movements but to fight alongside the masses and to struggle *inside* the movement against the treacherous leadership.

Was it therefore wrong to support the mass mobilizations which culminated in the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration given the fact that they took place under the leadership of El-Baradei/NSF and Tamarod and were abused by the army command as justification of their coup? No, definitely not. One had to fight inside the movement, prepare the masses against the threatening sell-out by the corrupt NSF- and Tamarod-leadership as well against the threatening coup and organize the vanguard independent of these misleaderships.

Various opponents of the coup have now started to dispute the numbers of the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration which were reported as 15, 17 or even 33 millions. Naturally we are not in a position to calculate the real numbers. It is certainly true that in times of such struggles all sides tend to exaggerate the number of participants in their demonstrations. One critical observer "*calculated that the absolute maximum number of anti-Morsi demonstrators who could fit in the total area of major public spaces in Egyptian cities was at most 2.8 million.*" (67) While we can not judge about this dispute on number, we say that this is not decisive. Mass mobilizations, supported by the trade unions and youth movement, of even "only" three million people represents a huge mass which could have been the basis for a revolutionary overthrow of the Morsi government.

Yes, the army used the 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration as a pretext for their conspiracy. But this was not the dominant aspect of the mobilization. All the conspiracy theorists – seeing everywhere "*Colored Revolutions*" – ignore there was a real existing mass sentiment against the Morsi government before. The 30<sup>th</sup> June demonstration did not occur out of the blue but was the high point of several months of mass mobilizations and strikes. (Remember the figures we gave above about the massive increase of strikes and workers

protests under the Morsi government.). The history of class struggle is full of conspiracies of the ruling classes (and the 3<sup>rd</sup> July was an obvious conspiracy). But history is not driven by conspiracies!

#### **After the 3<sup>rd</sup> July: Summary of the RCIT's assessment and conclusions for revolutionary tactics**

*The military coup was a turning point. Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July the situation has changed completely!* The coup brought the army command and the folool back to direct political power. The new regime is supported by the whole big bourgeoisie. The masses of the 30<sup>th</sup> June have been politically hijacked. Most are staying now at home demoralized and disorientated. Others join the pro-Sisi demonstrations which are nothing but a Bonapartist cheering parade to call for "*a mandate to fight terrorism*".

The military-imposed government is using brutal force to remove any opposition from the streets and to crush and arrest the Muslim Brotherhood and others. It has killed hundreds and injured and arrested thousands of Brotherhood activists. It has revived the notorious torture and monitoring departments of the police from the Mubarak era to "*fight terrorism*".

The 3<sup>rd</sup> July regime clamps down on Hamas and the Palestinians in Gaza as well as the Syrian refugees and rebel activists. The coup helps the imperialists and Zionists to impose their new fake Peace Talks between Israel and the treacherous Palestinian Authority of Abbas. (68)

As a result of all this the new regime has been supported from the beginning by US imperialism, Israel and the Gulf monarchies. It has also been welcomed by Russian imperialism and met no opposition except from the African states and – after contrary initial reactions – Iran. (69)

So we see the situation has fundamentally changed with the 3<sup>rd</sup> July coup. We say this has been an important setback for the Revolution. This does not mean that the setback is irreversible. The putschists' regime can still be smashed. But for this mass mobilizations against the new military-imposed regime are necessary. This is currently the most important task in order to defend the limited gains of the unfinished democratic revolution of February 2011. Therefore, now the dominant aspect in the class struggle situation is the defeat of the military regime and the defense of democratic rights.

Trotsky once stated that one of the key characteristics of Bolshevism is its ability to recognize sharp changes in the class struggle situation and to adapt its tactics to this: "*Marxism is a method of historical analysis, of political orientation, and not a mass of decisions prepared in advance. Leninism is the application of this method in the conditions of an exceptional historical epoch. It is precisely this union of the peculiarities of the epoch and the method that determines that courageous, self-assured policy of brusque turns of which Lenin gave us the finest models, and which he illuminated theoretically and generalized on more than one occasion.*" (70)

Similarly it is today of major importance to recognize the change in the Egypt Revolution since the 3<sup>rd</sup> July and adapt the revolutionary tactics. Hence the RCIT believes that revolutionaries should call for the formation of *Actions Committees* to organize the defensive struggle against the putschists. They should participate in the mass demonstrations and square occupations and argue for an ex-

tension of the struggle to the enterprises in order to prepare for a *general strike*. They should raise the slogan of a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly* to be organized and controlled by the revolutionary masses. Such an assembly could be the place where the masses should discuss and decide about the future road of the country. Such an assembly should be elected with equal voting rights for all over the age of 12. It should have proportional representation and no threshold, and its delegates must be recallable by those who elect them. It must be protected by workers and popular militias against any interference by reactionary forces.

Clearly such a program must be combined with the perspective of a *workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs!* There will be no real democracy as long as Egypt is depended of and exploited by imperialist capital and powers, as long as the super-rich capitalists dominate the country and as long as the armed state apparatus related to the rich elite is not smashed.

In the first five weeks since 3<sup>rd</sup> July the only existing mass mobilizations against the coup have been those organized by the Muslim Brotherhood. This is of course highly unfortunate because it reflects that the official workers movement and left have lost its ability and credibility to mobilize masses against the army command. But this failure of the reformist left must not lead revolutionaries to follow these treacherous elements in leaving the field of class struggle. They must call for a united front of all forces to join in democratic mobilizations against the military-imposed regime and the suppression of the protests in the streets. Such a united front orientation should focus on the workers organization. But it must also include the forces around the Muslim Brotherhood as the currently biggest mobilizing force against the regime. Of course revolutionaries would limit such a united front only to the practical struggle against the military-imposed regime and for the defense of the democratic rights. As the RCIT said from the beginning, we do not support any call for a return of Morsi to power.

It is likely that the Muslim Brotherhood leaders would not accept such a united front and that they would even suppress revolutionaries who participate in their demonstrations. However this does not alter the fact that masses follow the Muslim Brotherhood leadership and that they are the main force currently. As we know revolutionaries often have to work even inside the trade unions without fully disclosing their political identity because they could be immediately expelled by the trade union bureaucrats and sacked by the capitalists. In progressive wars the situation was similar for revolutionaries defending the Stalinist Soviet Union during World War II or joining the army of Chiang Kai-chek in China in the 1930s against the Japanese invaders. One has to make revolutionary propaganda and agitation with the means which are possible.

It is also possible that the joint efforts of the army command and the imperialists succeed in forcing the Muslim Brotherhood leadership to stop their protest camps and daily mass demonstrations. This is quiet possible given the bourgeois-conservative nature of the Islamists leadership. Such a capitulation of their part would however represent

a setback and not an advance for the revolution because it would help to consolidate the putschist-imperialist regime of General Al-Sisi.

As we explained in our statements the decisive task now is to build a mass movement and action committees in order to organize a general strike to bring down the military-imposed regime. An important slogan is the *Revolutionary Constitutional Assembly* in order to tackle the massive democratic illusion. (more on this below). Another important task is to agitate amongst the soldiers in order to split the army between the lower ranks and the reactionary officer corps. The strategic goal which has to be prepared in propaganda now is the struggle for a *workers government, based on the poor peasantry and the urban poor* committed to the expropriation of the multinationals, big capital and banks under workers control as well as the replacement of the bourgeois state apparatus by workers and peasant organs.

It is around these lines where a *revolutionary organization* in Egypt should be built in the current phase. At the same time revolutionaries should call all workers organizations to break with the bourgeois forces and form an independent *Mass Workers Party* based on a revolutionary program!

### III. The Marxist classics on reactionary coups d'états

The military coup and the existence of an authoritarian regime in Egypt is of course not the first event of this kind in the history of class struggles. Hence the revolutionary workers movement had to deal many times with an analysis of such regimes and the tactical conclusions which derived from this. In this chapter we will outline an overview of how Marxists have dealt with such issues based on a number of historic examples.

#### Marx and Engels against "tactical" support for reactionary forces against bourgeois opponents

The present confusion amongst most so-called Marxists and their failure to find the correct orientation reflects their adaption to petty-bourgeois forces as well as their failure to assimilate the lessons of the revolutionary workers movement. In fact in the history of the class struggle we have seen a number of similar situations where sections of the workers movement failed to understand the reactionary nature of a coup respective sided with the regime in power against the bourgeois opposition.

Marx and Engels insisted that the workers movement must identify the main enemy in a given situation of the class struggle and be prepared to form practical alliances (united fronts) in order to broaden the struggle against such a main enemy. However the workers movement must follow an independent line, i.e. not subordinating the interests of the working class for the sake of an alliance with a (petty-) bourgeois ally. As they outlined in the last chapter of their famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (published in February 1848) only concrete, practical agreements were permissible which did not limit the workers party's independent propaganda and which would not derail its struggle for the workers and popular demands.

During the times of the 1848 Revolution Marx and Engels has to struggle against various pseudo-socialist tendencies

that confused the justified hatred against the bourgeoisie with "tactically" support for the feudal-royal monarchies. (71) In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* they criticized the so-called German or "true" socialists who focused their polemic against the bourgeois movements instead of the ruling monarchy:

*"By this, the long-wished for opportunity was offered to "True" Socialism of confronting the political movement with the Socialist demands, of hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality, and of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. German Socialism forgot, in the nick of time, that the French criticism, whose silly echo it was, presupposed the existence of modern bourgeois society, with its corresponding economic conditions of existence, and the political constitution adapted thereto, the very things those attainment was the object of the pending struggle in Germany. To the absolute governments, with their following of parsons, professors, country squires, and officials, it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie."* (72)

The founders of scientific socialism had to deal with a similar confused, reactionary attitude of some socialists when Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, elected president in 1848, staged a coup d'état on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1851, declared himself a Emperor and organized a national referendum to approve his takeover. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the leading theoretician of petty-bourgeois socialism in France, wrote a pamphlet where he gave "tactical" support for the coup. Marx denounced this position:

*"His work on the Coup d'état, in which he flirts with Louis Bonaparte and, in fact, strives to make him palatable to the French workers, and his last work, written against Poland, in which for the greater glory of the tsar he expresses moronic cynicism, must be described as works not merely bad but base, a baseness, however, which corresponds to the petty-bourgeois point of view."* (73)

Engels explained that socialists must not have been confused by the fact that many workers were demoralized and refused to defend the bourgeois republic against the monarchist coup. He said that such apathy was understandable since the bourgeois republicans killed thousands of workers during the insurrection of the so-called *June Days* in 1848 but he also added that this was politically wrong. Despite the fact that it was a struggle between two factions of the ruling class, it was a struggle where the revolutionary workers had a stake since they were interested in keeping elements of bourgeois democracy instead of a dictatorship.

*"But let us look at the position in which the bastard-eagle [Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte] found himself on the evening of his victory. He had for supporters the army, the clergy, and the peasantry. He had been opposed in his attempt by the middle-class (comprising the large landed proprietors), and the Socialists or revolutionary working-men."* (74)

The issue of revolutionary tactics in conflicts between different factions of the ruling class was again brought up when Marx and Engels had to deal with the tactics of Ferdinand Lassalle, who was the central leader of the German workers movement in the 1860s. Despite his undoubtedly merits in rebuilding the workers organizations after the defeat of the 1848 revolution, he committed grave

errors in his tactics. He mixed his sharp denunciations against the bourgeois opposition forces – in particular the "*Fortschrittspartei*" – with a lack of public attacks against Bismarck and the Prussian monarchy. He even went so far to make unprincipled secret deals with Bismarck. Engels characterized this as "*Lassalle's entire socialism consisted in abusing the capitalists and flattering the Prussian rural squires.*" (75)

In a letter to Marx, Engels characterized his dealings with Bismarck as a betrayal to the working class: "*Good old Lassalle is after all gradually being unmasked as a common or garden scoundrel. It has never been our practice to judge people by what they thought but rather by what they were, and I do not see why we should make an exception in the late Izzy's case. Subjectively, his vanity may have made the affair seem plausible to him, but objectively it was the act of a scoundrel, the betrayal of the whole workers' movement to the Prussians.*" (76)

In a public declaration Marx and Engels denounced Lassalle's tactic as an "*alliance of the 'proletariat' with the 'government' against the liberal bourgeoisie*" and reinforced their critique of such wrong tactics as they already outlined it during the 1848 revolution. (77) In particular they referred to an article which Marx wrote in 1847 where he polemicized against a pro-monarchist critique of the bourgeoisie. He explained that the working class must give tactical support to those bourgeois forces who were fighting against the monarchy because the later was the main enemy and the working class has better conditions to fight under more democratic conditions than under the dictatorial lash of a monarchy:

*"The people, or, to replace this broad and vague expression by a definite one, the proletariat, has quite another way of reasoning than the gentlemen of the ecclesiastical ministry permit themselves to imagine. The proletariat does not ask whether the welfare of the people is a matter of secondary or of primary importance to the bourgeoisie, or whether the bourgeoisie wishes to use proletarians as cannon fodder or not. The proletariat does not ask what the bourgeoisie merely wishes to do, but what it must do. It asks whether the present political system, the rule of the bureaucracy, or the one the liberals are striving for, the rule of the bourgeoisie, will offer it the means to achieve its own purposes. To this end it only has to compare the political position of the proletariat in England, France and America with that in Germany to see that the rule of the bourgeoisie does not only place quite new weapons in the hands of the proletariat for the struggle against the bourgeoisie, but that it also secures for it a quite different status, the status of a recognised party. Does the Herr Consistorial Counsellor then believe that the proletariat, which is more and more adhering to the Communist Party, that the proletariat will be incapable of utilising the freedom of the press and the freedom of association? Let him just read the English and French working men's newspapers, let him just attend some time a single Chartist meeting!"* (78)

#### **Lenin, Trotsky and the Communist International on reactionary coup d'état**

Similarly Lenin and Trotsky – who struggled for the working class revolution already in the new epoch of imperialism – understood that in a conflict between two bourgeois camps it is completely insufficient to be complacent with the denunciation of both sides as "capitalist". The insisted that a revolutionary party is obliged to make a concrete

study of the classes and factions of classes involved, which issues are at stake and what are the consequences of the possible outcome for the working class.

Thus for example the Bolsheviks were prepared to make practical agreements with petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois forces against Czarism. During the Russian Revolution in 1917 they called for united front actions for the defense of the bourgeois-republican Kerensky government when General Kornilov attempted a reactionary coup d'état against it in August 1917. The tactics of the Bolsheviks didn't imply an inch of popular-frontism, i.e. of political support for the Kerensky coalition government of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. They applied such united front tactics despite the fact that only weeks ago, in early July, the same Kerensky government had bloody suppressed the workers and soldiers uprising in Petrograd and arrested the Bolshevik leaders or forced them to go underground. But the Bolsheviks understood that in the given situation the main enemy was the threatening coup d'état of the extreme right wing General Kornilov. For this purpose they formed a purely practical, military united front with the Kerensky government to defeat Kornilov. They were victorious in this and two months later the Bolsheviks organized a successful armed insurrection against the same Kerensky government and took power.

Lenin generalized the valuable experience of the Bolsheviks in his famous book *Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder* in 1920. He emphasized the importance for every revolutionary party to recognize the possible contradictions between the classes and even within different factions of the same class. He insisted that revolutionaries must take advantage of such divisions and conflicts and must be prepared to form alliances for the purpose of practical actions without giving any political support to such allies and under the condition that such practical agreements help to advance the working class struggle.

*"After all, the German Lefts cannot but know that the entire history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is full of instances of changes of tack, conciliatory tactics and compromises with other parties, including bourgeois parties! (...)*

*The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skilful and obligatory use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in general. (...)*

*Prior to the downfall of tsarism, the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats made repeated use of the services of the bourgeois liberals, i.e., they concluded numerous practical compromises with the latter. In 1901-02, even prior to the appearance of Bolshevism, the old editorial board of Iskra (...) concluded (not for long, it is true) a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism, while at the same time being able to wage an unremitting and most merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism and against the slightest manifestations of its influence in the working-class*

*movement. The Bolsheviks have always adhered to this policy. Since 1905 they have systematically advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsarism, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsarism (for instance, during second rounds of elections, or during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the bourgeois-revolutionary peasant party, exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who have falsely described themselves as socialists. During the Duma elections of 1907, the Bolsheviks entered briefly into a formal political bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries." (79)*

#### **The Communists' tactic during the reactionary coup d'états in Bulgaria 1923 and Poland 1926**

However further events demonstrated that many communists had not assimilated these lessons. In Bulgaria in the early 1920s the country was led by the government of Aleksandur Stamboliyski and his Peasant Party (called *Agrarian National Union*). This was a bourgeois party which rested mostly on the small peasants. Stamboliyski tried to maneuver between the bourgeoisie, the Tsar and the peasantry and the working class. He also entered into an alliance with French imperialism. At the elections in 1919 and 1920 Stamboliyski's *Agrarian National Union* became the strongest party. By time its rule became more and more reactionary and dictatorial. It attacked the working class and moved to suppress the Communist Party (which was the hegemonic party of the proletariat at that time). The Agrarian National Union paramilitary wing – the *Orange Guard* – killed the Communist mayor of Dupnitsa and attacked the Communist meetings. Stamboliyski signed a treaty with the Yugoslavia government in March 1923 which meant a betrayal for the Macedonian people – an oppressed national minority which lived divided in Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria. (80)

On 9<sup>th</sup> June 1923 a coalition of army officers, embittered nationalists, Macedonian revolutionaries with the support of British imperialism overthrew the Stamboliyski government. The putschist regime – led by Aleksandar Tsankov – was joined and supported by the Social-Democratic Party which also formed a joined list with the putschist parties at the elections later in November 1923. (81)

The Communist Party took a neutral position during the coup. In its first statement the party's Central Committee claimed that this was *"a struggle between two wings of the bourgeoisie"* (82) The next day it declared: *"The working class and the toiling peasant must not interfere in the armed struggle between the rural and the urban bourgeoisie, because this would mean pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for your own exploiters."* (83)

They justified their neutral stance by referring to the reactionary and authoritarian character of the Stamboliyski government and to the animosity many workers had toward it which gave them – according to the Bulgarian communists – a *"certain feeling of relieve"* when the coup d'état took place.

Yet, this neutral tactic of the Communist Party of Bulgaria was a catastrophe. While it was true that the Stamboliyski government was bourgeois, authoritarian and collaborated with the French imperialists, the Bulgarian communists ignored that the *Agrarian National Union* based itself on the



peasants – a central layer which the communists needed to win to successfully struggle for a Workers' and Peasants' Government and to march forward to a socialist revolution. The putschists on the other hand represented the big bourgeoisie and the forces of the old monarchist regime (irrespective of the disgusting support by the social democrats). They ignored that the coup transformed the country from a bourgeois democracy – where democratic rights were increasingly limited by the authoritarian Stamboliyski government – into a military dictatorship which allowed only a few pseudo-democratic rights.

In such a situation it was imperative that the communists would have defended the Stamboliyski government against the coup d'état without giving it any political support. This would have been the road to build closer links to the peasants and to break them away from the *Agrarian National Union* in the longer run.

This was the line which the leadership of the Communist International unanimously took from the beginning. Grigory Zinoviev, the chairman of the Communist International, sharply criticized his Bulgarian comrades for their neutrality and emphasized in a first reaction to the coup:

*"In the moment where the fascists were in struggle with the leaders of the Peasant Party, it was (and remains today) the task of the Communist Party to unite with all honest supporters of the Peasant Party to struggle against the Whites. Has Kerensky not been an enemy of the workers in September 1917? But nevertheless did the Bolsheviks march with Kerensky against Kornilov."* (84)

Karl Radek, another leader of the Communist International and a co-fighter of Trotsky's *Left Opposition* against the Stalinist bureaucracy at that time, was commissioned to undertake a study of the Bulgarian events. He concluded in his report:

*"This is the biggest defeat which a Communist Party has ever suffered."* He also argued for a united front tactic of the Communist Party with the *Agrarian National Union*: *"The moment when the coup happened only in Sofia, this was the time to act... There is no doubt: In the moment, when the Peasant Party had to fight for life, did the historic chance open to form a coalition with it, despite everything which separates us from them."* (85)

In an appeal, the Executive Committee of the Communist International called the Bulgarian workers to form a united front with the Peasant Party against the reactionary putschists:

*"Whoever mistakenly thinks that the struggle of the now triumphant white clique against Stamboliski is a struggle between two bourgeois cliques in which the working class can be neutral, will now be taught better by the bloody persecution of the workers' organizations. The putschists are now the enemy, and must be defeated. Unite for the fight against the white revolt not only with the broad masses of the peasantry, but with the leaders of the peasant party who are still alive. Show them what the split between workers and peasants has led to, and summon them!"* (86)

Even worse was the failure of centrist leadership of the Polish Communist Party when General Pilsudski launched a coup against the discredited bourgeois government of Wincenty Witos in May 1926. His coup d'état – waving the flag of democracy and socialism – was supported not only some bourgeois forces, not only by the social democratic party but – at the beginning – even by the Communist

Party! (87)

Again the Communist International soon intervened and corrected this terrible mistake. However, as Trotsky pointed out, such a terrible blunder was the unavoidable result of the opportunist adaption of the centrist Stalinist Comintern leadership towards the petty-bourgeois "democratic" forces. (88)

We finish this chapter by remarking that the 'army socialists' of today are much worse than the socialists and communists of earlier days. Not only did they not learn from earlier experience and avoid a repetition of the mistakes made by our predecessors. While the Bulgarian communists wrongly took a neutral faced with the coup d'état in 1923 and the Polish communists managed to correct its mistake with the help of the Comintern soon, the 'army socialists' of today are not capable of recognizing their grave error even today one month after the military coup d'état in Egypt.

#### IV. The revolutionary democratic program and the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly

For obvious reasons the question we have mainly dealt with until now has been the character of the military coup d'état and not the concrete slogans which should be put forward now. How can one discuss about tactics without first clarifying the dynamic and nature of the class struggle?!

However as we have explained above the RCIT believes that the slogan of a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly* is important in the present class struggle conjuncture. We think so for several reasons:

First the issue of the Constitution is of major importance in Egypt today. This is clear to every observer given the many discussions and conflicts around the question of a new constitution and the Islamists desire to insert the Sharia into it. It is of course not surprising at all that the popular masses are looking for a new constitution after living for nearly six decades under a military dictatorship.

Secondly the masses still have massive illusions in bourgeois democracy and they have not even created Soviets – workers and peasant councils – as the basis for a higher form of democracy (workers democracy).

Thirdly this revolutionary democratic slogan can form a basis for joint actions of mass elements from different political background in order to fight back against the putschists. It could unite workers and poor with secular liberal, Islamist and socialist views. One does not have to agree what should be written in a new constitution but only that it should be elected by the people and it should remain under the control of the armed people. In this manner it could unite masses for joint actions now and undermine the mistrust from more backward sectors of the masses against revolutionary socialists.

Fourthly it is a particular important slogan in the present conjuncture where the military has staged a coup pretending to defend democracy and where the masses – both the pro-Morsi as well as the anti-Morsi popular masses – rally to the defense of the ideas of democracy. It is therefore a slogan which can unite the masses against the military-imposed government.

### On the LCC critique against our application of the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly

Let us now answer our opponents who have raised different criticisms against our slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly. The LCC comrades wrote in their reply to us: "*The RCA is a secondary, tactical, question and I don't think we have serious differences on that as a necessary demand in the Transitional Program. However, we think that the application of it historically, and your application of it today supports our view that it is a 'defensive' demand. The issue around the RCA is the role it plays in the action program. When the class is on the offensive the RCA is included as a promise to more backward elements of the workers and petty bourgeois that the workers will fight to defend and win bourgeois rights. When the class is in retreat the RCA becomes a central task since the defence of the most advanced bourgeois democracy possible is a condition of the return to an offensive.*" (89)

We agree with the comrades that our differences about the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly are of secondary nature given that we have completely different assessments of the military coup itself. Their critique nevertheless raises some interesting issues. As we have seen above the LCC comrades unfortunately do not recognize that the working class in Egypt is currently in a defensive position after the coup d'état. Therefore they see no reason to raise the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly today. But even if they believe that the working class is still an offensive they can hardly deny the fact that there are massive illusions of the popular masses in bourgeois democracy. Why else is "democracy" such an important slogan in all mobilizations today – both by the pro-Morsi as well as the anti-Morsi demonstrations?! The fact that the working class has not created soviets until now underlines this too.

However we reject the position which the LCC expressed in a past statement: "*This is where impressionists believe the BBC and why they think it is permissible to call for a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly (RCA) now at the same moment that they are calling for workers councils and militias and even a government of them! But we **only** called for an RCA last year when the democratic mass movement was under attack and retreating and demobilizing under the weight of the repression that was the prelude to the series of bourgeois elections, with the setup results we all know or ought to. The RCA is a defensive slogan for revolutionaries.*" (90)

The masses are often in the offensive and still have massive bourgeois-democratic illusions. This was exactly the case in all uprisings in 2011 when the masses fought for the overthrow of the old dictatorships. In fact, democratic slogans can play a central role for the masses to mobilize for the struggle and to win the in such a struggle for soviets and the program of the socialist revolution.

We already emphasized in our last document where we dealt with the mistakes of the LCC and WIVP comrades on the question of the Constituent Assembly that this slogan did play an important role for the Bolsheviks even in periods where they were in the offensive and even after they took power. Lenin emphasized this in his '*Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*':

"We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said – and following the April (1917) Conference of our Party began to state officially in the name of

the Party – that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly would be better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a "workers' and peasants'" republic, a Soviet republic, would be better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such thorough, circumspect and long preparations, we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have consolidated that victory." (91)

He went on: "We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois parliament in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then this should be clearly stated and proved, for it is necessary in evolving the correct tactics for international communism. If they were correct, then certain conclusions must be drawn. Of course, there can be no question of placing conditions in Russia on a par with conditions in Western Europe. But as regards the particular question of the meaning of the concept that "parliamentarianism has become politically obsolete", due account should be taken of our experience, for unless concrete experience is taken into account such concepts very easily turn into empty phrases." (92)

History has proven that revolutionaries have to raise the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly – a "revolutionary-democratic transitional demand" (Trotsky) (93) – as long as the masses have democratic illusions and questions of the constitution constitute an important role in political life. The decisive question is not if the masses are in an offensive or a defensive. It is rather the question to which extent the masses have developed a revolutionary class consciousness, to which extent the masses have overcome their illusions in bourgeois democracy and to which extent the masses have become convinced of the necessity to fight for a socialist revolution and creating the dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers and peasants councils.

This is the method which Trotsky explained to his co-fighters:

"The democratic slogans contain for a certain period not only illusions, not only deception, but also an animating historical force. (...) From the political point of view, the question of formal democracy is for us not only that of the attitude to be observed towards the petty-bourgeois masses, but also towards the worker masses, to the extent that the latter have not yet acquired a revolutionary class consciousness. (...) In any case, these results were not attained by simply opposing the soviets to the Constituent Assembly, but by drawing the masses towards the soviets while maintaining the slogans of formal democracy up to the very moment of the conquest of power and even after it." (94)

In his famous *Transitional Program* – the foundation document of the Fourth International in 1938 – Trotsky summarized the experience of the international class struggle and emphasized the validity of revolutionary democratic slogans such as the Constituent Assembly particularly for colonial and semi-colonial countries:

"It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the

*“national” bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution.” (95)*

### **WIVP: Confused about who should convene a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly**

The comrades of the South African WIVP certainly understand the reactionary nature of the military coup d'état much better than the LCC as well as the necessity to mobilize and call for a broad united front against it. However they are unclear about the Marxist method of applying revolutionary-democratic slogans. As we discussed this already in our last reply they criticize the RCIT's approach with several arguments. Let us first quote from their statements:

*“The RCIT (Revolutionary Communist International Tendency) place the struggle of the masses within capitalist limits by saying that the central slogan should be for a Constituent Assembly with proportional representation – in other words, they too believe that the capitalists should be present and represented in it. For us the central slogan is for a workers government not a Constituent Assembly. The bourgeois position of the RCIT is further exposed when they say that the role of the ‘provisional revolutionary government’ is to make sure that ‘the delegates of the Constituent Assembly are controllable and can be replaced if they do not implement what their electoral base wanted them to do.’ So for the RCIT, the role of the revolutionary govt is to safeguard the Assembly which includes the capitalist representatives, ie the revolutionary govt must limit itself to protect a bourgeois parliament, which is what the Constituent Assembly is. If the question of a Constituent Assembly comes up, the task of the revolutionary government is to show the limits of it, to expose it and disband it. The revolutionary workers’ government based on grassroots committees will be a million times more democratic than the best Constituent Assembly where the capitalists and their parties sit.” (96)*

In another statement they asked us: *“For those who call for a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly or a Constituent Assembly, the question remains: Who will convene it? The military? As long as the military regime is intact any assembly will be a sham, limited by the dictates of imperialism and the generals. Thus the first task is for the military regime to be overthrown.” (97)*

We think that the comrades are mistaken in several respects. First they see the danger that a Constituent Assembly could include capitalist representatives. Yes, this danger exists. If sectors of the popular masses have illusions in capitalist parties, then they will elect their representatives. But if such a danger exists, this just underlines that the masses have not already reached a revolutionary consciousness. This is an argument in favor and not against revolutionary democratic slogans like the Constituent Assembly!

What is the WIVP comrades' alternative? *“For us the central slogan is for a workers government not a Constituent Assem-*

*bly.”* This is phrase-mongering. Yes, we are also in favor of a workers' and peasants' government. But in the present situation such a slogan has less agitational weight because the masses are currently in the defensive, not in the offensive (as they were on 30<sup>th</sup> June). Therefore slogans to rally the masses on democratic issues are more important in the current phase.

Of course the slogan of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly is not separated but combined with the slogan for a workers' and peasants' government. Revolutionaries must strive to win the masses for the perspective of a workers' and peasants' government by convincing them that only such a government can secure the implementation of democratic slogans. But for this reason such democratic slogans are in the forefront and not the slogans for power.

The WIVP comrades' argument against our slogan – that it would be useless if it would be called by the military-imposed government – is wrong too. Revolutionaries should argue that a Constituent Assembly convoked by the military can only be a fake. This is why we call for the armed workers and peasants, for a revolutionary provisional government, to convene such a Constituent Assembly. Therefore the slogan of a Constituent Assembly is not a detraction but rather a help to explain why the masses need to overthrow the military regime.

Trotsky faced a similar criticism when he urged his Chinese comrades to raise the slogan of a Constituent Assembly. He replied to them:

*„The slogan of the Constituent Assembly becomes an empty abstraction, often simple charlatanry, if one does not add who will convoke it and with what program. Chiang Kai-shek can raise the slogan of a Constituent Assembly against us even tomorrow, just as he has now raised his “workers’ and peasants’ program” against us. We want a Constituent Assembly convoked not by Chiang Kai-shek but by the executive committee of the workers’ and peasants’ soviets. That is the only serious and sure road.” (98)*

### **Concluding remarks**

Such a methodological approach as outlined by the Marxist classics is still valid. However as Lenin and Trotsky repeated many times, the masses can not successfully take power and impose their interests if they do not possess a revolutionary leadership. In other words, the working class needs a revolutionary party to fight off its numerous enemies both inside and outside of the workers movement. Trotsky summarized the main lesson of the victorious as well as the failed revolutions so splendidly in 1924: *„Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer. That is the principal lesson of the past decade.” (99)*

As a matter of fact, such a revolutionary workers party does not exist at the moment – neither in Egypt nor worldwide. What exists currently are only small communist pre-party organizations who elaborate concrete tactics based on a revolutionary program and who strive to build nuclei of cadre of the working class and the oppressed in the midst of the class struggle. No doubt it is still a long way to build revolutionary workers parties and a World Party of Socialist Revolution (which will be the Fifth International in our view). But whoever believes that changing history

is an easy and short-term task is a hopeless fool.

Lenin once stated: „*In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization.*“ (100) Similarly we can state that in order to build successfully revolutionary parties and a World Party, the vanguard militants first need a Bolshevik pre-party organization which systematically accumulates the experiences of the international class struggle, spread its lessons by propaganda as well as practice and which unites dedicated revolutionaries in a single international organization.

The RCIT is working towards building an international Bolshevik organization based on a revolutionary program and rooted in the workers vanguard. Such a program has to be tested and developed on the basis of the experience of the class struggle as it takes place. We think that the current events in Egypt are of massive importance for the current world situation and therefore a crucial question for the perspectives of the class struggle not only in Egypt but the whole Middle East region and internationally. Without a correct orientation it is impossible for the working class struggle to fight against the reactionary military coup. Without such a correct orientation it is impossible for revolutionaries and the vanguard of the workers movement in Egypt and international to fight for the socialist program. We look forward to discuss these issues with revolutionaries in Egypt and world-wide. This is the only serious way to advance the collaboration and fusion of revolutionaries.

## Footnotes

(1) Friedrich Engels: Zur Geschichte des Bundes der Kommunisten (1885), in: MEW 21, p. 212; in English: On The History of the Communist League, [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/communist-league/1885hist.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/communist-league/1885hist.htm).

Given the fact that the mother language of the author is German, he quotes from the works of the Marxist classics in a number of cases from German-language sources and adds the link to the respective English-language Internet source.

(2) See Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the reactionary military regime!, 27.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime/); RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in Egypt (Editorial for RevCom#12), 22.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/editorial-revcom-12/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Military's Coup d'État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics, 17.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat/); Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left's Ignorance. Notes on the role of US imperialism in the military's coup d'état and the failure of the Egypt left, 11.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup/); RCIT: Egypt: Down with the Military Coup d'État! Prepare Mass Resistance! 8.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat/); RCIT: Tasks of the Revolution in Egypt, 2.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution/). All articles except the latest one have been published in the RCIT's international journal *Revolutionary Communism* No. 12 (July/August 2013).

(3) See LCC: Egyptian Class Combat Deepens: On to the Mass Political Strike! Forward to workers councils! July 15, 2013, <http://cwgsusa.wordpress.com/2013/07/15/egyptian-class-combat-deepens-on-to-the-mass-political-strike-forward-to-workers-councils/>; Letter from LCC on Military Coup in Egypt, 23.7.2013,

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(5) Ahram Online: Egypt's Rebel, NSF urge protesters to protect revolution as clashes erupt near Cairo's Tahrir, 5 Jul 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/75806/Egypt/Politics-/Egypys-Rebel,-NSF-urge-protesters-to-protect-revol.aspx>

(6) 'Rebel' endorses El-Sisi's call for Friday demos, Ahram Online, 25 Jul 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/77348/Egypt/Politics-/Rebel-endorses-ElSisis-call-for-Friday-demos.aspx>

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(8) Hazem Kandil: Revolt in Egypt, in: New Left Review No. 68, March-April 2011, p. 22

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(10) Egyptian Communist Party: What happened in Egypt was not a military coup. 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, 6 July 2013, <http://21centurymanifesto.wordpress.com/2013/07/10/egypt-crisis-analysis-from-the-egyptian-communist-party/>

(11) While the RS are aligned with the British SWP, their statements are approvingly distributed also by other organizations in the Cliffite tradition such as the ISO (US) as well as other groups.

(12) Statement by the Revolutionary Socialists organisation in Egypt: Four days that shook the world, July 4, 2013, <http://links.org.au/node/3424>

(13) Alan Woods: The Second Egyptian Revolution, Statement of the International Marxist Tendency, 4 July 2013 <http://www.marxist.com/second-egyptian-revolution.htm>

(14) "The Muslim Brotherhood represents the Vendee of the Egyptian Revolution. Its defeat is the prior condition for the further advance of the Revolution." (Alan Woods and Hamid Alizadeh: The Egyptian Revolution – a nightmare for the bourgeoisie, 12 July 2013, International Marxist Tendency, <http://www.marxist.com/the-egyptian-revolution-a-nightmare-for-the-bourgeois.htm>)

(15) Izquierda Anticapitalista: The Egyptian revolution must continue without the tutelage of the army, 8 July, 2013, <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article3030>. Izquierda Anticapitalista is the Spanish section of the Mandelita "Fourth In-

ternational". The website editors wrote at the beginning of the statement: *"This statement by Izquierda Anticapitalista represents a generally held opinion in the Fourth International."* Here is the major part of their statement: *"Neither Morsi nor the army represents the aspirations for freedom and social justice. (...) But the outcome of this intense mobilization, with the taking of control by the Army by means of a coup d'état, also shows the enormous weaknesses of the revolutionary process. In particular, it emphasizes the absence of a political pole favourable to social justice and the deepening of the revolution. It is the absence of a political alternative linked to the popular mobilization which has allowed the Army and its allies to take the initiative in trying to channel post-Morsi scenario towards their interests. (...) A period of great uncertainty for the revolutionary process has therefore opened. The determination and capacity for struggle of the Egyptian people have been well demonstrated, but also the strength of the forces of order and the Army, now riding on the popular aspirations. The Egyptian people will have to continue fighting to avoid their desire for change being reined in from above and to prevent any authoritarian reversion by the army and its allies, as well as to avoid the country slipping into a witch-hunt against the Muslim Brotherhood or any other organizations that are against the government, and a civil confrontation that adds to the chaos and can, in addition, be utilized by the army and reaction to impose an authoritarian reversion. Izquierda Anticapitalista considers that for all this the social mobilization and popular self-organization of the Egyptian people are necessary as well as the construction of a democratic pole, of those on the left and those favourable to social justice, to advance so that the revolution is not snatched from them by those who want everything to change so that things remain the same."*

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(63) Michael Pröbsting and Simon Hardy: Theses on Islamism (2011), in: Revolutionary Communism No. 7, [www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-islamism](http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-islamism)

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(65) Karl Marx: Das Kapital, Band III, MEW 25, p. 825; in English: Karl Marx: CAPITAL, Vol. III, Chapter 48

(66) RCIT: Tasks of the Revolution in Egypt, 2.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution)

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(69) According to a report “Iranian officials initially endorsed

what they called "the Egyptian Revolution" while they pleaded for "the fastest possible return to democratic rule" However, the report continues "there were two things which apparently prompted Iran to suddenly condemn "the military coup". (...) What prompted Iran's reversal from endorsement of "The Revolution" to a Condemnation of The Military Coup" were two factors. The first was Saudi Arabia's involvement in Egypt and Saudi Arabia's financial support. The second was the issuance of a draft amendment to the Egyptian Constitution, in which the first sentence read: '1) The Arab Republic of Egypt as a democratic regime is based on citizenship. Islam is the official State religion. Arabic is its official language. The principles of Islamic Sharia of Sunni are the principle source of legislation.'" (Christof Lehmann: Scramble for Foreign Political Influence over Egypt, Between Gulf – Iran – USA/EU, IMF and BRICS, July 17, 2013, <http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Scramble-for-Foreign-Political-Influence-over-Egypt-Between-Gulf-Iran-USA-EU-IMF-and-BRICS.htm>)

(70) Leon Trotsky: The New Course (1923), in: The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25), S. 96

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(73) Karl Marx: Über P.-J. Proudhon. Brief an J. B. Schweitzer (1865), in: MEW 16, p. 31; in English: On Proudhon. Letter to J. B. Schweitzer, [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/letters/65\\_01\\_24.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/letters/65_01_24.htm)

(74) Friedrich Engels: Die wirklichen Ursachen der verhältnismäßigen Inaktivität der französischen Proletarier im vergangenen Dezember (1852), in: MEW 8, p. 228; in English: Real Causes Why the French Proletarians Remained Comparatively Inactive in December Last, <http://marxengels.public-archive.net/en/ME0684en.html>

(75) Friedrich Engels: Rezension des Ersten Bandes 'Das Kapital' für den 'Beobachter' (1867), in: MEW 16, p. 227; in English Review of Volume One of *Capital* for the *Beobachter*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867/reviews-capital/beobachter.htm>

(76) Friedrich Engels: Brief an Karl Marx (27.1.1865), in: MEW 31, p. 45f.; in English: Engels to Marx, [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/letters/65\\_01\\_27.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/letters/65_01_27.htm)

(77) "The undersigned promised to contribute to the Social-Demokrat and permitted their being named as contributors on the express condition that the paper would be edited in the spirit of the brief programme submitted to them. They did not for a moment fail to appreciate the difficult position of the Social-Demokrat and therefore made no demands that were inappropriate to the meridian of Berlin. But they repeatedly demanded that the language directed at the ministry and the feudal-absolutist party should be at least as bold as that aimed at the men of Progress. The tactics pursued by the Social-Demokrat preclude their further participation in it. The opinion of the undersigned as to the royal Prussian governmental socialism and the correct attitude of the workers' party to such deception has already been set out in detail in No. 73 of the Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung of September 12, 1847, in reply to No. 206 of the Rheinischer Beobachter (then appearing in Cologne) [reference to Marx's article "The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter"], in which the alliance of the "proletariat" with the "government" against the "liberal bourgeoisie" was proposed. We still subscribe today to every word of the statement we made then." (Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels: Erklärung an die Redaktion des 'Social-Demokrat' (1865), in: MEW 16, p. 79; in English: To the editor of the Social-Demokrat, [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/02/23.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/02/23.htm))

(74) Karl Marx: Der Kommunismus des Rheinischen Beobachters' (1847), in: MEW 4, p. 193; in English: The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter, [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/09/12.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/09/12.htm)

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(80) See on this Joseph Rothschild: The Communist Party of Bulgaria. Origins and Development 1883-1936, New York 1959, pp. 112-116

(81) See on this Julius Braunthal: Geschichte der Internationale, Band 2, Hannover 1963, p. 312

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(84) Grigori Sinowjew: Die Lehren des bulgarischen Umsturzes, in Die Kommunistische Internationale, No. 27 (August 1923), p. 45 (our translation)

(85) Karl Radek: Der Umsturz in Bulgarien (23.6.1923), in Die Kommunistische Internationale, No. 27 (August 1923), p. 115 and p. 118 (our translation)

(86) ECCI Appeal to the Workers and Peasants of Bulgaria to Oppose the new Bulgarian Government, 23 June 1923; in: Jane Degras: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents, Volume II 1923-1928, p. 50

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(88) See Leon Trotsky: Pilsudskim, Fascism and the Character of our Epoch; in: Trotsky Writings 1932, pp 156-165; see also Isaac Deutscher: Die Tragödie des polnischen Kommunismus (1957), pp. 86-96

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## Announcement of a new Book from 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 new book. It's 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.

### The Author

Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 30 years. He is the author of many articles and pamphlets in German and English language. He published books or contributed to books on *Rosa Luxemburg* (1999), on the *World Economy* (2008), on *Migration* (2010) and the *Arab Revolution* (2011). He is the *International Secretary* of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*.

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.

You can view more details of the book as well as excerpts at the special website which we have created for this book:

**[www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net](http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net)**

You can order the book via

\* our contact address [rcit@thecommunists.net](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net),

\* online via the RCIT's website [www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net)

\* the special website for the book

**Price:** 15 Euro / 20 US-Dollars / 13 British Pound (plus delivery charges) ■

# 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*



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



# Announcement of a new Book from the RCIT

## Michael Pröbsting: Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?

### The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new book. It's called *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?*. The book's subtitle is: *The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism*. The book is in English-language. It has 5 chapters plus an appendix, 108 pages and includes 19 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who is the *International Secretary* of the RCIT.

In *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* Michael Pröbsting analyses the character of the Cuban Revolution 1959-61, its bureaucratic degeneration, and the recent march of the Castro leadership towards capitalism.

The author demonstrates how the Cuban Revolution, despite the initial modest intentions of its leaders, was spurred forward to more radical policies by grass roots struggles of Cuban workers and peasants. In fact, the very abolishment of capitalism by the Cuban regime was no part of the original game plan of either Castro's Movimiento 26 de Julio or of the official Cuban communist party (PSP), but rather was a product of precisely such pressures from below.

*Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* describes in detail how a number of relatively recent political, economic, and social measures were purposely taken by the Cuban government to open the road back to capitalism. Pröbsting elaborates the key role of the world's new great imperialist power, China, in Cuba's state policy as exemplified in the June 2011 Sino-Cuban agreement for a first Five-Year Plan of cooperation between these two states.

*Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* examines these developments from the viewpoint of Marxist theory, the nature of the

ruling bureaucracy in Stalinist states, and the process of restoration of capitalism under such regimes.

In conclusion, the book proposes a socialist program for political and social revolution in Cuba to halt the advance of capitalism and to eradicate the country's bureaucratic dictatorship.

You can view more details of the book as well as excerpts at the RCIT website:

**[www.thecommunists.net/theory/new-book-on-cuba](http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/new-book-on-cuba)**

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*Revolution* (2011). His latest book, *The Great Robbery of the South* (published in 2013), 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 is the *International Secretary* of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*.

# Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?

***The Road from  
the Revolution to the  
Restoration of Capitalism***



**By Michael Pröbsting**

Published by the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*

# Revolutionary Communist International Tendency:

## What does the RCIT stand 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 lead 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 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 lead 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 basis!  
Join the RCIT!

*No future without socialism! No socialism without a revolution!  
No revolution without a revolutionary party! ■*





