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Class Struggle against Imperialism!

Anti-Islam-Film, Turkey/Syria,
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WORKERS AND OPPRESSED UNITE!

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We welcome our readers to the sixth issue of the RCIT's English-language journal *Revolutionary Communism*. In this issue we deal with a number of important international class struggle events in the recent period.

In a RCIT Statement we deal with the spontaneous mass movement in the Muslim countries after the trailer of a racist Anti-Islam film, produced in the USA, was released to the public. It led to a series of protests and riots against Western embassies because people understood the relationship between the imperialist arrogance expressed in the denigration of their religion and the imperialist domination expressed in economic exploitation, war and occupation. While the imperialist US administration mourned for its killed ambassador and three CIA agents in Libya, the Western media largely ignored the fact that the pro-imperialist regimes in Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Pakistan and other countries killed at least 50 demonstrators during these protests. It should also not go unnoticed that most self-proclaimed "Marxists" failed to see the anti-imperialist content in these protests. In their un-dialectical understanding they superficially saw a clash between "religious bigots" and concluded from this that there was "nothing progressive in these demonstrations" (The quotes are from the ex-revolutionary LFI). This event is therefore a vivid example how the failure to see classes and class contradictions behind ideas and ideologies inevitable leads to failure in taking the right side of the barricade in the class struggle.

Two articles, from the *Revolutionary Workers Collective (US section of the RCIT)* respectively from Adam Beltz, deal with the upcoming election of the US president. They show that Obama in no way represents a "lesser evil" to the Republican candidate Mitt Romney, if one looks to the practical results of the present administration. Obviously there is a crying need for a new Workers Party in the USA.

Presidential elections in another country, Venezuela, are the subject of two other articles. In opposite to the USA, we had here two candidates who are considered by many as socialists: President Hugo Chavez and Orlando Chirino, the candidate of the centrist party PSOL. Nevertheless, neither of them is an alternative for the workers since they don't represent the political independence of the working class.

Questions of strategy and tactic are also at the centre of our articles on the heroic miner strike in South Africa. This struggle demonstrated the huge obstacles for the working class to achieve victory: the existence of powerful reformist bureaucracies in the NUM/COSATU trade union and the South African Communist Party. These forces are a deadly enemy for the working class liberation struggle.

Furthermore we publish an Action Program which the *United Lanka Workers Party (RCIT Section in Sri Lanka)* has adopted. Therein the comrades elaborate the perspective for the working class and the oppressed to overthrow the capitalist system and to open the road to socialism in Sri Lanka. Such a road includes the right for the Tamil people to form a *socialist Tami Eelam*.

Another document – adopted at a conference of the *Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation (RCIT section in Austria)* – deals with the issue of the imperialist European Union. Therein the comrades develop tactics on the question, which position communists should take concerning the accession of semi-colonial countries to the EU. They conclude that the workers vanguard should employ differ-

ent tactics in imperialist and semi-colonial countries.

A recent feature of the sharpening contradictions of decaying capitalism is the increasing rivalry between Japanese and Chinese imperialism. In a longer article, *Michael Pröbsting* concretizes the result of his study of China as an emerging imperialism which we published recently in the fourth issue of *Revolutionary Communism*. He concludes that the looming war on the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands in the East China Sea must be answered with a consistent policy of revolutionary defeatism by the working class militants in these countries and internationally. The workers must fight against their own ruling class in order to prepare their overthrow. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party, wrote in one of his first documents after the beginning of World War I in 1914: "*We are always for 'santa guerra di tutti gli oppressi per la conquista delle loro patrie!'*" ("*a holy war of all the oppressed, for the conquest of their own fatherland!*", *The European War and International Socialism*; in: LCW 21, p. 20). This is also the necessary approach today to the imperialist rivalry between China, Japan and the USA. The subject of imperialism and the class struggle strategy to bring it down is also at the centre of our section "*From the Archives of Marxism*". In it we republish two documents from the revolutionary communist movement. The first is a series of short resolutions from the Bolshevik Party which it adopted in February 1915 to codify its strategy of revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist war. The second document is the "*Theses on the Eastern Question*", adopted by the Communist International at its Fourth World Congress in 1922. In it the Communists developed the anti-imperialist united front tactic to rally the oppressed people under the leadership of the working class for the liberation struggle.

While the articles in this journal deal with different issues, they have in common what we would describe as the essence of Bolshevism: *class independence*. Many so-called "Marxists" interpret class independence as being independent of every movement which is "poisoned" with petty-bourgeois or bourgeoisie forces. In fact this has nothing to do with class independence; it rather means independence of real, living masses who struggle for their rights with a still not revolutionary consciousness. Such kind of "independence" has a name: sectarian abstentionism.

Real class independence in a Marxist sense understands the inevitability to fight for such an independence under the conditions of constant pressure by all forms of (petty-) bourgeois forces who permanently exercise their influence on the workers and the oppressed in order to contain their struggle. *Class independence therefore is something essentially war-like: it can only be advanced in constant war inside the existing mass movement against their present-day backward leaderships.*

Finally an announcement: Albeit we have founded the RCIT only a few months ago in April 2012, we were already able to achieve progress. We could not only produce a relatively intense level of theory and propaganda but could also strengthen our – albeit still small – organization. As a result we plan to produce this international journal from now on a bi-monthly basis in order to present the RCIT's analysis and programmatic conclusion on a more regular basis.

22. October 2012

Editorial Board of the Journal *Revolutionary Communism*

New anti-Islam film: We condemn the latest imperialist-racist assault on the Muslims!

On the mass protests against the US embassies in the Middle East

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 13.9.2012

1. A new anti-Islam film, called "*Innocence of Muslims*" and produced in the USA, has provoked widespread protest in the Muslim world. The film slurs the Islam's prophet Mohammed, compares him to a goat and portrays him and a number of Islam's founding figures as homosexuals and child-molesters. In reaction thousands have protested in front of the US embassy in the Egyptian capital Cairo and pulled down the US flag. In Benghazi, the centre of the Libyan revolution against the Gaddafi dictatorship in 2011, the US American consulate was stormed and burned down, leaving the US ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, and a number of embassy officials and security forces dead. In Yemen's capital, Sanaa, the US embassy was stormed too. US president Obama has promised to bring those responsible for the event in Benghazi "to justice" and has ordered two navy war ships to the Libyan coast.

2. The RCIT considers these protests against the symbols of US imperialism as justified. In fact the international workers movement and all democratic forces, irrespective of religious or non-religious beliefs, should condemn this film as another imperialist-racist humiliation of the Muslim people.

3. This film is not a "critique of Mohammed" or even less "a documentary" as the ultra right-wing US TV station *Fox News* claims. It is not even a religious film. It is a racist political attack against the Muslim people to justify ideologically the imperialist war-drive in the Middle East.

4. This becomes completely obvious if one looks at the producer and the promoters of this film.

a. The film producer calls himself *Sam Bacile*, and claims to be a 52-year-old Israeli-American real estate developer from California. Bacile claims that he raised \$5 million for the film, in which about 60 actors and 45 crew members participated. He told the *Associated Press* in an interview that his motivation was to show the world that "*Islam is a cancer*". He does not hide his political intentions: "*The movie is a political movie. It's not a religious movie.*" While the true identity of this person is unknown, other leading figures in this project are well-known.

b. *Steve Klein*, a consultant to the film who claims credit for inspiring Sam Bacile, is a right-wing extremist Christian activist in California. He claims to have led a "hunter-killer team" during the US war in Vietnam. He is a founder of a group called "*Courageous Christians United*", which promotes anti-Mormon, anti-Catholic and anti-Muslim literature. Klein also has ties to right-wing militias and the racist anti-immigrant "*Minuteman movement*".

c. Klein is closely related to *Morris Sadek*, an Egyptian-American anti-Muslim activist, who made the film famous via producing an Arab translation of it on his website. Sadek is a supporter of "*ACT! for America*", which

believes that President Obama has embraced the Muslim Brotherhood. The group rallied its supporters behind the right-wing Tea Party leader Michelle Bachmann. He's a member of groups like "*Islam is of the Devil*" and "*Warriors of Christ*", and an enthusiastic supporter of Israel, of Republican Tea Party icon Allen West, Daniel Pipes and George W. Bush.

d. Another promoter of the film is the Florida pastor *Terry Jones*. He is the leader of an extreme right-wing Christian fundamentalist church. Jones became famous for burning copies of the Koran in April 2012.

5. While the *trigger* for the protests is this slanderous film, the real background is the justified outrage of millions of people in the Middle East against the unceasing imperialist war. Day by day, occupation forces, led by the USA and supported by Germany, Australia and other imperialist powers, terrorize the Afghan people. The US imperialism and its regional watch-dog Israel threaten to bomb Iran. US military repeatedly kills so-called terrorists in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and other countries. The Zionist Apartheid state Israel has driven out the Palestinian people from their home territory in 1948 and occupies and oppresses them until today. Add to this the constant harassment of Muslims in the USA and Western Europe by the imperialist bourgeois democratic regimes. For all these reasons we say that the trigger of the protest is of religious nature but the real content is political: the justified outrage against the oppression and humiliation by the imperialist powers. For all these reasons the masses protest against the USA and Israel and not against the Christian Church. That's why they burn the US and Israeli flag, not the Christian cross. V. I. Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution 1917, recognized that politically backward masses often participate in "*political protests in religious guise*". Indeed, this is what we see today.

6. Of course, no one should have illusions about the organizers of these protests. According to information available these are mostly Salafist groups, i.e. reactionary Islamist fundamentalist, who utilize the mass unrest of Muslim. Also bourgeois conservative forces like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt call for mass demonstrations. Revolutionaries have to point out that these Islamist forces support such protest but at the same time they or their financial backers – like Saudi Arabia or other bourgeois-Islamist Gulf regimes – collaborate closely with US imperialism. The task is to politically fight against such bourgeois Islamist forces and to remove them from the leading positions which they often possess in resistance movements today.

7. Working class militants should not politically subordinate to these bourgeois forces but take an independent class position. It is therefore important for organizations

of the workers movement and the oppressed to support mass protests against the imperialist war mongers and to argue for a political anti-imperialist working class perspective.

* For an international mass movement against the imperialist war on terror!

* For mass boycott of the imperialist war on terror – like the protests in Pakistan against the supplies for NATO!

* Break down the blockade of Gaza! Open the border between Egypt and Gaza by any means necessary!

* Cut all treaties with US imperialism! Close down all imperialist military bases!

* Down with the US embassies in the Middle East!

* Cancel all debts to the imperialist powers!

* No US-Israeli attack on Iran!

* Support the armed resistance movements in Afghanistan and Palestine against the imperialist and Zionist occupiers! Material aid including arms for the resistance!

* Solidarity with the Syrian revolution against the Assad regime! For a workers and peasant government in Syria! Down

with Russian and Chinese imperialist support for the Assad regime! No to Western imperialist sanctions and intervention!

8. Socialists should combine such an unwavering anti-imperialist stand with an opposition against any sectarian hatred against Christian minorities like the Copts in Egypt, the Shiite minorities in Saudi-Arabia or the Alewites in Syria or Turkey as it has been promoted repeatedly by Sunni Salafist groups. The task is the building of a non-sectarian political mass movement of the working class and the oppressed against the imperialist warmongers and their supporters which should unite people of different religious convictions as well as Atheists.

9. The mass protests show again the burning need to rebuild an anti-imperialist working class movement in the West, the Middle East and internationally. It demonstrates in particularly the need for a new revolutionary Workers International, the *Fifth International*, to replace the existing petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships! This is what the RCIT is fighting for. ■



Racist Anti-Islam Film triggered mass protest against US imperialism: Demonstrators in Lebanon

No military intervention by Turkey/NATO in Syria!

Victory to the workers and peasants uprising in Syria against the reactionary Assad dictatorship!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 6.10.2012

1. After a mortar attack into the Turkish border town of Akcakale on the 3rd October 2012 which killed at least five people, the Turkish military started a series of artillery strikes against targets in Syria. The parliament of Turkey – a long-time member of the imperialist NATO alliance – has authorized cross-border military action against Syria, valid for one year, if deemed necessary by the government. While it is unclear, if the Turkish army will immediately move into Syrian territory, it is obvious that the ruling class is considering military intervention in Northern Syria as a realistic option in the foreseeable future. The AKP government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan wants to follow a similar policy of unhindered military interventions as it is doing for years in the Kurdish areas in Northern Iraq. As a result thousands of people gathered in Istanbul's Taksim Square on 4th October for an anti-war rally. Demonstrators chanted: "No to war! Peace now! We won't be soldiers of imperialists!" and some banners accused the AKP of being a stooge of the US.

2. The Turkish governments war-mongering demonstrates once more the ruling class's desire

a) to enlarge both its and NATO's influence in the region and

b) to contain and crush the two liberation struggles which are going on in respectively next to Turkey: the popular uprising in Syria against the reactionary Assad regime and the national liberation struggle of the Kurdish people in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

3. The working class and oppressed people in Turkey, Syria and the Middle East region must develop a policy which is based on the following principles:

a) Unconditional support for the popular uprising in Syria against the Assad regime with the perspective to advance it to the establishment of a workers and peasants government based on councils and militias;

b) Unconditional support for the national liberation struggle of the Kurdish people in all countries with the perspective to advance it to the establishment of an independent socialist Kurdistan;

c) Fight the imperialist Great Power policy in the Middle East! Support the resistance in Afghanistan against the imperialist NATO occupiers! Support the resistance of the Palestinian and Lebanese people against Israel! Defend Iran against an Israeli and/or US attack! Down with Russian and Chinese imperialism's support for the Assad regime!

4. A possible military intervention of Turkey into Northern Syria would be a dangerous blow for the Kurdish liberation struggle. It would certainly endanger the recent progress which the Kurdish liberation movement made under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois-nationalist PKK and its Syrian front, the Party of the Democratic Union. In Turkey, the PKK recently launched a number of

successful attacks against the Turkish army (including a major assault on the town of Semdinli) and in Syria it took control over much of the Kurdish territories in northern Syria. As Bolshevik-Communists we fight for the formation of a proletarian internationalist party as an alternative political leadership. However we fully support the Kurdish liberation struggle and the PKK guerillas against the Turkish army which is nothing but a foreign occupation power of Kurdish territory.

5. A possible military intervention of Turkey into Northern Syria would also be a dangerous blow for the Syrian revolution. Bourgeois leaders of the Syrian National Council or the Free Syrian Army might claim that the Turkish army intervention would create a buffer zone to help the freedom fighters. However, in reality it would only help the Turkish and the NATO imperialists ruling class to contain and control the Syrian liberation struggle. It would strengthen the imperialist's attempts to rob the rebel movement of its independence.

6. For these reasons – and not out of any sympathy for the reactionary, bourgeois butcher regime of Assad – the RCIT strongly opposes any intervention of the Turkish army in Northern Syria. We call the workers movement in Turkey, in the whole region and in the NATO countries to mobilize against any military intervention of the Turkish army. We call both the Kurdish and the Syrian liberation fighters to struggle as much as possible against an intrusion of the Turkish army. We call the international workers movement to support the liberation struggle of both the Kurdish people and of the Syrian workers and peasants by material (including military) aid and by mass mobilizations.

7. The RCIT consider the formation of a World Party for Socialist Revolution – the Fifth International – as the most urgent task in order to build a political leadership which can give the manifold class struggles, including struggles for national liberation, a perspective to win. Such a world party should be based on a revolutionary program, i.e. a program which links the present struggles against national oppression, dictatorships and austerity programs with the perspective of the socialist revolution.

* No to any military intervention by Turkey/NATO in Syria!

* *Victory to the popular uprising in Syria against the Assad regime! For a workers and peasants government based on councils and militias!*

* *For an international solidarity campaign of the workers movement with the Syrian rebels!*

* *For an independent socialist Kurdistan!*

* *For a socialist federation of the people of the Middle East! ■*

US Election: No vote for Obama or Romney!

US-American workers and oppressed need a new Workers Party on a revolutionary program

Statement of the Revolutionary Workers Collective, 17.10.2012

1. At the presidential election in USA, none of the candidates stand for the interests of the working class and the oppressed people. While Republican candidate Mitt Romney represents the greediest and reactionary sectors of the ruling class, Obama too is an enemy of the working class. His administration stands for the interests of the big corporations and the military brass. The whole workers and oppressed movement – trade unions, immigrant organizations, black community organizations etc. – must not rally behind the Democratic Party. They should break with them and form a new Workers Party. Such a party of workers and oppressed for the interests of the workers and oppressed should be based on a revolutionary program.

Republican Romney: the personified greedy rich

2. Republican candidate Romney reflects the disdain of the greedy super-rich for the popular masses. At the same time he stands for the typical capitalists' behavior of using off-shore bank accounts and countless tricks to avoid paying taxes. Romney openly expressed this in his remarks on the 47% of the population who are poor and wouldn't vote for him anyway. He stands for open class warfare against the laboring masses. And he stands openly for an intensified US war drive against the oppressed people around the world as his close links with the Zionist war-mongers of the Israeli Netanyahu government underline. He is Bush 2.0. However exactly for these reasons, he gets support only from the most reactionary sectors of the US society.

Democrat Obama: the disguised defender of the corporations and military brass

3. President Obama and his Democratic Party stand for a policy of the ruling class which essentially promotes the same kind of attacks against the working class and the oppressed in the USA and around the world. But in opposite to the Republicans and the Romney campaign, the Democrats and Obama are much more skillful in disguising their anti-working class policy. Obama as the first black president and with his promises of "change" aroused much hope for a fundamental transformation of US policy.

4. The reality however is that Obama is a president in the service of the corporations and the military brass. When the banks and financial institutions needed a bailout in 2009 – financed by working class and the middle class taxes – he promptly delivered. When the corporations wanted more concessions for oil drilling, Obama agreed to expand the use of particularly environmentally poisonous methods of energy production like shale gas and fracking on national forest lands, offshore and in the Arctic.

5. The real character of Obama's Democratic Party was also once again shown recently in Chicago where Mayor Rahm Emanuel – Obama's former chief of staff – attacked public education and the teachers union. Similarly Tom Barrett, the Democratic mayor of Milwaukee, also attacked public employees' unions. It is also visible in the government's racist policy against migrants. While during the Bush government, in 2001 "only" about 190,000 migrants were deported by the state apparatus, this figure rose to nearly 400,000 a year since Obama took office. And what has the Obama administration done about the 3.6 million foreclosures of homes since August 2007 of which most took place since the president took office?!

6. Obama's change in the US foreign policy – in particular the retreat of the US occupation forces from Iraq and the announced withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan – are not an expression of a peace policy. It is far more a realistic recognition of the weakened status of the US in the global relation of forces between the Great Powers and of the US's defeats in the Middle East. However, the systematic killing programs by drone attacks in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen as well as the continuation of the barbaric prison in Guantanamo, demonstrate the government's continuing commitment to an aggressive militaristic foreign policy. Likewise Obama's determination to keep the US's hegemonic role in the world was expressed in the administration's decision to position 60% of its navy in the Asian region by 2020.

New Workers Party needed!

7. Various third party and independent presidential candidates like the Green Party's candidate Jill Stein, Rocky Anderson from the newly formed Justice Party or the Roseanne Barr/Cindy Sheehan campaign of the Peace and Freedom Party are no alternative neither. They represent various forms of petty-bourgeois, left-wing populism, which is useless for the US-American working class.

8. While there is no alternative for the working class at the ballot paper, there is a way out: The building a Workers Party which fights for a program of liberation of exploitation and oppression by socialist revolution. Class conscious workers and socialists should argue at workplaces, in the communities, inside the trade unions and the organizations of the migrants, black and other oppressed for the formation of a Workers Party which is completely independent of all sectors of the capitalist class. It should be a party that participates in elections in order to spread socialist ideas, but its main orientation must be the class struggle. It should be a consistent internationalist and anti-imperialist party which oppose all forms of US great power policy. It should be a party which fights for working class revolution in order to build a socialist society without exploitation and oppression. ■

Open Letter to the Workers that voted for Obama in 2008

by Adam Beltz (Revolutionary Workers Collective, US Section of the RCIT), 17.10.2012

We all know that you have had your faith in the current sociopolitical system shaken. Prior to 2008 you were questioning whether voting is worth it, whether your vote counts. Finally it seemed, after decades of more of the same from both parties appears a real politician, a politician that fights for the interests of all, who will make much needed changes. Barack Obama came along promising that vague "change". Many thought that the "change" and "hope" that President Obama so often mentioned meant that their vote mattered this time, that they finally had someone that will represent them and change the way that things are done in Washington. This is clear by the amount of people that voted in the 2008 election. A great example of this is the amount of 18-24 year olds who voted for the first time, showing a significant increase over 2004. There were five million more voters in 2008 than in 2004.

What has Obama Done for the Working Class?

Now, back to another election 4 years later where are we? Have we had that change that was promised? Has anything significantly changed? Where has "hope" brought us? Well, we did receive an alteration to our medical provider laws, the government did bail out the auto industry. In fact, President Obama has been at the helm for many accomplishments including pushing through the stimulus package, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform Act, etc. But have these things really made much of an impact in your daily life? They may add or take away a little of the cash they typical American has on hand, but that's about it. The changes that Obama wants are changes that, do a better job of maintaining and strengthening the capitalist system of economic relations.

What Hasn't Changed

Maybe it is easier to look at what hasn't changed as an example of how similar the two capitalist parties – the Republicans and the Democrats – are. Look at the growing gap between the rich and poor, the amount of time a worker must work daily. How can the US be called the most advanced nation in the world if we have around 46 million Americans living below the poverty line?! This is roughly 15% of the population. How can we be considered advanced if we are a society where millions and millions can't earn enough to live on? Take a look around – we have mass poverty, crumbling infrastructure, mass underemployment, a continual degradation of the environment, etc. Yet, individual American workers work much more than their counterparts in all of the other industrialized nations. This is all occurring as technology continues to advance. Our possibilities as a society are almost limitless. Is this really the best we can do as the most advanced industrial nation in the world? Is this really the extent of what our society can achieve?

Democratic and Republican Party - Two Capitalist Parties

Under the current political system, no presidential candidate, whether Democrat or Republican, will make the changes that you are looking for, the changes you thought you would get from Barack Obama. Both parties, both capitalist parties, main priority is maintaining and strengthening the capitalist system. The divide between the two is only tactical, only between methods to achieve their goals. The two main parties differ in how they believe capitalism in the US can be maintained and strengthened. Neither party has its first priority as doing what is best for the people of the country on a whole; they do what's best for a small minority. And who is this minority? Who are these people that are the beneficiaries of the two main political parties? They are the ones who hold the reigns of the economy and production in their hands. These are the people that the Occupy movement calls the 1%. In fact, the productivity of the American worker has gone up by 400% since 1950. This means that an American worker need just work 10 hours to produce what they would have in 1950. So, who is benefitting from this increase, because it is obviously not the American worker?

The System is the Problem

The situation that the working class is in is not the results of the policies of this or that party – this is the long term effect of the capitalist system. Because of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, capitalism must always look to expand and look for new ways to increase profit. One of the sure ways to find extra profit is to pay the workers less and make them work more. This has happened, does happen, and will continue to happen unless the system itself is changed. As long as we live under the system of capitalism the workers will continue to be exploited more and more. One need only to take a step back to look at the larger picture: not whether we should be voting for the Republican or the Democrats, but whether we should be voting for either of them. They are the two capitalist parties that have brought us to where we are today. They are the two parties keeping the working class in a position of subservience.

This is the system that Barack Obama not only supports but strives to strengthen. Barack Obama will never provide any drastic change. He cannot. He is just part, a charismatic part, of the entire political pendulum that American Workers have found themselves a pawn in. The system is set up so that the pendulum swings back and forth, impossible to change direction, between two political parties – the two major parties that represent the interests of the capitalist class. The two parties actually work synergistically to keep capitalism going in the United States. They both act as a relief valve for discontent. They give the unhappy voters a place to turn to when they are unhappy with what is currently happening. When the Republicans

hold power the workers look to the Democrats for change. When the Democrats are in power the workers look to the Republicans for change. This happens repeatedly and consistently. Thus this two party system of two competing capitalist parties has a built in and predictable relief valve that allows the pressure of worker discontent to be channeled in a non-threatening way. The only way we are going to get out of this back and forth is by changing the source, they system itself.

The real problem with our society, the real cause of the unfortunate situation that we workers find ourselves in, is not the Democratic or Republican party. Either or both of those parties could be replaced and we could still find ourselves in the same situation, with no improvement in the lives of the workers. We need to go farther than just tying the blame to the Democrats and Republicans and look to the source. The two parties that are currently in power are the logical outcome of the combination of the capitalist system and the Constitution. This is what needs to be changed. We need to end the tyranny of the market and the profit motive. To do this we must replace the capitalist system with a system that is designed to benefit the workers themselves. The current Constitution was designed to concretize the capitalist system in the United States and the two party political system to keep it in place. The Constitution guarantees the right of the capitalists to exploit the working class. In order to create a system for the good of the workers, we must forge a new way of life from the ground up and this means getting rid of the capitalist U.S. Constitution.

Now that we have come to the conclusion that the beneficiaries of both parties are the super rich and political power holders (the 1%), we can see who are not the beneficiaries of this system – the ones who provide the lifeblood of the nation's economy (again, owned by the capitalist class). Some think that if we strengthen the corporations, if we strengthen the capitalists, they will voluntarily reward the workers with more pay, etc. This is absolute nonsense. The main and only essential function of any corporation is to increase its domination in its industry, and also (eventually) in every industry. The voluntary payment of extra money to the workers flies in direct contradistinction to the essential function of all corporations – no wonder: every single dollar more for the workers is a dollar less for the capitalist's profits. Again, the concern for the environment or for anything other than itself for that matter is foreign to its purpose of existence.

Real Change

What real change is: Real change is the eradication of the 40+ hour work week. There is no reason for us to have to work as much as we do. Why has technology been progressing, yet work requirements have not? The production capacity is constantly increasing. With the level of technology currently available there is no reason why we should be putting in as many (or more) hours at work as we do. As stated above, an American worker only needs to work about 10 hours per week to match the productivity of 1950 yet we are working more, not less. Technology should be used in the interests of all. It should be used to increase the quality of life of all. Unfortunately technology (under capitalism) is generally used not to help society, but to in-

crease profits.

This is just one example for the real change we need. To make it happen, we need to take the economy in our own hands. The enterprises, the infrastructure and the natural resources of our country must not belong anymore to a tiny minority of big shareholders. It must belong to the working people. Similarly the political system must no longer be in the hands of politicians who are the stooges of the super-rich.

We need an economy which is owned and controlled by the working class. Such an economy would no longer waste the resources in an anarchic economic system for profit which is dominated by the big monopolies. It would be rather planned according to the needs of the people. Similarly we need a political system where the people can elect, control and re-call the representatives whenever they feel it is necessary. This means we need a political system without congress and presidency but where political power is exerted by a centralized body of council delegates who are elected and controlled by regular mass assemblies in enterprises and communities. This is what we call socialism.

The Need for a Workers Party

The working class must have its own political party. The workers of the United States generally choose one of two options when determining their political allegiance. Either they choose not to become involved, which is usually the result of the alienation that they face because of their lack of representation by the Democrat and Republican Party, or they choose to be involved and are essentially forced to decide between the two capitalist parties, neither of which represents their class interests. This needs to change. We call for all members of the working class to end all support for the capitalist parties. We need our own party, a party that represents our interests, the interests of the majority, and not the interests of the 1%. A workers party would fight class collaboration with the capitalist class and its parties and for the political development of the working class. The mass workers party can fight to end the rule of the capitalists and their two parties.

Down with the Democratic and Republican Party! No vote for Obama or Romney. The workers need our own party. Support the working class struggle! Join the RWC. Fighting for Socialism. Fighting for Revolution. ■



Presidential elections in Venezuela: There is no alternative for the workers on the ballot paper! Neither Hugo Chavez nor Orlando Chirino should be supported by the workers! For a new workers party on a revolutionary program!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 3.10.2012

1. At the presidential elections in Venezuela on 7th October 2012 workers are left without a real choice on the ballot paper. None of the “left-wing” candidates - Hugo Chavez and Orlando Chirino – deserve support from workers. Instead, building of a new Workers Party, based on a revolutionary program, is necessary to fight for the victory of the socialist revolution.

Right-wing bourgeois opposition candidate Henrique Capriles Radonski: An enemy of the people

2. Obviously no workers with the most elementary class-consciousness will vote for Henrique Capriles Radonski, the candidate of the right-wing bourgeois opposition alliance *Democratic Unity Roundtable* (MUD). The leading forces of MUD are the two traditional parties of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie which ruled the country together between 1958-1993/98: Copei and Acción Democrática. MUD’s presidential candidate Henrique Capriles was the mayor of the middle class Baruta municipality in Venezuela’s capital city Caracas. As the mayor at this time, Capriles and the police forces under his command played a central role in the armed clashes in 2002. These armed clashes were the prelude for the pro-imperialist coup d’état. Capriles’ Baruta police forces even detained the Chavista Interior Minister Ramon Rodriguez Chacin during these counter-revolutionary uprising. In short, Capriles personifies the heart of the reactionary bourgeoisie and upper middle class.

3. MUD is supported by the most reactionary forces: by the association of the capitalists *Fedecámaras* (the Federation of Trade and Industry Chamber), by former right-wing Colombian president Uribe, by the German and European governments and of course US imperialism. (1) The MUD leaders already promise to re-establish Venezuela’s ties with Israel if they come to power. (2)

4. MUD is the main party of the Venezuelan capitalists. For them even the limited social reforms of the Chavez government are too much. According to their plans they want to start a massive roll-back. MUD wants to decrease goods and services provided by the Chavez government in order to reduce social spending. It wants to decentralize the provision of social services to municipal governments. Health and education missions, including the maintenance of school and hospital infrastructure and the provision of food, should be opened up to “private initiative”. MUD wants to end the current government subsidies on housing built as part of the Great Housing Mission. Overall, MUD wants to decrease the amount of government food subsidies by 60% over the next 3 years. It also wants to eliminate subsidized transport. The subsidized provision of electric-

ity would also be cut and opened up to “the private sector”. All price control mechanisms would be eliminated within a year. MUD plans also include the deregulation of banks, opening up the economy to private investment and the reduction of state funding for public services and communal council projects. It also wants to eliminate the banks’ obligatory social contributions according to which – at least officially – 25% of a bank’s profits must go towards agricultural projects, 15% towards housing, 3% to micro-businesses, 10% towards manufacturing activities and 2.5% towards investment in national tourism. (3)

5. For all these reasons we consider MUD and its presidential candidate Henrique Capriles as a central force of the Venezuela bourgeoisie which wants to liquidate all limited social progress of the revolutionary process since 1998. No class class-conscious worker will vote for him.

President Chavez: leading Venezuela not towards socialism but towards capitalism with a strong state sector

6. President Hugo Chavez and his governing *United Socialist Party of Venezuela* (PSUV) claim to stand for building a socialist future. In his election program Chavez promises to “construct 21st century Bolivarian socialism”. (4) Many socialist-minded workers support Chavez and the PSUV. Internationally there are also a number of centrists like the IMT of Alan Woods and Lal Khan or the Australian Socialist Alliance/Green Left Weekly who uncritically support the “socialist government” in Caracas. However, despite its name neither the PSUV nor the Chavez regime is socialist. In fact it is a bourgeois, left-populist regime which is a close ally of emerging Chinese imperialism. While Chavez and the PSUV promise to march towards “socialism”, the truth is that despite being in power since 1998 (i.e. 14 years!), the capitalist class is still dominating both the economy and the state. While the regime has the support by the main trade union federation UNT, the heart of the state is the “Bolivarian” bourgeoisie, i.e. the state-capitalist bureaucracy and sectors of the capitalists (personified in figures like the billionaire Wilmer Ruperti or the telecommunications magnate Gustavo Cisneros).

7. In fact, the Chavez regime created a strong state-capitalist sector around the state oil corporation PDVSA. This gives it the material basis both to support state-capitalist interventions in the economy as well as to finance certain welfare programs (the so-called *misiones*). However despite its “socialist” rhetoric, the private sector even enlarged its size since Chavez took power. Between 1998 and 2008 the private sector’s share of the economy grew from 64.7% to 70.9% at the expense of the public sector. (5) In particular, the parasitic sector of “finance and insur-

ance", i.e. money capital, grew rapidly in this period, by 258.4%, followed by construction (+159.4%) trade and repair services (+152.8%), transport and storage (+104.9%), communications (+151.4%) and manufacturing (+98.1%). (6) As a result the banking sector – including private banks like Banco Bisboa, Liberty Mutual, ABM-AMRO and Citibank – makes huge profits (in 2011: 14.490 million bolivares which is about 3.369 million dollars, a growth of 92.3% compared to the previous year.)

8. Another rebuttal of the Bolivarian "Socialist" myth is the fact that the working class' wage share in income has not improved in the 14 years of Chavez. According to United Nations UNCTAD and other sources, the share of workers' wages in national income is today below the level when Chavez took power. (7) Wages for workers at PDVSA were frozen by the state appointed executives between 2007 and 2009, despite inflation of about 30% a year. This has contributed to the situation whereby nearly 70% of public sector workers reportedly earn minimum-wage. (8) Officially, unemployment stood at 6.6% at year-end 2009. However these figures do not account for workers in the informal sector of the economy, who constitute approximately half of the country's total workforce. (9)

9. The supporters of the regime often refer to the *misiones* – the huge social welfare programs. Indeed these

programs are beneficial for the poorest strata of the population and they have contributed – at least according to official statistics - to a certain reduction of the extreme inequality of income in the country. Of course all socialists must defend such social programs against neo-liberal attacks. However they are not the product of Chavez' socialism but of the pressure of the masses – particularly after the failed counter-revolutionary coup d'état in 2002. One also has to see that these social aid programs do not strengthen the position of the working class because they neither raise the wages nor do they raise the formal employment – a major problem in a country with such a huge informal sector. These are not socialist measures but simple social-democratic small reforms. And indeed a similar process of limited reduction of inequality took place in a number of Latin American countries in the last decade. It is also true that the regime nationalized a number of enterprises. However one has to point out that these enterprises were often bankrupt and the owners were compensated for it.

10. The social programs of the Chavez regime are not the result of any socialist policy but of the exceptional economic position of the country. Venezuela is the fifth largest member of OPEC by oil production. This enables the regime to make huge profits given the extraordinary rise



of oil price in the past decade. On this basis the Chavez regime created a strong state-capitalist sector around the state oil corporation PDVSA, utilizing the enormous oil and gas resources of the country. As a result oil accounts for roughly 30% of GDP, 94% of export earnings, and more than 50% of the central government's budget revenues. (10) Another material basis for the regime's social reform programs is the country's rapidly increasing foreign debt. Between 2006 and 2011 public debt – as a share of the Gross Domestic Product (the country's annual output) – rose from 28.4% to 45.5%. (11) This natural wealth and the increasing indebtedness give the regime the basis to finance certain reforms. However relying on this huge oil rent and indebtedness is a classic cul-de-sac for semi-colonial countries. While the regime profited from the huge rise of oil price in the past decade, this can easily change in the future. Once the oil price collapses and the country doesn't get new loans, the Chavez model collapses too.

11. These social reforms – as limited as they are – are an important material factor for the remaining substantial support for Chavez and the PSUV amongst important sectors of the working class and the poor. On the other hand, the government needs the support of the masses as a counterweight to the deep hatred from a huge part of the domestic bourgeoisie. The latter want to use the country's resource wealth to become rich compradors in a Venezuela which would be transformed into a pure US colony. As a result many workers and poor identify with the regime and support the Bolivarian movement of Hugo Chavez. While it is impermissible for socialists to politically support forces like the bourgeois-populist Chavez and vote for them in elections, it is also important to relate to these Bolivarian masses. In the trade union field, in the struggle against the greedy oligarchs, against the constant pressure of US imperialism etc, it is urgent to apply the united front tactic to the Bolivarian mass organizations and work with their activists in order to have joint actions against the bourgeoisie and to politically break them away from their bourgeois leadership.

12. The anti-working class character of the regime is also visible by its suppression of independent working class activity. Independent activists face reprisal, dismissal, jail or even murder. A well known example for this is the union leader Ruben Gonzalez, a member of the PSUV, who was sentenced to 7 years in prison by the state, which accused him of violence during a strike at the state-owned Ferrominera Orinoco. While he was freed after one year in prison because of mass protests, at least 125 worker militants remain in prison for being involved in various strike actions or occupations and more than 2.500 activists have faced criminalization. (12)

13. Another example of the anti-socialist nature of the Chavez regime is the arrest and handing over of the exiled Colombian Joaquin Perez Becerra in April 2011. Becerra acted before for years as representative for the guerilla movement FARC in Europe. Chavez personally agreed to a request by the pro-US government of Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia for the immediate extradition when Becerra visited Venezuela.

14. Finally, the bourgeois character of the Chavez regime is also demonstrated in its support for the reactionary dictatorships of Gaddafi in Libya and Assad in Syria as well as the Stalinist-capitalist dictatorship in China. When

the masses rose up in 2011 to bring down these dictators, Chavez hailed and still hails these butchers as "anti-imperialists". This scandalous position is related to the process of bourgeoisification of the Bolivarian movement. Its leadership becomes more and more a pro-social-imperialist leadership which leans towards Chinese imperialism as an alternative pole against US/Western imperialism. (13) In fact China did substantially expand its position in Venezuela in the recent years. While the USA remains Venezuela's biggest trading partner, China has become the third biggest export destination as a result of a massive expansion of trade between the two countries from \$1.3 billion in 2005 to nearly \$8.9 billion in 2009. (14) China is also one of the country's biggest foreign investor and lenders. Chinese corporations invested in Venezuela about \$8.9 billion in the years 2005-2010. (15) Total borrowing from China has been \$36 billion since 2007. (16) Such a pro-Chinese orientation does not stop Chavez – as a "flexible" politician – to make declarations of support to the US president Obama, showing how rhetorical his "anti-imperialism" is. Recently Chavez announced: "If I were American, I'd vote for Obama." (17)

15. For all these reasons the RCIT does not consider the Chavez regime and the PSUV as socialist, but rather as bourgeois, left-populist. It made certain concessions to the masses and implemented some nationalization of enterprises. But this was the result of mass pressure and not of a socialist government policy. Of course socialists must defend Venezuela (as well as Cuba, Bolivia etc.) against any attacks by US imperialism or the internal counter-revolution of the old oligarchy. For these reactionary forces even these limited reforms are too much. This is why US imperialism and the majority of the domestic bourgeoisie want to get rid of the Chavez government. Given the history of the past decade in Venezuela, the 2009 coup d'état against Honduras President Manuel Zelaya, the attempted coup d'état against Ecuador's president Rafael Correa in September 2010 or the recent palace coup against Paraguay President Fernando Lugo, such a possibility is a real danger. In case of a reactionary coup d'état socialists must – following the method of the anti-imperialist united front tactic of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky – defend the Bolivarian movement including the Chavez government against these attacks.

16. But such a defense against imperialism and domestic reaction must not lead the working class to renounce its political independence of Bolivarism and Chavez government. Supporting the PSUV and Chavez at the elections is equal to the political subordination of the working class to the Bolivarian bourgeoisie. Unfortunately this is exactly what various international centrists like the IMT, the Australian SA or the CWI are doing. In opposite to them, the RCIT calls workers not to vote for Chavez!

Chirino and the UIT: collaboration with the right-wing bourgeois opposition in the name of socialism

17. Orlando Chirino, the presidential candidate of the *Socialism and Freedom Party* (PSL) and a long-time leader of the centrist Morenoite UIT, seems to offer a political alternative. He is a long standing trade union leader who supported Chavez for many years. He was one of the central leaders of the biggest trade union UNT. He broke with the

regime and was sacked from his job for his politics. Today he is a leader of the PSL and of the small trade union *Frente autónomo en defensa del empleo, el salario y el sindicato* (FADESS). (18)

18. However in the last years Chirino and his supporters have increasingly turned to a right-wing centrist and indeed dangerous policy. After failing to build a mass political alternative to the PSUV, Chirino follows a very dangerous policy of collaboration with the right-wing bourgeois opposition in the trade union field. In concrete, Chirino is leading FADESS together with a number of reactionary figures like:

* *Froilán Barrios*. In addition to leading FADESS Barrios is also a leader of the bourgeois party *Movimiento 2D* which supports the right-wing coalition MUD. (19)

* *Pablo Castro*. (20) Castro is at the same time a leader of the bourgeois party *Un Nuevo Tiempo* who was and is a main force of the MUD alliance. *Un Nuevo Tiempo* provided the main candidate of the conservative opposition at the presidential elections in 2006, Manuel Rosales. Castro is today the MUD's "coordinador sindical" (21)

* *Dick Guanique*. (22) Guanique is also the General Secretary of *Bandera Roja*, a reactionary Maoist organization which is part of MUD and supported anti-Chavez plots and campaigns since 1998. (23)

* *Carlos Navarro*. (24) He was the former General Secretary of the old corrupt trade union CTV which was involved in the 2002 coup d'état and is a member of the bourgeois COPEI. (25)

* *Henry Arias*. (26) He is also a leader of the bourgeois *Voluntad Popular* which is a member of MUD. (27)

* *Jesus Urbieto*. He is a former leader of the right-wing trade union CTV, concretely it's Institute director. This Urbieto played a role in the pro-US coup d'état in 2002 and received money from the US AFL-CIO. (28)

19. FADESS also demonstrated on MayDay 2012 together with the CTV, which is the right-wing trade union who supported the pro-imperialist coup d'état against Chavez in 2002. (29) It is also worrying that Chirino was invited and spoke recently at a meeting of Venancham (Venezuelan American Chamber of Commerce) (30)

20. To summarize, despite his propaganda for working class independence, Chirino, in his trade union practice, is moving dangerously away from the politics of class independence. The RCIT is of the opinion that it is impermissible to build together with the right-wing, pro-US alliance MUD leaders – who represent nothing amongst the class-conscious workers in Venezuela – a small trade union against the big Chavezista union UNT. It is the worst kind of a popular frontist policy of collaborating with the most reactionary sectors of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and its US imperialist masters. We think *this is a gross violation of the communist principle of class independence and of the method of revolutionary trade union policy!* In words Chirino and the UIT are in favor of class independence but in their *deeds* they subordinate the workers to the capitalists via their joint trade union work with MUD leaders.

21. One could say that such work inside a reactionary trade union is legitimate referring to Lenin's argument that revolutionaries have to work even in reactionary trade unions. However this argument hardly applies to this case since it is relevant for situations where the only existing mass unions are led by reactionary forces. In

Venezuela however, FADESS is one of the smallest trade unions while the Chavezistas lead the biggest union UNT. In addition to this, it is one thing to intervene in a reactionary trade union in order to carry out a revolutionary opposition work. It is something completely different to build a union as a leading force together with right-wing, reactionary leaders!

22. We are fully aware that the bourgeois, left-populist Chavez regime may push sectors of the workers towards the conservative opposition. In defending working class rights against the Chavez regime, one will join forces in a strike also with such sectors of workers. There is nothing wrong in such an approach. But it is something completely different to systematically work together with *leaders* of the counter-revolution, i.e. *leaders of the MUD alliance!* This is impermissible! In our opinion, a real class independent, socialist trade union policy must have nothing to do with the most reactionary political forces like MUD. Despite this, various international centrist organizations like the Morenoite UIT and LIT or the British right-wing centrist, pro-Zionist AWL, call to vote for Chirino. The RCIT draws the opposite conclusion: We oppose calling for a vote for Orlando Chirino at the presidential elections.

For a new workers party on a revolutionary program!

23. Venezuela is characterized by an extreme unevenness in the political process. While the masses are repeatedly taking the streets and joining the class struggle, this process is stuck by the Bolivarian leadership. Chavez is administering a capitalist economy with a significant state-capitalist sector around the oil company PDVSA. The regime is allying itself to emerging Chinese imperialism. Under the pressure of the masses and faced with the hostility of a major part of its domestic bourgeoisie and of neighboring US imperialism, Chavez is forced to concede certain social reforms to the masses. Attempts to build a workers' party to the left of the PSUV have failed until now because of a lack of revolutionary strategy. The recent collaboration of Orlando Chirino – a promising workers leader in the past – with the right-wing counter-revolutionary forces demonstrate that the lack of such a strategy leads to adventures and political dead-ends.

24. The fact that at the presidential election there is no candidate workers should vote for, underlines the urgent need to build a new Workers Party – a party which gives class-conscious workers the opportunity to fight for their interests independent of any Bolivarian bourgeoisie or bureaucrats. Such a Workers Party should appeal to all militant trade unionists and activists inside and outside of the Bolivarian movement. The RCIT proposes that such a Workers Party should be based on a revolutionary program, i.e. a program for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, a rupture with all imperialist Great Powers in West and East and for the establishment of the working class dictatorship to open the road to authentic socialism.

25. Such a revolutionary transitional program should include:

* Fight insecure employment! Conversion of unprotected, informal and temporary contracts into permanent contracts, with alignment of the employment protection provisions and wages. The adherence of these should be regulated by collective tariff agreements and controlled by

trade unions and workforce representatives!

* No to any pay freeze! For massive wage increases and a minimum wage, the amounts of which should be set by independent workers' committees!

* Fight all layoffs and plant closures! Expropriation without compensation of all enterprises that don't pay wages completely, who threaten with layoffs, who don't pay their taxes in full or threaten with closure or relocation of the site! In such cases: the entrepreneurs must be made to pay out of their private property! Continuation of these companies as public companies under the management of the employees!

* Cut the working hours now! We support any reduction in working hours. The aim must be the division of labour on all hands. This means that everyone should have a job and work with less hours at unchanged wages!

* Fight inflation! For automatic adjustment of wages and all social benefits and pensions to price increases!

* For the control of prices through price monitoring committee, elected by the workers, housewives and -men as well as consumers! The basis should be a cost of living index, which is determined by representatives of the working class, the peasants and small traders.

* For accessible, quality housing with essential services based where people are located!

* Open the books – bookkeeping, bank accounts, tax returns, etc.! Inspection by accountants who enjoy the trust of the workers!

* For workers inquiry committees for comprehensive detection of corruption between companies and between companies and government agencies!

* For the control and the veto right of the workers against all decisions of the management! Against any participation of workers representatives in management positions!

* For a public employment programme to improve infrastructure (energy supply, public transport, education and child care, etc.). This programme must not be subject to state control of bureaucrats, but must be planned and controlled by the workers and the poor. It is to be paid out of profits and the assets of the super rich.

* All essential services such as water, electricity, health care, education, etc., must be publicly owned and controlled by the workers and the users! Free access to basic services for all!

* Fight women oppression! Equal pay for equal work! For the massive construction of free, well-equipped 24-hour child-care facilities! For a wide range supply of affordable and high-quality public restaurants and laundry facilities! Our goal is the socialisation of housework!

* For a public employment programme to create the conditions for the socialisation of housework and simultaneously eliminate unemployment among women!

* Free access to free contraception and abortion on demand regardless of age and no matter in what month of pregnancy the woman is!

* Nationalisation of all media under the control of employees, the workers movement and the consumers! Democratic participation of all sections of society in the media!

* Abolition of all indirect taxes such as VAT!

* Massive reduction in taxes on wages! Drastic increase in taxes on profits and speculation! Elimination of tax loopholes for businesses! Immediate recovery of outstanding tax debts of the companies!

* For the confiscation of property of the powerful and influential families and their utilisation in the context of a national economic plan! For the expropriation of the super rich!

* No further interest and debt repayment! Immediate and complete cancellation of all private and government debt!

* Nationalisation of all banks and financial institutions and fusion into a single central bank, nationalisation of large companies, large wholesale trade and transport, social, health, education and communication sector without compensation and under workers' control! Expropriate the big land owners! Introduction of a foreign trade monopoly!

* For a workers' government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor, on the basis of councils in the enterprises and neighbourhoods as well as armed militias! Their representatives are under the direct election and can be recalled by the workers and they receive not more than an average skilled workers salary!

* For a socialist federation of the countries in Latin America!

26. Of course such a program will not be realized by a Chavez government. The workers must organize in *action committees* and build a *rank and file movement in the trade unions* to oust the bureaucrats. It will need *mass strikes and demonstrations* to achieve even a small proportion of these demands. And even then such reforms will be only temporary given their incompatibility with the capitalist principle of production for profit and profit only.

27. In the end this program can only be implemented in its totality by a socialist revolution, this means the armed insurrection of the working class and the oppressed to smash the state apparatus and to expropriate the ruling class. Such a revolution can never be peaceful – as the centrist daydreamers of the IMT, the CWI as well as form the Bolivarian theoreticians imagine – since it will meet the violent resistance of the bourgeoisie and the foreign imperialist powers. The allies of the revolution are neither the Stalinist-capitalists in Beijing nor the theocratic dictators in Teheran but the international working class and the oppressed people. The socialist revolution must become permanent and international – or it will be inevitable crushed. To lead the revolution to victory, the workers need a revolutionary Workers Party as part of the Fifth International. This is what the RCIT is dedicating its forces.

Footnotes

(1) See: "Fedecámaras welcomes people's participation in opposition primary. Jorge Botti, the president of the Federation of Trade and Industry Chamber (Fedecámaras), said that the election day sent a "very clear message" about what people want" <http://www.eluniversal.com/nacional-y-politica/primarias-2012/120213/fedecamaras-welcomes-peoples-participation-in-opposition-primary>; "Uribe Meets with Venezuelan Opposition to Protest "Chavista Dictatorship" <http://www.caribbeannewsreview.com/index.php/cen-america/news/316-uribe-meets-with-venezuelan-opposition-to-protest-chavista-dictatorship>; "Germany Asks European Union to Step Up Support for Venezuela's Opposition" <http://alethonews.wordpress.com/2012/05/18/germany-asks-european-union-to-step-up-support-for-venezuelas-opposition/>

(2) "Venezuelan Opposition Promises "Renewal" for

Venezuela-Israel Relations" <http://alethonews.wordpress.com/tag/mud/>

(3) See "Venezuelan Opposition Economic Plan to Roll Back Public Services Revealed" <http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/7198>; the MUD document in Spanish can be read here: <http://www.ciudadccs.info/wp-content/uploads/DOC-ACCIONES-ECON%C3%93MICAS-MUD.pdf>

(4) See Tamara Pearson: Planning the Next 6 Years of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, [Venezuelanalysis.com](http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/7091), July 6th 2012 <http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/7091>

(5) See Shawn Hattingh: Venezuela and the 'Bolivarian revolution': Beacon of hope or smoke and mirrors?, <http://libcom.org/library/venezuela-%E2%80%98bolivarian-revolution%E2%80%99-beacon-hope-or-smoke-mirrors>; The Economist: Venezuela's economy. Towards state socialism. A wave of nationalisation promises scarcity and decline, Nov 18th 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/17527250>; Federico Fuentes: Venezuela's Economic Woes? 23 May, 2010, [CounterCurrents.org](http://www.countercurrents.org/fuentes230510.htm), <http://www.countercurrents.org/fuentes230510.htm>; Associated Press: What socialism? Private sector still dominates Venezuelan economy despite Chavez crusade, July 18, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/07/18/socialism-private-sector-dominates-venezuelan-economy-despite-chavez-crusade/>

(6) See Mark Weisbrot, Rebecca Ray and Luis Sandoval: The Chávez Administration at 10 Years: The Economy and Social Indicators, February 2009, Center for Economic and Policy Research, p. 7

(7) UNCTAD: Trade and Development Report, 2012, p. 53; See Marta Guerriero: The Labour Share of Income around the World. Evidence from a Panel Dataset (2012), Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), Development Economics and Public Policy, Working Paper Series, WP No. 32/2012 p. 48

(8) Tom Wetzel: Venezuela from Below. Review: Venezuela: Revolution as Spectacle by Rafael Uzcategui, August 22, 2011

(9) Venezuela: Economy; <http://globoledge.msu.edu/Countries/Venezuela/Economy>

(10) See OPEC: Annual Statistical Bulletin 2012, p. 11

(11) International Monetary Fund: World Economic Outlook Database, 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/01/weodata/index.aspx>

(12) See Johan Rivas: Venezuela: Ruben Gonzalez freed!, Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI in Venezuela) 08/03/2011, <http://www.socialistworld.net/doc/4915>

(13) The RCIT's analyzes can be read in the recently published study by Michael Pröbsting "China's transformation into an imperialist power" (online on www.thecommunists.net/theory/why-china-is-imperialist) and the statement "No to chauvinist war-mongering by Japanese and Chinese imperialism!", www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-between-china-and-japan.

(14) See José Orozco: China's Buying Spree: Venezuela – A Match Made in Globalization, Feb 07, 2011 <http://latintrade.com/2011/02/china%E2%80%99s-buying-spree-venezuela-a-match-made-in-globalization>

(15) Derek Scissors: China's Investment Overseas in 2010, Web Memo No. 3133, February 3, 2011, Published by The Heritage Foundation, p. 2

(16) Mark Weisbrot and Jake Johnston: Venezuela's Eco-

nomics Recovery: Is it Sustainable? September 2012, Center for Economic and Policy Research, p. 17

(17) Seth Cline: Hugo Chavez Says He Would Vote for Obama, October 1, 2012, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/10/01/hugo-chavez-says-he-would-vote-for-obama-debate-talking-point-hugo-chavez-endorses-obama>

(18) See e.g. <http://laclase.info/imagen/orlando-chirino-dirigente-de-fadess-ccura-y-usi>

(19) See "Fadess estima 3.000 conflictos laborales en el país" <http://www.eluniversal.com/economia/120620/fadess-estima-3000-conflictos-laborales-en-el-pais>; "Conformado Fadess en Aragua" <http://laclase.info/nacionales/conformado-fadess-en-aragua>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movimiento_2D and <http://www.movimiento2d.org/nosotros.php>

(20) See e.g. "Miembros del Comité Ejecutivo de la CTV rechazan anuncio de congreso 'fraudulento'" <http://noticiasvenezuela.org/?p=33545>; "Roig: el aumento del salario mínimo no responde a una discusión seria entre todos los sectores" <http://informecifras.com/?p=228787>; "Pablo Castro: No se puede creer que este gobierno haya creado 4 millones de empleos" <http://elimpulso.com/articulo/pablo-castro-no-se-puede-creer-que-este-gobierno-haya-creado-4-millones-de-empleos#.UDySDKO26Hg>

(21) See e.g. "MUD denuncia que nueva LOT favorece expropiaciones" <http://ve.globedia.com/mud-denuncia-lot-favorece-expropiaciones>

(22) See "Fadess califica de electoral elaboración de la Ley del Trabajo" http://www.contextotmt.net/base/unilever/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=28934

(23) See "Venezuela presidential election: Venezuela opposition floods streets in support of presidential candidate" <http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/06/10/2843123/venezuela-opposition-floods-streets.html>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Flag_Party

(24) See "Conformado Fadess en Aragua" <http://laclase.info/nacionales/conformado-fadess-en-aragua>;

(25) See http://books.google.at/books?id=wHnut2I9U04C&pg=PA72&lpg=PA72&dq=%22Carlos+Navarro%22+COPEI+venezuela&source=bl&ots=YI3IwlkoOa&sig=2KxvqK_zvp_G6ARmWAJCCMFLxtc&hl=en&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22Carlos%20Navarro%22%20COPEI%20venezuela&f=false

(26) See "Henry Arias en Fadess" <http://laclase.info/imagen/henry-arias-en-fadess?page=158>

(27) See "Ayer presentaron "Plancha del Progreso" integrada por quienes se sienten desplazados" <http://www.nuevaprensa.com.ve/site/articulo/42909/OposicionenfrentadapordisputadenombresaConsejoLegislativodeBolvar/> and <http://www.voluntadpopular.com/>

(28) See "National Endowment for Death Squads? The AFL-CIO and the NED", <http://lists.econ.utah.edu/pipermail/margins-to-centre/2007-January.txt> http://www.iefd.org/articles/for_death_squads.php

(29) See "CTV y Fadess marcharán juntas el 1º de mayo" <http://www.el-carabobeno.com/portada/articulo/33272/ctv-y-fadess-marcharn-juntas%5C-el-1-de-mayo>

(30) See "Reforma a la Ley Orgánica del Trabajo" http://www.venamcham.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=943:reforma-a-la-ley-organica-del-trabajo-valencia-10052012&catid=5:pagina-principal ■

On the outcome of the presidential elections in Venezuela

By Michael Pröbsting, 8.10.2012

After the counting of more than 96% of all votes, the outcome of the presidential elections in Venezuela is beyond any doubt: Huge Chavez clearly defeated Henrique Capriles, the candidate of the right-wing opposition alliance MUD. Orlando Chirino – who claimed to stand for an independent workers policy – came out as the candidate with the smallest share of votes. Here are the exact numbers of the election on 7th October 2012 which was marked by a record turnout of 80,45%: (1)

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Hugo Chávez	7.963.061	55,00%
Henrique Capriles	6.426.286	44,39%
Reina Sequera	68.210	0,47%
Luis Reyes	7.946	0,05%
María Bolívar	7.269	0,05%
Orlando Chirino	3.996	0,02%

The RCIT argued in a statement on the presidential elections in Venezuela, that the *“workers are left without a real choice on the ballot paper. None of the “left-wing” candidates - Hugo Chavez and Orlando Chirino – deserve support from workers. Instead, building of a new Workers Party, based on a revolutionary program, is necessary to fight for the victory of the socialist revolution.”* (2)

Working class illusions in Chavez regime

We explained that the Chavez regime is “socialist” only in words, but capitalist in practice. While it has the support of the majority of the working class and the oppressed, it is dominated by the “Bolivarian bourgeoisie”, i.e. a layer of state-capitalist managers and millionaires.

We therefore rejected those who paint the regime in socialist colors as many Stalinists and the fake-Trotskyists (like Alan Woods IMT) regularly do. Socialists cannot vote for a bourgeois candidate, i.e. a candidate who is the representative of a faction of the capitalist class but not of the workers movement.

While Chavez received a smaller share of the votes than at the last elections in 2006 (he got 62.87% of the votes at that time), the outcome of the elections shows that there are still substantial illusions in his government amongst the workers and the oppressed. At least he is clearly seen as a lesser evil than the candidate of the right-wing pro-US representative of the oligarchy, Henrique Capriles. Fears of a victory of Capriles certainly helped Chavez to rally his supporters.

These remaining illusions show why it is urgent for socialists in Venezuela to seek joint actions and employ the united front tactic with workers and poor who hope social reforms and expropriations of the rich by the Chavez government.



Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez and his Iranian friend, the reactionary dictator Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The reasons for the disastrous result for Orlando Chirino

Another important lesson of the elections' outcome is the huge defeat for the candidate of the centrist PSOL, Orlando Chirino. Chirino, a long-time member of the centrist Morenoist UIT, was a former Chavez supporter and an important trade union leader. He broke with Chavez and for some time argued for a new workers party. This was an important step with a huge potential for building an independent working class party in Venezuela.

But lacking a clear revolutionary strategy, Chirino and his UIT conducted in the last years various adventurist maneuvers with petty-bourgeois and right-wing forces. As we showed in our statement with a number of examples, Chirino and the UIT-section have moved sharply to the right. They are focusing on building a small trade union FADESS together with leading forces of the pro-US, right-wing MUD.

During his election campaign he also presented himself as a "reasonable" socialist who respects the private property of means of production. In an interview with the conservative and pro-business daily paper "El Universal", he promised that a government led by him would even review all enterprise expropriations which were undertaken "outside of the law" by the Chavez government. (3)

For all these reasons, the RCIT argues that Chirino is no candidate representing an independent working class policy. Through his systematic collaboration with open counter-revolutionary, pro-US forces, he represents rather a policy of subordination of the working class to the most reactionary sector of the capitalist class. Therefore the RCIT rejected the position of those centrists like the Morenoite UIT, LIT, PST-FT, LFI, COREP and the British AWL, who supported Chirino as an "independent workers candidate" at the elections.

Chirino's miserable result of 3.872 votes or 0,03% shows,

that hardly any worker in Venezuela considers him as "independent workers candidate". This of course cannot be explained by a lack of prominence. Chirino was for years one of the most prominent trade union leaders in the country. The truth is that Chirino was completely ignored by the workers because he discredited himself (and his party) through years of systematic collaboration with the pro-US, right-wing opposition. This is a shame since his break with Chavez offered an excellent opportunity to build a working class alternative to the Bolivarian-bourgeois Chavez government. However, the failure to overcome the boundaries of the UIT centrism led him into a political disaster. The complete failure at this elections shows that the workers in Venezuela do not forgive Chirino his tailism towards the right-wing counter-revolution.

A new start, a new Workers Party based on a revolutionary program is more urgent than ever!

Footnotes:

(1) Divulgación Presidencial 2012, http://www.cne.gob.ve/resultado_presidencial_2012/r/1/reg_000000.html

(2) Presidential elections in Venezuela: There is no alternative for the workers on the ballot paper! Neither Hugo Chavez nor Orlando Chirino should be supported by the workers! For a new workers party on a revolutionary program! Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 3.10.2012, www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/elections-in-venezuela

(3) Entrevista Orlando Chirinos, Candidato Presidencial Del Partido Socialismo Y Libertad: "El país ha sido gobernado por el imperialismo y los militares". "El país tiene la necesidad de construir una alternativa que garantice libertad y democracia en el marco del socialismo"; Gustavo Méndez, El Universal, 27.9.2012, <http://www.eluniversal.com/nacional-y-politica/120927/el-pais-ha-sido-gobernado-por-el-imperialismo-y-los-militares> ■

Defend socialist activists in Argentina against state repression!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 8.10.2012

The Argentine state machinery has carried out on 3rd October 2012 a series of raids against several socialist activists like Paula Medrano (whose parents "disappeared" in the years of the dictatorship), Viviana Noguero and others. The comrades are leaders of the "Movimiento por la Democracia Obrera" (Movement for the Worker Democracy) in Argentina, which are part of the FLTI. According to the comrades of Democracia Obrera, computers, cell phones and documents of the organization were confiscated by the police.

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) sharply condemns the attacks against these socialist activists. *An injury to one is an injury to all!* Irrespective of the political differences we have with the FLTI, we call the international workers movement to defend the comrades! The full press release of the Movement for Workers Democracy can be read at http://www.democraciaobrera.org/index_eng.html ■



Police at a demonstration in Buenos Aires

The European Union and the issue of the accession of semi-colonial countries

Resolution of the Revolutionary Communist Organization for the Liberation (Austrian section of the RCIT), 14.10.2012

1. The European Union (EU) is an imperialist alliance – on the economic, political and military level. It is dominated by the rich, imperialist countries (in particular Western European countries like Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Austria etc.). It also encompasses poorer, semi-colonial countries (like Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, and the countries of Eastern Europe such as Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, etc.). These semi-colonial countries make up more than half of the EU-27 member states and inhabit 119 million people, almost a quarter of the EU population. The EU is first and foremost dominated by the imperialist powers Germany and France, amongst which Germany is the *primus inter pares*. Furthermore, the EU is an expression of the fact that the productive forces are reaching beyond the boundaries of nation states and the capitalists – if they do not want loose in global competition – can ensure a profit-making production only in the international arena.

2. The purpose of the European Union is to defend and expand the power of the – in the global context relatively weak – imperialist states of Europe against the United States, Japan, as well as against China and Russia. It also serves the goals of the European capitalists to create a larger European market for the monopolies and to increase the exploitation of the semi-colonies. Therefore it is a thoroughly reactionary alliance that serves the interests of monopoly capital.

The EU worsens the situation of people living in their semi-colonial peoples. It affects their national independence and thus a number of bourgeois democratic rights and increases their economic exploitation. The EU is therefore a *“double-imperialist” alliance*: on the one hand, it serves to exploit the semi-colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America and on the other hand it serves the exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonies which are part of the EU. For the semi-colonial countries, an EU accession is therefore a step towards colonization; it limits their national independence and subordinates them increasingly more and direct under the imperialist monopolies!

3. The over-exploitation of semi-colonial EU countries by the imperialist monopolies takes by and large four main forms.

- i) The corporations make extra profits by relocating their production facilities in these countries and the exploitation of relatively cheaper labor;
- ii) Banks and other financial institutions make extra profits by growing indebtedness of the semi-colonial EU countries;
- iii) The value transfer from the semi-colonies towards the metropolises by unequal exchange;
- iv) Finally, there is also a value transfer in the form of migration, i.e. the import of comparatively cheaper labor from the semi-colonial EU countries in the imperialist metropolises.

4. The EU is currently in a very unstable situation.

On the one hand it is being shaken by the global economic crisis and it is facing a working class that has carved out a historically relatively high living standard and is very well organized. On the other hand, the EU is a federation of states and not a federal state. This means that the imperialist bourgeoisie in Europe still don't have a centralized capitalist state apparatus. But only by such an apparatus, they could enforce even more powerful their position over their imperialist rivals, as well as the working class and the oppressed peoples both domestically and globally. This highly contradictory situation exacerbated enormously the conflicts and contradictions between the ruling classes of the individual European nation-states.

5. This situation cannot continue indefinitely. The ruling classes of the EU have to find a (at least temporary) solution in one way or another. Roughly outlined, there can be several outcomes:

a. The EU falls apart and is again divided into many national states. This would lead to a further worsening of the economic crisis and contribute to a strengthening of the bourgeois nationalist and fascist forces. Such a development would make it virtually impossible for the capitalist class of Germany, France, etc., to compete with the U.S., China, Japan and Russia in the struggle for world domination. This is by far the most unlikely development.

b. The EU splits into a south-eastern and north-western part. A *“core EU”* under Franco-German leadership remains, the rest is divided into nation-states or agrees to form a loose *“Commonwealth”-Alliance* together.

c. The EU continues to exist by making a qualitative step towards the development of a centralized European imperialist state apparatus.

6. It is likely that there will be no *“pure”* solution for the capitalist class in Europe, but rather a combination of several possibilities. Either way, the capitalists must launch a determined attack on the rights of the workers to impose their interests.. They will try to cut our wages, to abolish the minimum wage, to raise the retirement age, to cut or to cancel unemployment benefits, to lift the taxes for the masses (VAT, fuel tax, ...) and to undertake massive cuts in the education, health and social system. They will also restrict our democratic rights, strengthen the repressive apparatus and increasingly organize imperialist military interventions. It is necessary for the capitalist class to crush the majority of the gains that the working class has carved out in the last 50-90 years. Greece serves as a *“testing ground”*: all maneuvers (e.g. mass redundancies and wage cuts) that are made by the EU and their supporters in Greece, all the considerations that various mouthpieces of the bourgeoisie address today (e.g. military coup) – these are the concrete EU plans the coming years and decades.

7. For the working class in Europe, none of these three aforementioned development opportunities is an alternative. They are all equally reactionary and therefore must be rejected. The only progressive alternative, for

which we fight so as revolutionary communists, is: The EU must be eliminated by a revolution of the working class (in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in alliance with the poor peasants) and be replaced by the formation of the *United Socialist States of Europe*.

8. Since the European Union is an imperialist alliance, it can not be reformed. We therefore support the *revolutionary break-up of the EU*. This means that we are advocating the break-up of the EU through the revolutionary seizure power by the working class (in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in alliance with the poor peasantry). This will probably first take place in one country and has then to spread, rather sooner than later, throughout Europe. The goal is the establishment of the *United Socialist States of Europe*. This is the perspective for all European countries, regardless of whether they have an imperialist and semi-colonial character.

9. This task requires amongst other things a correct political tactic of the workers on the question of the accession of individual countries to the EU. Since not all European countries have the same class character, our concrete tactics towards the EU membership must vary in different countries.

a. In the *imperialist countries that are EU member states*, the working class vanguard has to the fight against "their" own imperialist country (i.e. the German working class against imperialist Germany, the French working class against imperialist France, the Austrian working class against imperialist Austria etc.) as well as against the imperialist EU as such. We say: "*Neither imperialist EU, nor imperialist nation-state but international class struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe!*" We reject the slogan of an exit of the imperialist nation-state of the EU. An "independent" imperialist nation-state is not more progressive for the working class than being part of the imperialist EU. At the same time we don't advocate the country's membership in the EU. We firmly reject any nationalist campaign calling for an exit to these countries from the EU – regardless if it is undertaken by Stalinist and reformist forces or, even worse, by right-wing forces. Such campaigns of nationalist right-wing forces are usually also combined with attacks against migrants and asylum seekers and must be therefore rejected out of principle. In the case of Stalinist or other reformist we see petty-bourgeois nationalist slogans that are hidden under the cover of an alleged anti-imperialist policy directed against the EU. This is nothing but a dead end for the development of a revolutionary consciousness and a living internationalism of our class. Instead they promote a false identification with the ruling class in their own country, blurring the clear boundaries which have to be drawn between oppressive imperialist countries and oppressed semi-colonial countries, and they promote jingoism and false patriotism in the ranks of the labor movement.

Revolutionary communists in an imperialist EU country must support the wish of a semi-colonial country for an exit from the EU. At the same time they must combat all nationalism of "their" country who wants to prohibit semi-colonial countries to join the EU, or want to throw them out from the EU. As revolutionary communist workers we emphasize that this decision must be made primarily in those countries themselves. Similarly important for communists in imperialist countries is the solidarity with

the people who are being exploited by "their" imperialism and the support for their resistance against their "own" state (e.g. in France especially with the peoples of north-west Africa; in Austria with the peoples of the Balkans and Eastern Europe; the same is the case in the nations which are attacked by the EU powers such as Afghanistan). Furthermore it is also important for every revolutionary organization to organize migrants from these countries.

We say to the workers that during the process of taking power by the working class, an exit from the EU is undoubtedly a necessary step (i.e. it can be part of the program of a workers' government). However we do not raise this slogan as a separate demand before the occurrence of such a revolutionary situation. The slogan for exit has no independent role, since the imperialist nation-states are not at all nationally oppressed by the EU. We do not advocate an "independent" imperialist state and we refuse to defend it. The task of the working class of these countries is the socialist revolution. While the national liberation of oppressed minorities in these countries (e.g. migrants, Basques in Spain, etc.) is of course part of the program of permanent revolution, these imperialist countries as such are no subject to any national oppression.

b. The conditions are different in *semi-colonial countries that are part of the EU*: Here we are in favor of an exit of the EU. The demand for an exit from the EU is part of the program for the socialist revolution as a legitimate democratic, anti-imperialist slogan, like many other democratic slogans (e.g. abolition of national discrimination, equal rights for women, etc.). It is therefore a slogan which we raise already today, regardless of the current possibility of seizing power of the working class.

Which alternative to an EU membership do we advocate as revolutionary communists? We combine the slogan of national independence of this semi-colonial country of the EU, with a socialist perspective, i.e. we advocate the establishment of the working class rule in alliance with the poor peasants and the urban poor. (In this regard, we use the same approach as in those cases where we support the se-



EU is an imperialist alliance on economic, political and military level

cession of oppressed nations from oppressing nations – for example, for a workers ‘and peasants’ republic in Tamil Eelam, in Chechnya or Kurdistan). But just as we defend these nations against their oppressors even if they build their own state under capitalist conditions, so will we defend a semi-colonial EU states after its exit from the EU under capitalist conditions.

Our goal, however, is not an independent semi-colonial capitalist nation-state but a socialist workers ‘and peasants’ republic. Similarly, a revolutionary communist organization must combine that slogan with the perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe, if it does not want to slip into the petty-bourgeois nationalism.

We advocate the permanent revolution, which is directed on the one hand against the foreign, imperialist companies which exploit the masses and suppress and on the other hand against its “own” capitalists who collaborate with these corporations and also exploit the working men and women. We reject bourgeois nationalist forces who seek to leave the EU on a national-isolated, capitalist basis and we reject a united front for this goal with them.

c. In *semi-colonial countries that are not part of the EU* (Balkans, Turkey, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Iceland), revolutionary communists must fight against EU membership. We combine this slogan with the slogan of the United Socialist States of Europe and the struggle for the rule of the working class, in alliance with the poor peasantry. We oppose an alliance with bourgeois nationalist forces to fight against accession to the EU. It is the task of the working class - and not the national bourgeoisie - to resolve the democratic and national question in these countries and it is also the only class that is capable of doing it.

We argue therefore for a workers’ united front of trade unions, labor parties, and so on, to fight against EU membership. Of course, there may be short-term agreements and agreements with (petty-) bourgeois forces, but in general we reject that. In case of a possible referendum on EU membership we would call for a vote against accession.

While the (petty-) bourgeois opponents of EU membership stand for a nationally narrow-minded perspective of all-class encompassing fatherland, our alternative to an EU membership is the international class struggle. This means that we advocate – regardless of whether the particular semi-colonial country is part of the EU or not – the joint international resistance of the workers’ organizations, joint cross-border demonstrations and strikes, etc. We advocate the opening of the EU external borders for migrants, for international collective agreements in multinational corporations etc.

d. In *imperialist countries that are not part of the EU* (Switzerland, Norway), revolutionary communist organizations must take a defeatist position about a possible accession. This means that they are neither for the imperialist EU nor for the imperialist nation-state, neither for nor against joining the EU, but for the class struggle at the national and international levels and combine this with the goal of the United Socialist States of Europe. In case of a possible referendum on EU membership they should call for a boycott. We call on the workers’ movement of these countries to combine a defeatist position about a possible EU accession with a campaign against any chauvinism in their own ranks.

10. In the ranks of the labor movement in the impe-

rialist countries a strong chauvinism against the semi-colonial countries of the EU exists. This becomes especially apparent on issues like the opening of the labor market or other immigration issues. We combine our position on the EU with slogans like opening of the borders and the right for migrants to work and live in the EU regardless if they are EU citizens or not! We call for the immediate abolition of all asylum and migration laws. We also call on the workers’ movement to take up these demands and combine it with a broad campaign against any chauvinism in their own ranks. Especially the chauvinism in the imperialist countries against the semi-colonial countries (like the denunciations of the supposedly “lazy Greeks”) must be sharply opposed by the labor movement! Since the leadership of the workers movement is closely connected with sectors of the ruling class, the struggle against chauvinism has to be combined with the organizing of the rank and file in the unions and the workers organization. With such organs of rank and file organization it is possible to challenge the misleaderships in the workers movement and to replace them with the revolutionary self-organization with its own democratically elected and at any time recallable leaders from the ranks of the ordinary workers. The way towards the international unification of our class is only possible through the path of consistent struggle against all imperialist arrogance and thus against every element of chauvinism in the ranks of the workers movement.

11. We struggle in all countries against the attacks by the EU. We fight in Europe against the reform treaties that strengthen the power of the capitalist state apparatus and undermine our rights. We fight against the militarization of the EU and a joint EU army. We call for the European-wide (and global) unity of the workers, for cross-border class struggle, joint trade unions, etc. We call upon the European Trade Union Confederation, all unions and workers’ organizations and parties in Europe, on the one hand to fight against the attacks on the rights of workers and on the other hand to mobilize against the imperialist EU. We must fight against the continuing exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonies in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America at the places of their origins – namely, Berlin, Paris, London, Rome, Vienna and Brussels!

It is the task of the working class, to bring this continent – which has already integrated together economically long ago, which was divided by two world wars and from which new imperialist offensives are planned today – under its rule and transform it into a stronghold of the world revolution. This goal can only be achieved under the leadership of a World Party of Socialist Revolution – the *Fifth International!* The RCIT and the RKOB as its Austrian section are dedicated to this goal!

* *For international class struggle against the attacks of the ruling class in the EU!*

* *In the semi-colonial countries of Europe we raise the slogans: No to EU-colonialism! Out of the EU respectively no accession! Defense of national independence as part of the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe!*

* *In the imperialist countries of Europe we raise the slogans: Neither imperialist nation-state nor imperialist EU – neither is a “lesser evil”! For the Socialist United States of Europe!*

* *For the revolutionary break-up of the EU through the working class! ■*

South African „communists“ continue to support police violence against miners

By Michael Pröbsting, 18.9.2012

The South African Communist Party's leader, General Secretary Blade Nzimande, demonstrated again that his party stands on the side of the bosses and against the workers. In his speech at the trade union federation COSATU's 11th National Congress on 17th September he expressed the SACP complete support for the brutal crackdown by the South African police forces against the thousands miners and their families in Marikana who fight for a living wage.

In his speech, which is published fully on the COSATU website, he also calls again for the arrest of the strike leaders and denounces the strikers as outsiders who supposedly are not even employed by the enterprise concerned, Lonmin:

„The SACP fully supports government's crackdown on the illegal carrying of weapons, on intimidation and on incitement to violence. The ring-leaders must be dealt with and separated from the mass of misled strikers (many of whom are not actually employees of Lonmin or even workers). Those possessed of mysterious wealth, who have never worked a day in their lives, those who were recently anti-unionisation in the army, those who are now happily inciting others to kill and be killed must be dealt with. We also require a thorough investigation into where their funding is coming from, whether locally or internationally. Any formal structures of the ANC that are collaborating with the so-called Friends of the Youth League must themselves face suspension from our movement. We have given opportunism far too much space and tolerance. Together as an Alliance and with our local structures, together with government agencies, we need to help to restore basic norms of safety and security into the lives of our mining communities.“ (1)

The fact however is that the South African miners are already in their sixth week of a heroic strike for a living wage. They continue their strike despite the mass murder on 16th August, when the ANC/SACP/COSATU government sent their police forces who killed at least 34 miners. Many of the miners are living in shanty settlements without electricity and water. They miners have the sympathy of the masses because they are suffering from crisis-ridden capitalism. Unemployment in the country is unofficially at over 40% and youth unemployment is over 60%.

At the same time the bosses live a happy life in country which is governed by the ANC/SACP/COSATU government since 18 years! Take Ian Farmer, the CEO of Lonmin: he gets R20.4 million a year (2011) – 424 times as much as the average wage of a miner in his company! A small elite of black capitalists, amongst them ANC and former COSATU leader, have joined the white ruling class and became millionaires too. For example, the Mandela, Motlanthe, Zuma families have all shares in the mines. The notorious Cyril Ramaphosa, ex-communist, former General Secretary of the National Union of Miners (NUM) and later the ANC, is now the owner of the McDonald's franchise in South African, as well as a Lonmin share owner and board member. Who can be surprised that the miners

are disgusted by the trade union and “communist” leaders, desert the NUM and fight for higher wages?!

However in his completely perverse logic, SACP leader Blade Nzimande puts the heroic miners as the spearhead of a counter-revolutionary conspiracy of imperialism against the trade union movement:

“This Congress meets in the shadow of an intensified offensive against the working class in SA. It is an offensive directed primarily against the best organized detachment of our working class - this federation, this COSATU, especially the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and all these affiliates. (...) Here in SA we are no strangers to this offensive. Here, too, the anti-union offensive has intensified and grown more desperate in recent months. It is an offensive also supported by sections of imperialism.”

SACP as a bourgeois workers party

All this confirms our analysis of Stalinist reformism as a bourgeois agency inside the working class movement. The Stalinist bureaucracy is organically connected with the capitalist state apparatus and the bosses so that they defend them unconditionally against the workers who fight for a living wage. They have since the beginning of the miners' strike repeatedly denounced the strike and called on the capitalist police forces to arrest the strike leaders. As we wrote in an article on miners' strike:

“Of course, at their party congresses, at international meetings etc. the SACP raises the banner of communism. But these are only words for the reassurance of the honest party members and masses. Their practice is anti-communist, anti-working class. The SACP leaders are not workers communists, but police communists!” (2)

It is a shame that such a speech by the SACP General Secretary was allowed at the COSATU congress. It shows that the trade union leadership is itself in bed with the government and the bosses!

This however must not lead revolutionaries to confuse the SACP leadership with the ordinary rank and file members, of whom many are workers who credit the party with their leading role in the liberation struggle against the racist Apartheid regime from the 1950s till 1994. In fact the SACP leadership did everything to contain the radicalization of the workers and the formation of independent mass organs (like soviet-like councils and militias) which could have formed the basis for the working class to take power and open the road to socialism. But many ordinary activists of the SACP gave scarifies during the struggle against the Apartheid regime and this is the basis for a still existing influence of the party amongst sectors of the working class.

It is important for Marxist revolutionaries to develop slogans and tactics to relate to the rank and file members of the SACP and develop a strategy to throw out the reactionary leadership of COSATU in order to reclaim the unions

to the workers. A central slogan is the campaign to break up the reactionary pro-imperialist popular front – the so-called Tripartite Alliance of ANC, SACP and COSATU. COSATU – *Break with the ANC!* Similarly, it is important to call SACP members to demand from the party leadership that it must break with the government so that the Stalinists cannot use this alliance as an excuse for its treacherous politics.

These slogans have to be seen as part of a revolutionary Action programme for the miners' strike in the short term and for working class struggle for power in the longer term. (3)

The Stalinist concept of the "National Democratic Revolution" and the reality of "economic Apartheid" today

Finally let us draw attention to the fact that the SACP leadership justifies its support for South African capitalism by referring to the old Stalinist-reformist "stages" schema. This strategy artificially separates the working class struggle for power into two different stages – the so-called "national democratic revolution" and "the struggle for socialism". So in his speech, the SACP General Secretary calls the trade union members to continue to support the capitalist ANC/SACP/COSATU government by referring to the supposedly realistic "national democratic revolution": "*All the above constitutes the immediate terrain upon which the working class must act as the principal motive force of the national democratic revolution and the struggle for socialism.*" And he finished his speech with the appeal: "*Take Responsibility for the National Democratic Revolution!!*"

This SACP rhetoric is nothing but a charade! We Trotskyists always insisted that this is an impossible utopia which only serves to confuse and subordinate the working class. Even the national and democratic tasks cannot be completely implemented without the working class smashing the capitalist state and taking power.

Just look at the still existing "economic Apartheid", as many people in South Africa call the continuing extreme social and racial inequality! When formal Apartheid was abolished in 1994 and the ANC/SACP/COSATU government took power, black people owned only 13% of the land, while white people owned 87%. Despite big promises to give the land back to the black majority people, in 2011, less than 5% of South Africa's land has been redistributed. (4)

Inequality today is worse than it was in the days of white-racist Apartheid before 1994. According to COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, in 1995, the so-called Gini coefficient – which measures the gap between the rich and the poor – stood at 0.64 but it increased to 0.68 in 2008. (5) According to the United Nations children's agency more than half of South Africa's children live in poverty! (6)

Another example for the gross social inequality which reflects the capitalist system of exploitation combined with the ongoing racial oppression of black people is shown in the results of a South African Institute of Race Relations survey in 2009. According to the study, the life expectancy of a white South African now stands at 71 years but that of a black South African at only 48 years! (7)

Such is the reality of 18 years of "national democratic revolution" under the leadership of the ANC/SACP/COSATU

government! This shows that the national and democratic tasks cannot be solved if capitalism is not overthrown by a socialist working class revolution. It shows once more the validity of Trotsky's strategy of permanent revolution, which means the uninterrupted class struggle for power, i.e. the relentless struggle till the formation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only if the democratic revolution is combined with the socialist revolution, only then can liberation of the workers and the urban and rural poor take place.

The most important pre-condition for this is the creation of a revolutionary workers party as part of a new world party of socialist revolution – the *Fifth International*. The RCIT wants to work together with revolutionaries in South Africa and world-wide to achieve this goal.

Footnotes

(1) Speech delivered by SACP General Secretary, Cde Blade Nzimande, to COSATU's 11th National Congress, 17 September 2012, <http://www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?ID=6525>

(2) Michael Pröbsting: South Africa: The traitors in their own words. On the South African "Communist" Party who call the police to arrest the miners leaders; Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 17.8.2012, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa/sacp-betray-miners/>

(3) See for example Perspectives and some first lessons from the miners' strike and the police massacre in South Africa. Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 20.8.2012, www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa/rcit-statement-south-africa

(4) Julius Malema: It's time to dispossess our oppressors, 16 June 2011, <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=241284&sn=Detail&pid=71616>. See also Tom Goodenough: Jacob Zuma says South Africa is still being controlled by white power-brokers from 'Apartheid-era', 26 June 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2164961/Jacob-Zuma-says-South-Africa-controlled-white-power-brokers-Apartheid-era.html>

(5) Chris Hani Memorial Lecture by Zwelinzima Vavi, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) general secretary, delivered in Queenstown, October 23, 2010, <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/68423>

(6) Aislinn Laing: More than half of South Africa's children live in poverty, 21 May 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/9280481/More-than-half-of-South-Africas-children-live-in-poverty.html>

(7) NGO Pulse: Peoples Budget Coalition Comments on the 2011/12 Budget, 28.2.2011, <http://www.ngopulse.org/print/18051> 2011/02/28 ■

Victory for the South African miners!

A programme to win the struggle against the ANC/SACP/COSATU government

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 18.9.2012

The miners struggle is at a decisive point. The unholy alliance of the ANC/SACP/COSATU government and the big mines corporations like Lonmin and Anglo American bosses are determined to break up the strike with its police forces. They do everything in their power to disarm the miners, to arrest their leaders and to wear them out. Nevertheless, the miners' are heroically continuing their strike since more than six weeks!

We fully support socialist activists in South Africa in their calls to spread the strike to all mines and to the whole country. The RCIT proposes a programme to win the struggle against the ANC/SACP/COSATU government around the following slogans:

- * R12.500 living wage for all miners!
- * No arrests, no charges against any miner! No sacking of strike activists!
- * Build strike committees in all mines! For a nation-wide coordination of these committees! Unity of all miners independent of the union-affiliation!
- * For solidarity committees with the miners' strike everywhere!
- * For committees of the women in the miners communities in order to support the strike and to strengthen the independent role of women in the struggle!
- * For a national strike in all mines! For the occupation of the mines to increase the pressure!

* For the formation of armed self-defense committees to drive out the police forces from the miners' communities!

* Prepare for a nation-wide general strike for a living wage for all workers in South Africa!

* For the nationalization of the mines without compensation and under workers control!

* For an international solidarity campaign with the South African miners' strike!

* Throw out the existing leadership of COSATU! Force COSATU to break with the Tripartite Alliance and the ANC government! SACP members, demand from the party leadership to break with the government!

* Down with the Popular Front ANC government! For a workers government, based on workers councils and militias, with a program to expropriate the capitalist class and to smash the bourgeois state apparatus!

* For a new mass working class party based on militant workers committees, trade unions and socialist activists! Such a worker's party should be based on a revolutionary action program! Forward to a new world party of socialist revolution – the Fifth International!

The RCIT calls on militants in South Africa and worldwide to work join forces in order to achieve this goal!

Workers of world and oppressed, unite! ■



South African miners fought determined for wage increase and succeeded despite the betrayal of the SACP and COSATU leaderships

Action Program for Socialist Revolution in Sri Lanka

United Lanka Workers Party (ULWP), August 2012

Our principles

The **United Lanka Workers Party (ULWP)** is a combat organisation for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. The **ULWP** is the Sri Lankan section of the **Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)**. The following Program of Action is based on our common international program – the RCIT program “*No future without socialism! No socialism without a revolution! No revolution without a revolutionary party!*”

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 **ULWP** stands on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers’ movement associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. It builds on the tradition of the *Samasamajist* movement of the LSSP and the BLPI/BSP till it ceased to exist as a revolutionary force in the early 1950s.

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

The **ULWP** supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of workers, the peasants and the oppressed. But real improvement of our living is possible only in a socialist, classless society without exploitation and oppression. Such a society can only be established internationally.

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

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 socialist revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for she is the only class that has nothing to lose but their chains. Under the leadership of the working class the poor peasants and the urban poor can play an important role in the liberation struggle.

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

The **ULWP** is fighting for the establishment of workers’ and peasants’ 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.

Working class internationalism is the basis of our work. The history of our country was and is determined by in-

ternational development – beginning from the terrible history of British colonialism, the slave-like import of Tamil plantation workers, the dependency of our economy from the world economy, the close links the Tamils have with their brothers and sisters in Tamil Nadu and the worldwide Diaspora, the often over-exploited work 350-400.000 Sri Lankans are forced to do as migrants abroad etc. This is why we are dedicated to building an international trade union movement, women’s movement and above all a world party for socialist revolution.

Our liberation cannot be achieved spontaneously but only if the working class organises itself. This means first and foremost if it can build a revolutionary party in Sri Lanka and internationally as its leadership. We in the **ULWP** fight with our comrades **RCIT** shoulder on shoulder as equals to build the revolutionary party in Sri Lanka and the Fifth Workers International.

If you share our goals – join us!

Exploitation and Oppression in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a divided country. Like in all capitalist countries in the world it is split between the ruling class – the capitalists, the military tops and the foreign imperialists – on one side and the working class, the peasantry and the urban poor on the other side.

Workers and poor peasants are suffering in capitalist Sri Lanka. Prices are rising much faster than wages, unemployment and poverty are increasing. 2/5 of all toilers are working under precarious conditions. Even by official standards 1/3 of the 500.000 plantation workers in the estate sector (tea, rubber and coconut) are living in poverty. 8% of the children are forced to work. At the same time the capitalists are enriching themselves. As long as the small minority control the economy, there can be no improvement of our living conditions.

The regime of President Mahinda Rajapaksa is a semi-dictatorial capitalist regime behind the cover of a parliamentary democracy. Rajapaksa’s government and his ULFP serve the interests of the capitalists and foreign imperialists.

Like most countries in the world Sri Lanka is a semi-colonial country. It is formally independent but in fact exploited and oppressed by imperialist power like the USA, EU or nowadays also the new imperialist power China. The ruling class and capitalist parties like the ULFP sometimes make speeches against imperialism. But in fact they collaborate with the great powers.

Rajapaksa’s government and the preceding governments, the capitalists and foreign imperialist were and are plundering the country’s wealth. The government has indebted the country enormously – at the moment it is equivalent to more 86% of the Gross Domestic Product (the annual output of the economy). An important part of these debts –

more than 17 billion US-Dollars (2010) – are owned by the US-American, European, Chinese and other imperialists. Only by this they could finance a huge oppressor's army. As a result the country pays millions of US-Dollars every year as interest to the domestic and foreign financial capitalists – in 2010 this was 37% of all government payments. The Rajapaksa's government did achieve a huge victory in 2009 when it successfully slaughtered our Tamil brother and sisters in the North. The enormous build-up of the army with all the privileges for the generals and officer caste has been legitimated behind the cover of the so-called threat of the "danger of terrorism". But today – years after the terrible defeat of the Tamil freedom fighters – the government still employs a mega-army of 400.000 soldiers. This is a higher proportion in relation to the country's population than the USA has!

The government needs such a huge army on one hand to occupy the Tamil home land. The Tamil territories in the North are effectively occupied with one soldier per 10 inhabitants! On the other hand it fears unrest from the Sinhala working class and youth. This is hardly surprising since the regime is far from secure given the social misery and the political instability.

However opposition parties like UNP are no alternative – in fact the UNP is just another party of the capitalists. When it was in power it waged a war against the Tamils too and gave the country's wealth to the domestic and foreign super-rich.

The **ULWP** fights for:

** For higher wages! To protect workers' wages against inflation we demand a sliding scale of wages linked to a workers and poor people's cost of living index! For an obligatory minimum wage for all workers set by the trade unions and worker representatives!*

** Jobs for all! For a public employment program financed by higher taxes for the rich!*

** Raise the plantation workers wages to the national average wages! For a public programme to modernise the housing and services on all plantations (electricity, water, sanitation)!*

** Build price control committees to stop the inflation!*

** Full support for Sri Lankan migrant workers abroad! For international trade union solidarity to fight against the discrimination of migrants!*

** Open the books of the enterprises so that people can control the accounts of the capitalists and land owners and see their huge wealth!*

** Stop all privatisation of public enterprises! Re-nationalisation of the enterprises privatised in the past 30 years!*

** Workers control in the enterprises so that workers can veto the management!*

** No payment of any interests to the banks! Cancellation of all debts – both to domestic and foreign financial institutions*

** Nationalisation of all banks and fusion to one central state bank under workers control!*

** Expropriation of the capitalists and plantation big business and nationalisation of their property under control of the producers, i.e. the workers and peasants!*

The working class can only liberate itself if it fights against all forms of oppression and together with all oppressed. Most important among them are the nationally oppressed Tamils and the poor peasants.

Oppression of the Tamils and the perspectives for the National Liberation Struggle

To keep power the ruling class must divide the oppressed masses. One important line where they divide us is between the Sinhala majority and minority of the Tamils. They hope to win the support of sectors of the Sinhala middle class and workers by depriving the Tamils of all rights.

The Tamils constitute – if one adds the Eelam Tamils in the North and East, the up-hill Tamils in Central Sri Lanka and the Moors – at least one quarter of the country's population and thus a high proportion amongst the Sri Lanka working class. And this despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of Tamils have been driven out of the country in the past decades!

The Eelam Tamils are – as the Sinhala people – an old indigenous people living since thousands of years on the island. The Tamils in the North and East have unambiguously declared in the past decades that they want to live in a separate state, an "*independent, socialist Tamil Eelam*" (Vattukottai Resolution, 1976)

The up-hills Tamils have been brought – like slaves – by the British colonial rulers from India to Sri Lanka to work there on the big plantations. Many of them have been long denied the most basic citizenship rights. Given their central role in the agricultural production for export the Tamil plantation workers play a particular important role.

From the beginning of independence the Tamils have been oppressed by the Sinhala state. From the early 1980s to 2009 they fought for their liberation with arms. Albeit the Tamil people unfortunately suffered a historic defeat in 2009, their struggle for national liberation continues and must be supported now more than ever.

** Release all political prisoners!*

** No to population transfers! Dissolution of all refugee camps! For the Tamil refugees' – from wherever they are today in- or outside of Sri Lanka – right to immediately return to their land and villages! No to the "re-registration" of land in the Tamil areas!*

** For the complete withdrawal of the army from all Tamil territories! For full compensation of the Tamils for the war-related destructions of their homes and lands by the Sri Lankan state – financed by tax rises of the rich!*

** For tribunals against the war-crimes committed by the Sri Lanka army against the Tamil people! The jury must be elected by the Tamils and progressive Sinhals!*

** For a registration process of the missed people organised by the Tamils and progressive Sinhals!*

The **ULWP** fights for the national liberation of the Tamils. This includes the struggle for full equality.

** Abolish state languages! For the equal status and free and unlimited access of Tamil language in whole Sri Lanka – in education, media and at all administrative institutions! For massive recruitment of Tamils into the public administration and as teachers at schools and universities! For common, bi-national schools of Tamils and Sinhalese where both languages are taught!*

** Full citizenship and employment rights for Tamils in the whole country!*

The Tamils have fought in their history against their oppression. It is a shame of the Sri Lanka left and workers

movement – including so-called Trotskyism – that it never fully supported the Tamils struggle for equality and later for an independent state. The **ULWP** says: a party can only be a revolutionary, workers party serving the cause of liberation if it supports consistently the struggle of all oppressed. In Sri Lanka a party can only be a revolutionary, workers party if it unconditionally supports the struggle of the Tamil for full equality and for an independent state.

We fully support the national liberation struggle of the Tamil people. The petty-bourgeois strategy which focuses on the guerrilla war as the main form of struggle has failed as a road to liberation. We reject the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the Tamil Tigers. It led them to reactionary acts like expelling the Muslims from their homes in the North or bomb attacks against Sinhala civilians. The truth is that the closest ally of the Tamil workers and poor peasants is not the Tamil capitalists and middle class but the Sinhala workers and poor peasants.

However while Tamil nationalism is an obstacle in the liberation struggle Sinhala chauvinism is thoroughly reactionary. It binds the Sinhala workers to their bosses. They must free themselves from these ideological chains to successfully win their liberation.

What is necessary is a strategy of mass struggle of Tamils and Sinhala workers and peasants which included all forms of resistance. The goal must be the socialist revolution and the formation of working class and peasant republics!

Our goal is revolutionary integration through struggle: this means to build the unity of the workers and peasants from all different nations to fight together against the ruling class and for the socialist liberation.

** For an independent, socialist Tamil Eelam in the North and East! For local self-government and autonomy for all areas where Tamils and other discriminated national and ethnic groups live. For the right of self-determination of the Tamils in Central Sri Lanka including the right to separation!*

A long-term solution can only be achieved if the people collaborate as closely as possible. The **ULWP** therefore fights with its comrades in the **RWO** (Pakistan) for a socialist federation of the people of South Asia and beyond!

The Sri Lankan working class is multinational and only as a united multinational class it can win!

Liberate the poor peasants!

In a country where more than 4/5 of the people live in rural areas and 1/3 of the labour force works in the agriculture, the poor peasants constitute an important ally of the working class. Most peasants can't make a living from their agrarian production. It is not surprisingly that the rural poor account for 95 percent of the country's poor. So many of them are semi-proletarians where the family or part of it earns money from outside the agriculture. Usually they are highly indebted.

In the coming period they will be particularly under attack given the government determination and the World Banks/IMF's pressure "to create a free land market", i.e. the complete commodification of the land. Behind the so-called "re-registration system" the state bureaucrats are trying to expropriate many peasants or at least reduce their land. Under the slogan of "full private property rights" the

imperialists and the government hide their secret agenda to transform the land into a full commodity to buy and sell at the land market. This will force peasants to sell their small piece of land to land owners and multinational agrarian corporations.

The government has a cynical plan: It wants to drive the Sinhala poor peasants from their land to give it to the agro-corporations. To limit the protest, the government wants to bring some of these poor peasants as colonial settlers to the North where the army is driving out the Tamils from their land. This shows that the Sinhala poor must support and ally with the Tamils because they have a common enemy: the foreign corporations, the Sinhala capitalists and their government in Colombo.

The **ULWP** fights for the liberation of the peasants from being hostages of the banks, state bureaucrats and agrarian big business. The closest ally of the poor peasants is the working class and the rural workers – constituting 1/3 of agricultural labour force – in particular.

The peasants must be supported by cheap credits. At the same we advocate that only a voluntary close cooperation in agrarian cooperatives is a way out of the trap of small, unproductive agrarian units.

** No to the creation of a "free land market" which means expropriation of the small peasants by the agro-business and land owners! No to "re-registration system"! No to any reduction of subsidies for the peasants!*

** Cancel all debts of the peasants! Nationalization of the banks under workers control! For interest-free loans for small peasants!*

** The land must be in the hands of the state under the control of workers and poor peasants! The land to those who cultivate it! The local democratic actions council representatives of the poor and landless peasants have to decide the question of the allocation and use of the land! Promotion of voluntary agricultural cooperatives and the formation of larger state production units!*

** For a program of agricultural development elaborated under the control of the workers and the poor peasants! For a radical change of direction in the agricultural economy! Away from the monoculture! For sustainable cultivation methods in agriculture! As much international transport of agricultural product as necessary to supply the world's population as necessary and as much supplies of locally produced agricultural goods as possible!*

** Stop the destruction of the environment! No to the reckless deforestation – for a public program of re-forestation as part of a national plan for a sustainable agricultural policy!*

Fight oppression of women and youth!

Another line to divide the toilers is the systematic oppression of the women and the youth. The oppression of the women serves primarily the capitalists since they are the main profiteer of the women's lower wages and child labour. While full liberation of women and youth is only possible under socialism we start the fight for equal rights now!

** Equal pay for equal work!*

** For the massive construction of free, well-equipped 24-hour child-care facilities! For a wide range supply of affordable and high-quality public restaurants and laundry facilities! Our goal is the socialization of housework!*

** For a public employment program to create the conditions for*

the socialization of housework and simultaneously eliminate unemployment among women!

- * Free access to free contraception and for the right of abortion!
- * Fight against violence against women! For the expansion of public women safe houses, controlled by women's organizations! For the formation of self-defence units by the workers' and women's movement against sexist violence!
- * Abolish child labour!
- * Public education for all youth financed by taxes on the rich! For a massive public investment program to build schools close to the villages and plantation where the people live! For massive recruitment of more teachers to reduce the number of school students in each class!
- * Those who can work must have the right to vote too – for the

right to vote at the age of 15.

- * For self governed youth centres free of charge where young people can spend their time beside the patriarchal family control.
- * For the building of a revolutionary women's movement! For the right to caucus for women in the mass organizations of workers and oppressed!
- * For a revolutionary youth movement!

**Separation of religion and state!
No privileges for religious institutions!**

While the hard working people are poor, the Buddhist clergy has become rich by exploiting peoples religious beliefs. Sectors of the Buddhist clergy play an openly po-



litical role (see e.g. the JHU) and support the reactionary Rajapaksa government!

** For the separation of state and religion! No privileges for religious institutions (taxes, religious education at schools etc.)! For the transfer of the property of the clergy into the public hands to serve the needs of the people!*

**For full democratic rights!
Down with the all-powerful military!**

To secure its rule, the capitalist class has at its hands a powerful state apparatus: a strong presidency, a state apparatus with the power to violate the rights of the people, a bloated army and a manipulated media apparatus. To finance its huge oppressor army the government spends \$1.28 billion (2010) or 3.5% of its budget a year. Imagine how much we could improve housing, the food situation, the public infrastructure if we would take this money away from the military brass and spend it for the well-being of the people! We say: this enormous state apparatus doesn't serve our interests but only those of the rich. It cannot be controlled by the working people and it costs a lot of our money!

** Abolish the presidency!*

** Repeal all "Anti-Terror" Acts and all emergency laws introduced in the past 30 years during the Eelam Wars!*

** Stop the harassment against critical journalists! Nationalise the media under workers control with access to all sectors of the society!*

** For full democratic rights for soldiers, for rank and file committees, for soldiers right to elect their officers! For agitation against Sinhala chauvinism amongst the soldiers!*

**For a workers' government,
based on the poor peasants and the urban poor**

The working class and the oppressed will never get anything if they are not fighting for it themselves. This is why they must resort to mass actions like strikes, demonstrations, occupations, general strikes and armed insurrection. For this they must organise themselves in action councils and workers and peoples militias.

The goal of the struggle is the creation of a workers' government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor. Such a government must make a decisive break with the capitalist class.

** Nationalization of banks and fusion into a single central bank, nationalization of large companies, large wholesale trade and transport, social, health, education and communication sector without compensation and under workers' control! Introduction of a foreign trade monopoly!*

** Expropriation of the capitalist class and especially the banks, corporations and speculators!*

** For a workers' government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor, on the basis of councils in the enterprises and neighbourhoods as well as armed militias; Their representatives are under the direct election and recall ability by the workers and receive not more than an average skilled workers salary!*

Crisis of leadership

The working class lacks a leadership which is willing and capable to successfully fight for the liberation. We fight for

a strong, united trade union movement. We fight against the divisions of the union movement in many small unions. In workplaces where unions don't exist we are for building new ones. We fight against the numerous bureaucratic restrictions by the state which hinders the legalisation of trade unions. For broad, mass unions which organise the workers in the whole industrial branch. Unfortunately the trade unions like the *Ceylon Workers Congress* are controlled by a bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is a layer which is connected with the state and capital via jobs and privileges. In their living conditions and mindset it is far from the interests and living circumstances of the members. The struggle for the liberation of the working class must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their upper strata. We work inside the trade unions and advocate class struggle, socialism and workers' democracy.

The trade union struggle is very important. But the central issues of the working class life are not decided on the enterprise level but on the political level. Most importantly, our liberation – the socialist revolution against capitalism – is a thoroughly political question. This is why the formation of a mass worker's party in Sri Lanka and of the Fifth Workers' International with a revolutionary programme is the most important task. Unfortunately such a party and International does not exist anymore since the *Samasamajist* movement of the LSSP and the BLPI/BSP along with the Fourth International ceased to exist as a revolutionary force in the early 1950s.

The *ULWP* strives for unity in action with other organizations. However, we are aware that the policy of progressive liberals, nationalists, populists, reformists and the pseudo-revolutionary groups is dangerous and they ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class.

The JVP praises Socialism and even Marxism. But in reality it is a petty-bourgeois force which – despite having many honest workers and youth in its ranks – supported the Rajapaksa's regime for a long time and acted as the most fanatical supporter of the chauvinist war of oppression and slaughter against the Tamils.

The LSSP and the CPSL are also not parties in the interest of the working class but rather reformist parties, i.e. parties based on workers support but which are in the service of the capitalists.

Only with a revolutionary party and International 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 a new, revolutionary workers' party! For a 5th Workers International on a revolutionary basis!

This is what we in the *ULWP* are fighting for together with our comrades in the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*. If you agree with us – join us!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without a revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party! ■

Chinese and Japanese workers: Your main enemy is at home!

Stop the conflict on the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands in the East China Sea!

No to chauvinist war-mongering by Japanese and Chinese imperialism!

By Michael Pröbsting, 23.9.2012

1. War threat is looming in East Asia. A group of five islands in the *East China Sea* – which are called *Senkaku* islands in Japan and *Diaoyu* islands in China – are at the centre of the most recent outburst of Japan's and China's drive for hegemony. Behind the dispute over the claims on the islands lurks the drive of the imperialist ruling classes of the second and third biggest world economic powers – China and Japan – to control the rich resources in the region. The present chauvinist war-mongering also serves to divert the working class from the sharpening social problems at home and to rally them behind their rulers.

2. The RCIT calls socialists and class conscious workers to oppose the chauvinistic warmongering and turn the workers and popular hatred against their imperialist rulers. There must be neither support for Japan nor for China in a possible conflict in the East China Sea. Both are imperialist powers. Both pursue imperialist hegemonic interests in the region. Both are deadly enemies of the working class. The RCIT says that in any military conflict between the two powers socialists must strive to convince soldiers to direct the guns not against their brothers in uniforms of the enemy country but against their real enemies – the reactionary governments in their own country. The goal is to transform the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war. The same position applies to US imperialism in case it should intervene in the conflict.

3. It is uncertain if the present conflict will transform into an economic or even military war in the short term. However it is clear that even if the two Great Powers reach a compromise for the moment this means nothing more than a postponement of future clashes including wars. We say clearly that in the coming 10 years or so war between the imperialist powers China and Japan is inevitable. It is equally inevitable that US imperialism will intervene sooner or later since it considers the region as an area which it must dominate to keep its position as the world's strongest power.

4. The correct position in the conflict between Japan and China cannot be derived from the question, who formally possess a given territory first or who fires the first shots. The decisive point is which kind of class rules the given country and what are the consequences of such a conflict for the working class and the oppressed. While for Marxists Japan's class character as an imperialist country is a longstanding and undisputed insight, China's character is often misunderstood. This is not surprisingly given the profound transformation which China underwent in the past two decades. Therefore the war danger in East Asia shows once more that a correct and scientific position of China as an imperialist power is of utmost importance for any socialist organization. Without a clear understanding of the class character of China, it is impossible to take a correct position in any economic or military conflict

involving China and hence it is impossible to show the working class a revolutionary way forward.

Historical background

5. The Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands are located about 370km to the East of China's coast and about 410km to the South-West of Japan's most southern island Okinawa. While Japanese nationalist historians claim that the islands were *terra nullis* (no man's land) until 1895, Chinese nationalist historians claim that they were incorporated much earlier in the empire's map. It is however an established fact that neither Japan nor China effectively controlled and possessed the islands before 1895. When emerging Japanese imperialism started its first war against China in 1894 it occupied the islands (along with Korea and Formosa). Several of these islands were sold in 1932 to private Japanese citizens. However Japan lost control of it with its defeat in the World War II in 1945. Thereafter the USA took the islands over. It returned them to Japan in 1972 as part of its withdrawal from Okinawa. Since then the islands are in formal possession of Japan. In September 2012 the Japanese government bought several of these islands from private Japanese citizens.

Imperialist interest behind both Japan's and China's claims on the islands

6. The real reasons of Japan's and China's claims on the islands are of course not related to any historic claims but rather the economic and geo-strategic importance of the islands. While the rocky islets are not inhabited and very small (the biggest one is only 4.3km²), control over the islands allows the occupying power a number of economic advantages:

a. The East China Sea – as well as the *South China Sea* (or *East Sea* as Vietnam calls it) – is a key international shipping route for world trade. About 60.000 ships deliver – via the Straits of Malacca and the East China Sea – 80% of the oil to Northeast Asia. In 2009, the top five world trade routes originated in East Asia. In 2010, seven of the world's top ten container ports were in East Asia, with the port of Shanghai in the East China Sea holding a firm first place. (1)

b. Huge natural energy resources are estimated under the seabed in the East China Sea. China estimates oil reserves of about 160 billion barrels. It expects also quite high natural gas reserves of about 175 to 210 trillion cubic feet. The *Chunxiao/Shirakaba field* is the most promising field with gas reserves of 168 billion cubic feet. (2) The China National Offshore Oil Corp.'s 2011 annual report said the firm had 384.6 million barrels of proven crude oil reserves in the whole of the East China Sea and natural gas

reserves of 303.7 billion cubic feet. (3)

c. The Sea also contains important fishery resources. The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries reported that the total fishery catch in the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea was about 9.2 million tons in 2004. It is most particularly important for China which got 8 million tons, with 1 million tons for South Korea and 0.2 million tons for Japan. (4)

Increasing economic and political contradictions in China and Japan

7. Control over the East China Sea is important and indeed necessary for the world's second (China) and third (Japan) biggest economic powers. In a period of world capitalism's decline the rivalry between these two powers is increasing substantially. When the total cake gets smaller, Great Powers who have the means available, will do whatever they can keep their share as big as possible and at the cost of their rivals if necessary. This is particularly true in a situation where the world economy is close to another recession after hardly any substantial upswing after the 2008/09 recession. This is a very serious danger for Japanese capitalism which already saw in the decade 2001-2010 a decline of its industrial production of annually -0.4% in average and similarly a negative "growth" of its Gross Fixed Capital Formation of annually -1.9%. (5) While China is still in a period of rapid capital accumulation and economic growth, even here a slowdown seems to be ahead. Premier Wen Jiabao recently announced a 7.5% growth target for this year, which would represent the slowest growth for China in 22 years. (6)

8. This economic crisis can easily translate into a sharp political crisis given the increasing political and social contradictions inside these two imperialist powers. China's growth is built on the super-exploitation of its numerically growing working class and the brutal dictatorship over its people. As a result inequality and poverty is rising dramatically. While China has the fastest growing millionaires' club, nearly 30% of its population lives on less than \$2 a day. The country's top 10% earners get 23 times more income than the lowest 10%. (7)

9. While the Stalinist-capitalist ruling class strengthens its repressive state apparatus, the class struggle of the workers and the rural poor is massively rising. Popular protests, officially called "mass incidents", rose from 60.000 (2006), 80.000 (2007), 90.000 (2009) to 180.000 (2010). (8) The Commune in Wukan, created as a result of a popular insurrection at the end of 2011, is only the most outstanding example. Wu Zhong, the China Editor of the Journal Asia Times correctly observed: *"To a certain extent, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) may not be unhappy to see the rise of patriotic sentiments. In past decades, the Party has devoted great efforts to introduce patriotism to Chinese youths in the hope of filling the 'ideological vacuum' orthodox Marxist believe was abandoned to pave the way for economic reform and opening up advocated three decades ago by Deng Xiaoping. In practice, anti-Japanese protests could help divert the attention of Chinese people from worrying about the slowdown of economic development and other domestic problems."* (9)

10. Against this background, a power struggle has erupted inside the Stalinist-capitalist ruling class for the

first time since two decades. This is reflected in one of the biggest corruption scandals and the spectacular downfall of powerful former Chongqing party boss Bo Xilai. Bo, who had hoped to get a seat on the all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee at the upcoming party congress, was removed from his Chongqing post and, soon thereafter, suspended from the Politburo. His wife, Gu Kailai, received a suspended death sentence after she was convicted of murdering British businessman Neil Heywood in November 2011. Bo's right-hand man in Chongqing - former police chief Wang Lijun - was also tried for his alleged part in a failed plot to cover up of Heywood's murder and for his later attempt to defect at the US consulate in Chengdu. This power struggle seem to have reflected the conflict with a more state-capitalist faction - for whom Bo was a leading figure - and a faction closer related to private capitalists which seem to have won for now. Current Premier Minister Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao as well as their likely successors, Li Keqiang and Xi Jinping, must take care of not being accused by the more state-capitalist faction as being "unpatriotic" and "weak" towards arch-enemy Japan. So against this background, China's rulers are eagerly looking for a foreign adventure to raise their profile as "strong defenders of the nation".

11. To summarize, China's Stalinist-capitalist ruling class faces growing social and political domestic problems in an environment of a global capitalist crisis. At the same time, as the world's second biggest power, it possesses the means to push its imperialist hegemonic interests abroad to counteract these growing domestic difficulties.

12. Japanese imperialism is - in relation to the size of its population - much wealthier than China and hence has more resources to retain political stability. Nevertheless the country has seen in the past two decades a massive increase of unemployment and poverty. The horrible Tsunami and the nuclear catastrophe of Fukushima in 2011 and the reckless management of the consequences by the government have shattered the society.

13. Against this background Japan see now its biggest mass mobilizations since decades. In a summer of discontent tens of thousands of protesters march every Friday evening in Tokyo against the nuclear policy of the government. According to the organizers sometimes up to 100.000 or 200.000 people joined the demonstrations in the past months. While the workers movement remains still relatively weak - with some exceptions like the rail way workers - these recent mass mobilizations represent an important turn in Japan's politics.

14. In this situation right-wing chauvinist forces - like the Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara - try to utilize this situation to initiate a turn of the country's foreign policy. While Japanese imperialism - after its defeat in WWII - developed already in the 1960s and 1970s into one of the worlds biggest economic powers, it could not gain a similar status as a political or even military power. In this sphere it remained under the hegemony of US imperialism which came out as the main victorious power of WWII. Even now the USA has a major military basis in Okinawa. Japan has the worlds 7th biggest military budget which however is less than 1% of its annual GDP. The right-wing chauvinist forces represent a growing sector in Japans ruling class who wants to overcome it's supposedly "pacifist" foreign policy in subordination to the USA and instigate a more

aggressive, militarist policy which would make Japan more independent of the USA.

15. To summarize, Japanese capitalist ruling class is faced with economic stagnation and a looming recession and a growing political polarization. While on one hand sectors of the working class and the lower middle class enter the streets en masse for the first time since decades, the right-wing chauvinist forces push for a turn to a more aggressive foreign policy to divert the attention from domestic problems. While Japan's development of its military has to overcome certain historic limitations as a result of its defeat in WWII, it certainly possess the economic means to build a very powerful military in a few years so that it can pursue its imperialist hegemonic interests abroad independently without the USA.

Japan as an old imperialist Great Power

16. To develop a correct position in the conflict between Japan and China socialists and class conscious workers need to have a clear analyzes of the class character of these two countries. Why? For Marxists the decisive criterion in a looming war is not, who formally possess a given territory first, nor who fires the first shots. What is decisive is which kind of class rules the given country and what are the consequences of such a conflict for the working class and the oppressed.

17. Japan clearly has an imperialist class character. Since the late 19th century the ruling class waged a series of colonial wars in Asia and battled with US imperialism for hegemony in the Pacific region during WWII. While it

suffered a setback after 1945 Japanese monopoly capital gained in strength relatively quickly and became one of the worlds' major economic powers. Hence Japan is an imperialist country ruled by a monopoly bourgeoisie. It pursues imperialist interests towards China and all other Asian neighbors.

China as a new, emerging imperialist Great Power

18. The class character of China is more complicated to determine because it underwent important changes in the past decades as the RCIT showed in a major study on China's emerging imperialism. (10) China transformed in the early 1950s from a semi-colonial capitalist country into a Degenerated Workers State. This means it became a country where the bourgeoisie was expropriated and where the economy was (bureaucratically) planned on the basis of post-capitalist, proletarian property relations. At the same time however the working class was politically expropriated and oppressed by a Stalinist bureaucracy. The heroic uprising of the workers and students in 1989 ended in a historic defeat on 4th June with the Tienanmen Square massacre. This opened the road for the Stalinist bureaucracy to restore capitalism in the early 1990s under its continuing political regime.

19. Since then the transformed Stalinist-capitalist ruling class successfully initiated a rapidly progressing accumulation of capital based on major super-exploitation of huge sectors of the numerically growing Chinese proletariat. Utilizing its old household registration system (the so-called *hukou* system) most workers moving from



The Senkaku/Diaoyu-Islands between Japan, China and Taiwan in the East China Sea

the countryside into the cities lack any social or political rights – which is why they are called “migrants” despite the fact that they are often of the same nationality like the urban citizens. On this basis China’s new bourgeoisie could abolish most social achievements of the past, push down the wages and raise their profit rates enormously.

20. Given this super-exploitation, the rapid capital accumulation and the continuing dictatorship, as well as the US decline (and Japans and EU’s stagnation), China’s ruling class could increasingly strengthen its position. This was clearly visible when China proved a strong economic power during the Great Crisis in 2008/09. By the end of the 2000s it became an emerging imperialist power. Today China produces 14.3% of the world’s global output; it is the globally biggest exporter as well as manufacturing producer. Amongst the top 500 global corporations, China is home of 73, only to be superseded by the USA. China has developed a huge financial capital which plays an important role on the world’s bond market as well as at the loan market. It is also increasingly exporting capital to other countries to exploit the working class there. China became the world’s fourth-largest outward investor in 2010.

21. This of course cannot hide the fact that China is an *emerging* imperialist power which in terms of labor productivity and spread of modern technology is still much behind the old imperialist power. As we have already pointed out in our study, it is exactly because of its “historic deficit” as a late-coming imperialist power that China is forced to act as an aggressive and rapidly arming Great Power. It is surrounded by areas which are already in the sphere of influence of other hegemonial powers. To its North and West the rival is mainly Russian imperialism, while to its South and East it is the USA and Japan. This means China can only create its (semi-)colonial sphere of influence by openly confronting other Great Powers. In this respect its fate is not dissimilar to the historic situation of Germany in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century which could only create its empire by challenging the existing Great Powers like France, Britain and Russia.

22. Nevertheless the economic relations between Japan and China demonstrate the strong position of the later. China is a major trade partner for Japan, accounting for 20.5% of its imports and 18% of its exports. While Japan has huge investments in China of about \$83.97 billion, China on the other hand is a major lender of loan capital to Japan. China holds short-term and long-term Japanese government bonds worth \$230 billion (end of 2011) and became the largest creditor of Japan in 2010. This is of major importance given the fact that Japan is highly indebted – in relative proportions more than the USA or the EU countries (\$12.81 trillion or 2.2 times the value of Japan’s national economy!). (11)

23. Chinas imperialist character is demonstrated by the fact that today it has the second-biggest military expenditures, only to be superseded by the USA. It needs such a huge military since imperialist China has ambitious hegemonic plans for the East Sea and South China Sea. China’s military strategist developed the concept of the *two Island Chains* – an area which they desire to dominate and control. The first line – also called “nine-dashed line” – claims complete control of the South China and the East China Sea, leaving only the coast area for all other

neighboring countries like Vietnam, Malaysia or the Philippines. The second line goes further till the Guam Island (including most of Japan) and therefore obviously clashes with the interests of imperialist Japan. So to summarize, China is in no way a socialist country, nor is it still a Degenerated Workers State or a semi-colonial capitalist country. It is an emerging imperialist power. The RCIT therefore totally rejects open or semi-open support for China by (petty-) bourgeois forces around the world which describe themselves as socialist (like various Stalinist parties, Chavez, Castro and the Bolivarian movement).

24. Socialists and class conscious workers therefore must neither support Japan nor China in a possible conflict in the East China Sea. Both are imperialist powers. Both pursue imperialist hegemonic interests in the region. Both are deadly enemies of the working class.

On the mass protest in China and Chinese chauvinism

25. While in Japan the chauvinist mood has not found articulation on the streets in form of militant mass demonstrations, this is different in China. Here, a sector of the masses – many of them young – is fully sized by rabid anti-Japanese, Chinese chauvinist sentiments. According to reports, protests had spread to at least 108 cities across China. These demonstrations turned in many cities into anti-Japanese riots – like Shenzhen, Guangzhou (former known as Canton) and Dongguan (in Guangdong province); in Changsha, Hunan’s provincial capital; Xi’an, capital of Shaanxi province; and Qingdao, in Shandong province. According to many reports, demonstrators often shouted chauvinist slogans like “*Down with Japanese devils!*” “*Boycott Japanese products!*” “*Diaoyu Islands belong to China!*” “*Declare war on Japan!*” or “*For the respect of the motherland, we must go to war with Japan!*” Numerous Japanese cars and shops were attacked and set on fire and also the Japanese embassy was the target of massive protests. As a result Japanese corporations like Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Mazda, Canon, Panasonic or Uniqlo temporarily halted their operations in China. There are even reports of notices posted on street lampposts in Beijing to recruit a “dare-to-rape” team of men to rape Japanese women, according to a Hong Kong paper. (12)

26. While these protests initially certainly had the support by the regime they possessed a certain spontaneous dynamic and went in a number of occasions out of control. This was particularly the case in Shenzhen. There protesters besieged a Shenzhen government building demanding the immediate release of arrested demonstrators and throwing objects into the building. They confronted the police and turned a police vehicle upside down. At one time, some protesters even shouted: “*Down with the People’s Liberation Army!*”, for not taking any action in the face of Japan’s provocation.

27. This shows several things. First it demonstrates the effects of the strong nationalism which was preached by the Stalinist bureaucracy for more than nine decades. This chauvinism was intensified in the past two decades when the ruling Chinese Communist Party put “Marxism” and “Communism” even rhetorically in the background and filled the “ideological vacuum” with patriotism, i.e. chauvinism.

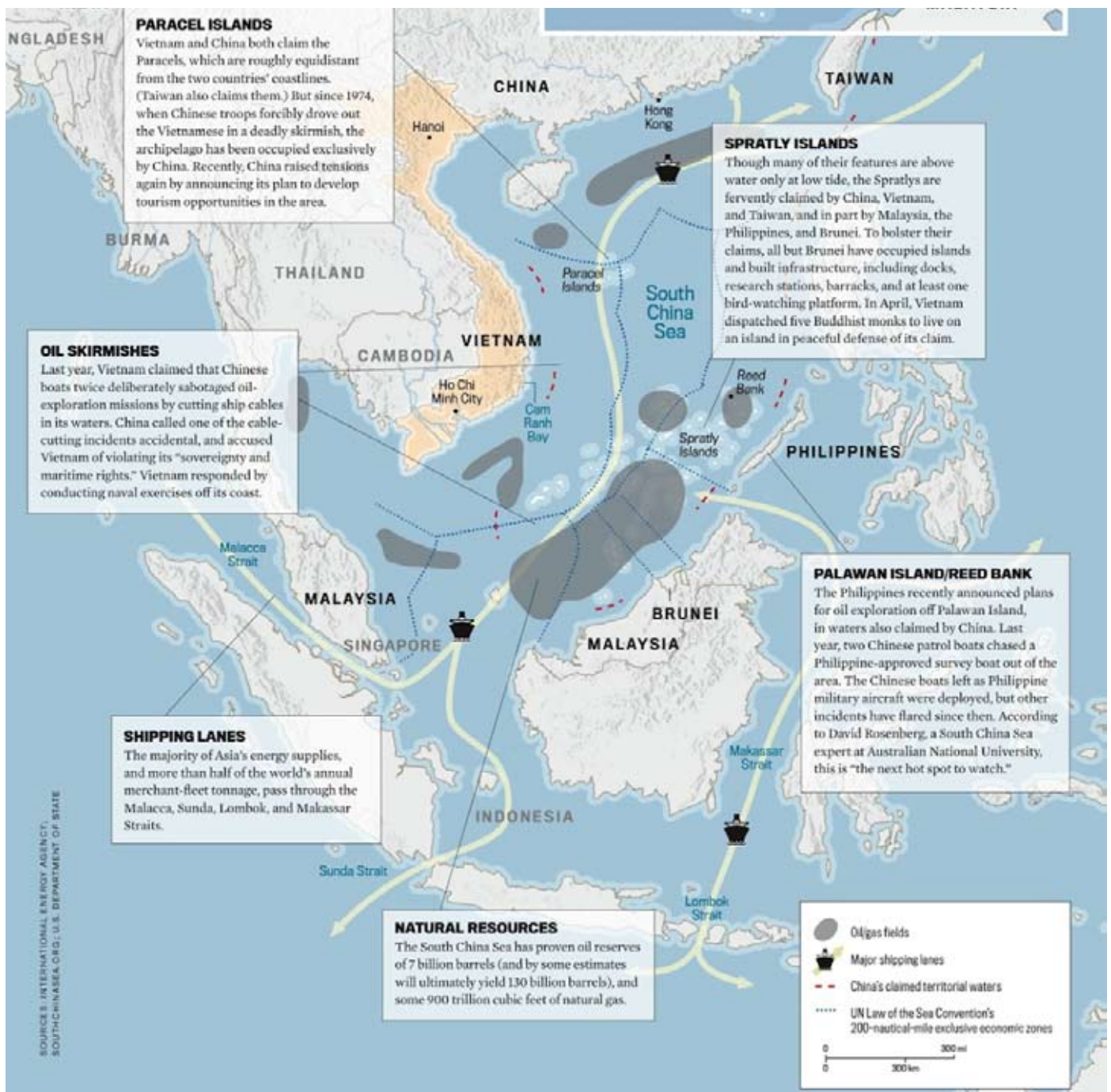
28. On the other hand one also has to recognize that

given China's history of aggression and occupation by Japanese imperialism, a material basis for nationalist rage in the society exists. Since 1894 Japan waged repeatedly attacks against China and committed a number of horrible massacres. The Communist International in Lenin's time and later Trotsky's Fourth International unconditionally defended China as a semi-colonial country against Japanese imperialism.

29. Finally these protests show that China's Communist Party at the moment seems to successfully divert the mass unrest fueled by increasing social inequality into a chauvinist movement. However, this is a risky game for the Stalinist imperialist rulers. They are now under pressure to transform words into deeds, i.e. to challenge Japan's control over the islands. The sending of first a number of Chinese navy patrol ships and in mid-

September of nearly 2,000 Chinese fishing boats towards the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands – accompanied by Chinese navy patrol ships – is a reflection of this.

30. Naturally Chinese chauvinism is fuelled by the memory of the repeated imperialist attacks and the justified national liberation struggle. The Yihetuan (called by the West "Boxer") Rebellion in the turn of the 20th century and the civil war against the Japanese occupiers are the most prominent example of this. However, as many things in politics, relations between classes and people change and with it the character of a given ideological current. With the constitution of the Stalinist state under Mao's CP, Chinese nationalism became an instrument of the new ruling caste. Since then it served to justify the oppression of national minorities in China – first and foremost the Uyghurs in East Turkestan (called Xinjiang by China's rulers) and the



The South China Sea (or East Sea) - an area with many conflicts

Tibetans. It was also used to legitimate the reactionary foreign policy of China's Stalinist bureaucracy when it collaborated with US imperialism against the Soviet Union or when its army attacked Vietnam in February 1979.

31. So while Chinese nationalism had a certain progressive element in the time of the national liberation struggles against Western and Japanese imperialism until 1945, this has fundamentally changed since then. Today Chinese chauvinism is nothing but an ideological instrument of the Stalinist-capitalist ruling class of emerging imperialist China. While it was the ideology of the country's oppressed petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie (with strong support in the working class) before, it became the ideology first of the ruling Stalinist caste and later of the Stalinist-imperialist ruling class. So while many ordinary Chinese people might associate the present conflict with the past national liberation struggle against Japan, Marxists must warn against such an ideological trap and point out the change in class relations. Such a change of the class content of nationalist ideology is nothing new or exceptional. To name a few examples, we refer to German nationalism which had a progressive element in the 1850s and 60s till the national unification in 1870 but later became deeply reactionary. Or one can point to Algeria where nationalism against the French colonial power had a progressive element, but after the country gained independence in 1962, it was increasingly used to justify the oppression of the Berber minority.

32. While China's Stalinist-imperialist ruling class utilizes anti-Japanese chauvinism for its purpose, this is a risky game. As it happened to the Qing Dynasty in the 19th century, popular sentiments against Japan could turn into anti-government anger when the regime is seen as too weak or incompetent to drive Japan from the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands or on the numerous other issues of conflict with its neighboring states. In such a case the regime could easily face a domestic revolutionary crisis.

Sooner or later war between the imperialist powers China and Japan is inevitable

33. Naturally it is difficult to speculate about the possible course of the conflict. The Chinese government openly threatens that it will not shy away from a "little war": Yu Zhirong, a senior official of the State Oceanic Administration who was formerly with the People's Liberation Army Navy, is quoted by *The Asahi Shimbun*: "We will have to chase off Japan Coast Guard vessels from Chinese territorial waters. We are not fearful of risking a minor conflict." (13)

34. While a war in the short term is in no way unavoidable, it can also not be excluded. James Holmes, an associate professor at the US Naval War College, characterized the situation accurately when he said: "The situation reminds me a bit of the (1962) Cuban missile crisis." (14) However it is clear that even if the two Great Powers reach a compromise for the moment this means nothing more than a postponement of future clashes including wars. *We say clearly that in the coming 10 years or so war between the imperialist powers China and Japan is inevitable.* This is in fact what the ruling class in both countries expects too which is why both sides have started major modernization programs of its military. China recently put in summer

2011 its first aircraft carrier into operation (the "Liaoning") and plans to build several more. However exactly because both sides are just at the beginning of major armaments programs they do not intend to go to a full war now.

35. However as it is known history develops primarily along class contradictions and not according to plans of rulers. Given the global economic crisis and the domestic political and social contradictions, an "accidental" skirmish could get its own dynamic and provoke a war between the two powers before they have finished their armament programs. *China Daily*, the English language state-controlled daily newspaper which serves as a semi-official mouthpiece of the Stalinist-imperialist ruling class, threatened openly with military measures against Japan in an editorial:

"China's maritime enforcement will then serve as a strong deterrent against Japanese right-wing activists who seek to land on the islands. The situation would further change if China seized Japanese nationals who illegally enter China's sovereign waters. China should seek to gather momentum toward such a direction and achieve these objectives. The consequences of China strengthening its law enforcement within 12 nautical miles of the islands include possible confrontation with the Japanese Coast Guard. As China firmly stands determined to safeguard its own sovereignty, Japan is more than likely to change its mind. (...) Intense friction entails high geopolitical risks and the possibility of negative impacts to both economies. But with a high level of support from the public, China is gaining the upper hand psychologically in such a contest. (...) It is clear that Japan touched probably the thorniest issue in bilateral ties, which in turn serves as an opportunity for China. We should seize the chance and make historic advancements in safeguarding our sovereignty by breaking Japan's "administration" of the islands. China should be confident about strategically overwhelming Japan. The People's Liberation Army's Navy and Air Force, as well as its Second Artillery Corps, are advised to increase their preparation and intensify their deterrence against Japan's Self-Defense Forces. China will not shy away if Japan chooses to resort to its military. As friction escalates, it is more likely for Japan to retreat in the face of unreliable US security assurances and China's strengthened strategic combat capabilities. (...) For China, triumphing will cement cohesion and public confidence in the country. We cannot back off and we must win." (15)

36. However even if there will be no war in the immediate future, there are a number of forms of conflict below an open warfare which could take place soon. In particular it is possible that an economic war between China and Japan could start very soon. In fact this is already openly discussed and advocated by circles in the Chinese regime. *China Daily* published on 17th September an article by Jin Baisong, deputy director of the Department of Chinese Trade Studies at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation affiliated to the Ministry of Commerce. In this article the author suggested a number of sanctions against Japan. (16) He argues that Japan is in its trade much more dependent on China than the other way round. And while Japan has much more foreign investment in China than vice-versa, Japan is increasingly dependent on Chinese loan capital – as we showed above. As we already mentioned the call for boycott of Japanese commodities is also widely popular in China.

37. It is clear that an escalation of the conflict even

below an open war – like sanctions or small skirmishes – will have major consequences for East Asia and the whole world. It would make the already approaching recession even deeper given its disastrous effects on industrial production and world trade. It will massively increase oil price – which is already rising because of the looming Israeli/US-attack on Iran – given the fact that the Seas to the South and East of China are essential shipping routes. In short, it would add another important factor to a specific world political conjuncture which is characterized by sharply increasing contradictions expressed in the wave of anti-Western demonstrations in the Middle East, the civil war of the Syrian workers and peasants against the Assad regime, the class struggle upswing in Southern Europe against the austerity packages, the miners' strike in South Africa and the threats of a new imperialist war against Iran. This proves once more that we are living in a *historic revolutionary period* since the beginning of the Great Crisis in 2008/09. The world is increasingly becoming a powder keg.

The role of US imperialism

38. While Chinese and Japanese imperialism are the direct rivals in the conflict over the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands, US imperialism is another Great Power in the region. As the RCIT showed in its study, the US-American ruling class is determined to gain control over the South China and East China Sea given their strategic importance. The USA has already close alliances with regional states which enable it to control military bases in Japan, South Korea, Guam, Australia, Singapore or the Philippines. It recently announced its plan to position 60% of its navy in the region by 2020. (17) In one of its latest strategy documents the US Pentagon formulates its desire to keep its hegemonial status in the Pacific in the typical diplomatic words, which however should blind no one of the imperialist motives behind them: *“Over the long term, China’s emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the U.S. economy and our security in a variety of ways. Our two countries have a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia and an interest in building a cooperative bilateral relationship. However, the growth of China’s military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region.”* (18)

39. Japan is an ally of US imperialism, albeit a complicated one. The USA could and did make sure that Japan – as a defeated power in WWII – could not develop as a strong military power until today. At the same time it supported Japan as its ally and is obliged by treaty to defend its territory. One of the biggest US military bases in Asia is in the southern Japanese island Okinawa. Unsurprisingly Japanese government officials praised the US plan to position 60% of its navy in the region by 2020. A senior Defense Ministry official is quoted of saying: *“Deterrent power throughout the entire western Pacific will be stronger.”* (19) Naturally this is a complicated relationship because Japan's bourgeoisie prefers to have its own military power and not being dependent of the USA willingness to support it. This is even more the case since Japan is also an economic rival of the USA on the world market.

40. The Pacific region is pregnant with military conflicts and wars. In the end it will be an arena where

the Great Powers will fight for hegemony. It is clear that sooner or later there will be an imperialist war between the USA and China. However this does not mean the USA does necessarily wish such a war already today. They would rather prefer to strengthen first its forces as its plans for 2020 indicate. This was also indicated by the remarks of US ambassador to China Gary Locke who recently stressed his country's neutrality in the current disputes: *“We take absolutely no position on who is right, and we do believe that both sides need to try to resolve this.”* (20) This is not surprisingly since the US military is already over-stretched by its wars and interventions in Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan. Add to this the present wave of anti-American protests in the Middle East. On the other hand they might be dragged in a military conflict earlier than they wish by it Japanese ally.

Japanese Communist Party: social-imperialism in pacifist clothes

41. While the historic Stalinist party in China has transformed itself successfully from being the political expression of a ruling bureaucratic caste into the political expression of a ruling imperialist class, its Japanese sister party is in a very different position. It never was part of a coalition government let alone a ruling party. While it had a revolutionary character in its early phase under the leadership of its founder *Sen Katayama* it degenerated together with the whole Communist International under Stalin's leadership in the 1920s. Similar to its brother Stalinist parties it became first a centrist and finally a reformist formation. This was particularly obvious after 1945 when it could operate openly. Under the leadership of Nosaka Sanzo (who was educated by the Stalinist apparatus as the Japanese delegate at Comintern headquarters in Moscow during the 1930s) the JCP declared as its goal to become a “lovable” (!) Communist Party and propagated a peaceful and parliamentary road to power. In short it followed the classic Stalinist reformist programme. It is still a reformist party today with a certain basis in the working class. It claims to have 318.000 members and has 9 seats out of 480 seats in the House of Representatives (in the 2009 general election, the JCP received 4.94 million votes, or 7%).

42. Its rotten reformism is demonstrated by its fundamental support for Japan's ruling class against its neighboring states in all the disputed territorial claims. Already in 1972, when US imperialism handed the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands over to Japan, the JCP on 31.3.1972 issued a statement, *“The Senkaku Islands – Japanese Territory”* to state its position: *“The Okinawa Legislature, in the March 3 plenary session resolved that ‘It is clear that the Senkakus are Japanese territory and there is no room for dispute over their territorial right’. The opinion of our party is that this claim is correct. We would again like to make clear our party’s view on the Senkakus question. For some time now our party has carried out investigations and studied the historical background and relations under international-law in connection with this. Our investigations have made it clear that the Senkakus are Japan’s territory.”* (21) It reiterated this position in a statement in 2010: *“Even with historical documents made available after the publication of the statement, no finding which makes it necessary for the JCP to revise this view has been introduced. Under international law, a country can exclusively exercise its*

sovereignty within its territorial waters. Therefore, it is a matter of course for the Japan Coast Guard to crack down on illegal operations of foreign ships." (22) And again, in the midst of the recent escalation with China, the reformist JCP insisted on 21.8.2012: "Regarding the Senkaku Islands, Ichida referred to the JCP's 2010 statement which made clear that Japan's possession of the islands is legitimate based on history and international law." (23)

43. As we already said, the JCP supports also all other disputed territorial claims of its "own" imperialism against its neighboring states. So it defends Japan's claims over the Dokdo/Takeshima Island, despite the fact that Japanese imperialism robbed it from Korea in 1905 and that is also claimed since long by South Korea. The party leadership stated in 1977: "... the JCP in 1977 expressed its view that Japan has the historical legitimacy to claim Japan's sovereignty over Takeshima Island" (24) This viewpoint was repeated in August 2012: "Regarding Takeshima Island, Ichida referred to the JCP's 1977 statement which stated that Japan has historical grounds to claim its sovereignty over the island." (25)

44. Even in the time when the Soviet Union was a Degenerated Workers State before 1991 (or a "socialist country" as the JCP even claimed), it openly supported Japanese imperialism demands against Moscow for the Kurile/Chishima Islands as well as the Habomai Islands and Shikotan Island. It attacked the Soviet Union for its "unlawful practice of the Soviet territorial expansionism" and justifies its claims by referring to the Karafuto (Sakhalin)-Chishima (Kurile) Exchange Treaty concluded in 1875 between imperial Japan and Tsarist Russia! (26) Still today in its official programme, it "seeks to achieve the return to Japan of the Chishima (Kurile) Islands as well as the Habomai Islands and Shikotan Island, which are historically part of Japan." (27)

45. All in all we see that the so called Japanese Communist Party is a loyal defender of the expansionist goals of its "own" imperialist ruling class. Of course it always stresses that these goals should be achieved not with militaristic means but by peaceful negotiations. But this is helpless and reactionary pacifism. With its support for Japan's territorial claims it strengthens the imperialist ruler's ideological influence and legitimacy amongst the working class. It creates a consciousness which identifies with the imperialist goals. This weakens the workers resistance against the ruling class. It strengthens the capitalist's legitimacy to argue if these the rightful claims cannot be achieved by negotiations or if they are threatened by another state, the state "unfortunately" must resort to militaristic means to defend its rights. The JCP hence acts as the bourgeoisie's agency in the ranks of the workers movement. Its policy is nothing else than shameful social-imperialism, i.e. support for its own imperialist ruling class under the cover of "socialist" phrases.

What should be the internationalist working class position in the conflict between Japanese and Chinese imperialism over the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands?

46. We of the RCIT believe that the fundamental task of the socialists and class conscious workers in China and Japan consists in opposing the chauvinist wave in their countries and in fighting against their own ruling class and their imperialist goals. We say: Chinese and Japanese workers:

Your main enemy is at home! The task is to denounce the expansionist war drive as goals which are fundamentally in contradiction with the interests of the working class and the oppressed. The Chinese workers are not poor because their rulers don't control the Diaoyu-islands. To fight unemployment in Japan and nuclear catastrophes it doesn't help in any way if its government possesses the Senkaku islands. The Chinese and Japanese millionaires are rich and want to get richer. This is why they want to expand their empires. China doesn't exploit the Japanese workers – it is the Japanese bourgeoisie. And China's workers and peasants are not so much exploited by the Japanese but rather by their own rulers. It has to be shown that the only interest of both the Chinese and the Japanese ruling class is to increase their influence and their profits as Great Powers. Of course the same is true for US imperialism. Socialists and class conscious workers in China and Japan must show that their rulers deliberately utilize the crisis around the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands in order to divert the masses attention from the explosive class contradictions in their countries and that they try to diffuse the growing mass protests which accumulated in the recent period.

47. It is obvious that the possibilities for revolutionaries in China are very different from those in Japan since they have to work in strict illegality. But ways can always be found if they are desired. The precondition for revolutionary propaganda agitation is a revolutionary analyzes and programmatic conclusions. Despite these difficulties it would be important if progressive activists and organizations both from China and Japan could join forces to produce a common declaration protesting against chauvinism and any economic or military war between the two countries.

48. Socialists and class conscious workers in China and Japan should actively oppose any chauvinist campaigns of boycott foreign commodities. They should oppose any chauvinist riots against other nationals or foreign companies. They should reject any economic sanctions against the "rival" country.

49. In Japan – in addition to agitate for the above mentioned positions – it seems important to us to organize a mass campaign against the right-wing chauvinist forces which are the driving force in organizing propaganda stunts by travelling towards the islands and which call for a "strong and self-confident Japan". These right-wing extremists are playing with the fire of a war and have to be stopped by any means necessary. In addition one has to point out to the absurdity in spending huge sums of money for armament in a period where the people are facing rising unemployment and the consequences of the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima. If the government and the super-rich want to be patriotic, they should give their money for their own people! Japanese workers: *Take the money from the rich to finance a public works program to rebuild the areas devastated by the effects of the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima! No money for war but to create jobs for the unemployed and to reduce the working hours!*

50. Another important issue is the demand for substantial and immediate compensation payments to those millions of people (respectively their descendants) in China, Korea and other Asian countries who became victims of the horrible occupation by Japanese imperialism in WWII. This is particularly relevant to the hundreds of

thousands of sex slaves (so called "comfort women") who were systematically raped and tortured by the Japanese soldiers in military brothels (a fact still not officially acknowledged by Japan). It is also necessary to call for *Japans full diplomatic recognition of North Korea* and the overdue massive reparation payment to the country for the colonial rule in 1910-1945. Such reparation payments must be paid not out of the pockets of the Japanese workers but by an extra-tax of the super-rich Japanese monopoly capitalists.

51. While joint actions with reformist and pacifist organizations are necessary in order to broaden the resistance, Bolshevik-Communists sharply criticize the social-imperialist policy of organizations like the JCP. It is high time for the formation of a revolutionary workers party in Japan!

52. In China opposing patriotism faces the challenge to explain the difference of the justified national liberation war before 1945 and the reactionary patriotism today. If the government really cares about the Chinese people they should give them higher wages, proper housing and social security instead of spending huge sums for armament. If the rich want to wage war, they should give their money and fight it alone!

53. To counter-act the chauvinistic wave it is important to point out how "unpatriotic" the Chinese bosses are themselves. Bolshevik-Communists draw attention to the fact that imperialist China spends huge sums for foreign investment of which the capitalists hope for extra-profits and also armament while at the same the people are poor and living in social insecurity. In addition it is important to point out that while China's rulers whip up the memory of Japan's past colonialism, they act as colonial powers today in Tibet and East Turkmenistan. In these provinces China act as foreign power as Japan did 70 years ago in China! Internationalism begins at home – not against Japan about the uninhabited Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands but by supporting the will of the national minorities in Tibet and East Turkmenistan for independence!

54. In any military conflict, the Bolshevik-Communists

call for a *revolutionary defeatist position both in China and in Japan*. In the RCIT's programme, we say: "In imperialist wars, we reject any support for the ruling class. We advocate the defeat of the imperialist state. Our slogan is that of Karl Liebknecht: 'The main enemy is at home'. Our goal is to transform the imperialist war into a civil war against the ruling class." (28) Such a Marxist position applies in our opinion to any possible military conflict between China and Japan (and/or the USA).

55. For the Chinese proletariat the defeat of "its own" imperialist rulers in any conflict with Japan (or any other country) would be the lesser evil. Why? Because a weakened regime in Beijing would mean a weakened enemy for the workers who are struggling higher wages, better working conditions, democratic freedoms and finally for taking the power in their own hands. A weakened Chinese ruling class can easier be pressed for reforms and finally be toppled by a working class revolution. The same is true for Japan: A weakened or defeated Japanese bourgeoisie is a weaker enemy for the Japanese workers and oppressed.

56. For such a policy of turning the guns against our own ruling class, it is important – despite the obvious difficulties – to organize illegal work amongst the soldiers both in the Chinese and the Japanese army.

57. With the escalation of the conflict it is likely that various reformist and pacifist forces will call for peace, disarmament, UN mediation and peaceful coexistence between the states. We Bolshevik-Communists say that such propaganda is utopian, empty and harmful. As we wrote in the RCIT's program: "The rulers with their talking shops as the UN or its hypocritical international courts can never abolish war from the world. This can only be achieved by the working class and the oppressed peoples themselves through the uncompromising class struggle – including the armed struggle." (29)

58. The only lasting solution for peace is the consistent class struggle – which must inevitable culminate in a civil war – against the ruling classes in China, Japan, the USA and all the other Great Powers. As difficult as it might be, the only lasting solution is a *wave of socialist revolutions in*

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East Asia which would lead to the formation of a *workers and peasant republics in China, Japan, Korea and other countries*. This again could form the basis for a *Socialist federation of workers and peasant republics in Asia*. Under such conditions the wealth of resources of the Sea could be jointly exploited and used for the welfare of all peoples of Asia and beyond.

59. As we have shown an economic or even military conflict about the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands will affect not only China and Japan but the whole Asian region and indeed the whole world. It is therefore an issue of the

international workers movement too. International anti-imperialist campaigns including against any additional interference of other Great Powers are an urgent issue.

60. The need for a consistent revolutionary and anti-chauvinist position in the looming China-Japan conflict demonstrates the urgent need for an organized internationalist force to develop and spread such a policy. This can only be an international revolutionary workers party – the Fifth International. The RCIT is an organization of Bolshevik-Communists to bring forward the formation of such a world party of socialist revolution! Join us! ■

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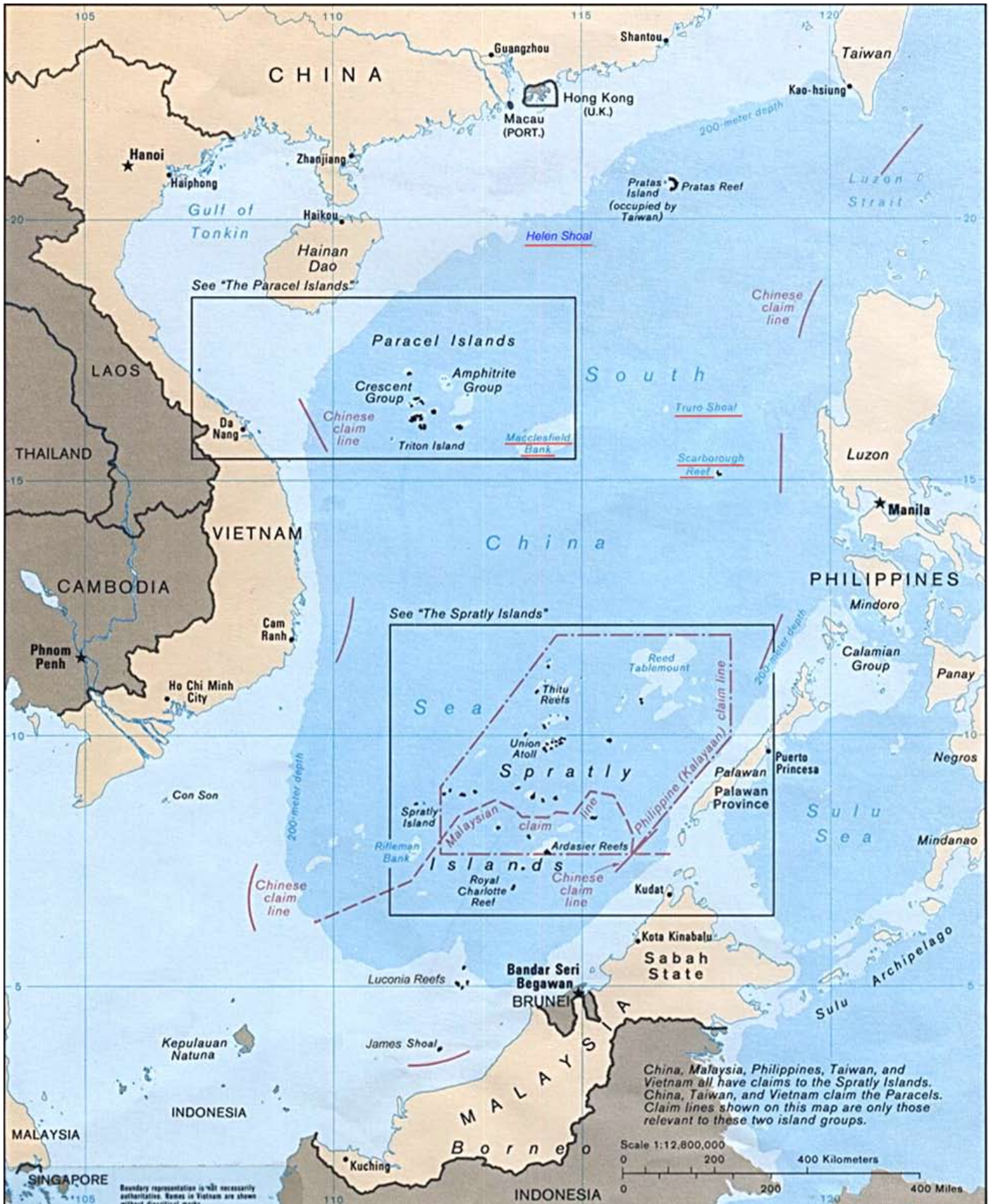
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From the Archives of Marxism

Resolutions from the Bolsheviks on imperialist war (1915)

Note from the Editor: We publish here several resolutions which were adopted by a conference of the Bolshevik Party (called Russian Social Democratic Labour Party at that time) groups abroad. The conference took place in Berne (Switzerland) on 27th February – 4th March 1915. The resolutions document the Bolshevik's tactic of revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist war - a highly relevant issue in the coming period. These documents have been published in the Bolsheviks' illegal central organ "Sotsial-Demokrat" No. 40 in March 1915. They have been published in English language in Lenin's Collected Works Vol. 21, pp. 158-164 and in the Internet at <http://marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/feb/19.htm>.

* * *

On the Character of the War

The present war is imperialist in character. This war is the outcome of conditions in an epoch in which capitalism has reached the highest stage in its development; in which the greatest significance attaches, not only to the export of commodities, but also to the export of capital; an epoch in which the cartelisation of production and the internationalisation of economic life have assumed impressive proportions, colonial policies have brought about the almost complete partition of the globe, world capitalism's productive forces have outgrown the limited boundaries of national and state divisions, and the objective conditions are perfectly ripe for socialism to be achieved.

The "Defence of the Fatherland" Slogan

The present war is, in substance, a struggle between Britain, France and Germany for the partition of colonies and for the plunder of rival countries; on the part of tsarism and the ruling classes of Russia, it is an attempt to seize Persia, Mongolia, Turkey in Asia, Constantinople, Galicia, etc. The national element in the Austro-Serbian war is an entirely secondary consideration and does not affect the general imperialist character of the war.

The entire economic and diplomatic history of the last few decades shows that both groups of belligerent nations were systematically preparing the very kind of war such as the present. The question of which group dealt the first military blow or first declared war is immaterial in any determination of the tactics of socialists. Both sides' phrases on the defence of the fatherland, resistance to enemy invasion, a war of defence, etc., are nothing but deception of the people.

At the bottom of genuinely national wars, such as took place especially between 1789 and 1871, was a long process of mass national movements, of a struggle against absolutism and feudalism, the overthrow of national

oppression, and the formation of states on a national basis, as a prerequisite of capitalist development.

The national ideology created by that epoch left a deep impress on the mass of the petty bourgeoisie and a section of the proletariat. This is now being utilised in a totally different and imperialist epoch by the sophists of the bourgeoisie, and by the traitors to socialism who are following in their wake, so as to split the workers, and divert them from their class aims and from the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The words in the Communist Manifesto that "the workingmen have no country" are today truer than ever before. Only the proletariat's international struggle against the bourgeoisie can preserve what it has won, and open to the oppressed masses the road to a better future.

The Slogans of the Revolutionary Social-Democrats

"The conversion of the present imperialist war into a civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan, one that follows from the experience of the Commune, and outlined in the Basle resolution (1912); it has been dictated by all the conditions of an imperialist war between highly developed bourgeois countries."

Civil war, for which revolutionary Social-Democracy today calls, is an armed struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, for the expropriation of the capitalist class in the advanced capitalist countries, and for a democratic revolution in Russia (a democratic republic, an eight-hour working day, the confiscation of the landowners' estates), for a republic to be formed in the backward monarchist countries in general, etc.

The appalling misery of the masses, which has been created by the war, cannot fail to evoke revolutionary sentiments and movements. The civil war slogan must serve to co-ordinate and direct such sentiments and movements.

The organisation of the working class has been badly damaged. Nevertheless, a revolutionary crisis is maturing. After the war, the ruling classes of all countries will make a still greater effort to throw the proletariat's emancipation movement back for decades. The task of the revolutionary Social-Democrats—both in the event of a rapid revolutionary development and in that of a protracted crisis, will not consist in renouncing lengthy and day-by-day work, or in discarding any of the old methods of the class struggle. To direct both the parliamentary and the economic struggle against opportunism, in the spirit of revolutionary struggle of the masses—such will be the task.

The following should be indicated as the first steps towards converting the present imperialist war into a civil war: (1) an absolute refusal to vote for war credits, and resignation from bourgeois governments; (2) a complete break with the policy of a class truce (bloc national, Burgfrieden); (3) formation of an underground organisation wherever the

governments and the bourgeoisie abolish constitutional liberties by introducing martial law; (4) support for fraternisation between soldiers of the belligerent nations, in the trenches and on battlefields in general; (5) support for every kind of revolutionary mass action by the proletariat in general.

Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International

The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of socialist opportunism. The latter has grown as a product of the preceding "peaceful" period in the development of the labour movement. That period taught the working class to utilise such important means of struggle as parliamentarianism and all legal opportunities, create mass economic and political organisations, a widespread labour press, etc.; on the other hand, the period engendered a tendency to repudiate the class struggle and to preach a class truce, repudiate the socialist revolution, repudiate the very principle of illegal organisations, recognise bourgeois patriotism, etc. Certain strata of the working class (the bureaucracy of the labour movement and the labour aristocracy, who get a fraction of the profits from the exploitation of the colonies and from the privileged position of their "fatherlands" in the world market), as well as petty-bourgeois sympathisers within the socialist parties, have proved the social mainstay of these tendencies and channels of bourgeois influence over the proletariat. The baneful influence of opportunism has made itself felt most strongly in the policies of most of the official Social-Democratic parties of the Second International during the war. Voting for war credits, participation in governments, the policy of a class truce, the repudiation of an illegal organisation when legality has been rescinded—all this is a violation of the International's most important decisions, and a downright betrayal of socialism.

The Third International

The war-created crisis has exposed the real essence of opportunism as the bourgeoisie's accomplice against the proletariat. The so-called Social-Democratic "Centre", headed by Kautsky, has in practice completely slid into opportunism, behind a cover of exceedingly harmful and hypocritical phrases and a Marxism falsified to resemble imperialism. Experience shows that in Germany, for instance, a defence of the socialist standpoint has been possible only by resolute opposition to the will of the majority of the Party leadership. It would be a harmful illusion to hope that a genuinely socialist International can be restored without a full organisational severance from the opportunists.

The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party must support all and every international and revolutionary mass action by the proletariat, and strive to bring together all antichauvinist elements in the International.

Pacifism and the Peace Slogan

Pacifism, the preaching of peace in the abstract, is one of the means of duping the working class. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable. On the other hand, however, Social-Democrats cannot overlook the positive significance of revolutionary wars, i.e., not imperialist wars, but such as were fought, for

instance, between 1789 and 1871, with the aim of doing away with national oppression, and creating national capitalist states out of the feudal decentralised states, or such wars that may be waged to defend the conquests of the proletariat victorious in its struggle against the bourgeoisie.

At the present time, the propaganda of peace unaccompanied by a call for revolutionary mass action can only sow illusions and demoralise the proletariat, for it makes the proletariat believe that the bourgeoisie is humane, and turns it into a plaything in the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent countries. In particular, the idea of a so-called democratic peace being possible without a series of revolutions is profoundly erroneous.

The Defeat of the Tsarist Monarchy

In each country, the struggle against a government that is waging an imperialist war should not falter at the possibility of that country's defeat as a result of revolutionary propaganda. The defeat of the government's army weakens the government, promotes the liberation of the nationalities it oppresses, and facilitates civil war against the ruling classes.

This holds particularly true in respect of Russia. A victory for Russia will bring in its train a strengthening of reaction, both throughout the world and within the country, and will be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the peoples living in areas already seized. In view of this, we consider the defeat of Russia the lesser evil in all conditions.

The Attitude towards other Parties and Groups

The war, which has engendered a spate of chauvinism, has revealed that the democratic (Narodnik) intelligentsia, the party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries (with complete instability of the oppositional trend, which is centred in Mysl), and the main group of liquidators (Nasha Zarya) which is supported by Plekhanov, are all in the grip of chauvinism. In practice, the Organising Committee is also on the side of chauvinism, beginning with Larin and Martov's camouflaged support of chauvinism and ending with Axelrod's defence of the principle of patriotism; so is the Bund, in which a Germanophile chauvinism prevails. The Brussels bloc (of July 3, 1914) has disintegrated, while the elements that are grouped around Nashe Slovo are vacillating between a Platonic sympathy with internationalism and a striving for unity, at any price, with Nasha Zarya and the Organising Committee. The same vacillation is manifest in Chkheidze's Social-Democratic group. The latter has, on the one hand, expelled the Plekhanovite, i.e., the chauvinist, Mankov; on the other hand, it wishes to cover up, by all possible means, the chauvinism of Plekhanov, Nasha Zarya, Axelrod, the Bund, etc.

It is the task of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in Russia to consolidate the proletarian unity created in 1912-14, mainly by Pravda,⁹⁵ and to re-establish the Social-Democratic Party organisations of the working class, on the basis of a decisive organisational break with the social-chauvinists. Temporary agreements are possible only with those Social-Democrats who stand for a decisive organisational rupture with the Organising Committee, Nasha Zarya and the Bund. ■

From the Archives of Marxism

Communist International: Theses on the Eastern Question (1922)

Note from the Editor: The following thesis was adopted by the Communist International at its IV. Congress in December 1922. It is a very important document since it outlines the principled attitude of communists in the anti-imperialist struggle. It elaborates the Marxist position of unconditional support for the oppressed people's resistance against the imperialists – even when this takes place under the leadership of (petty-) bourgeois leaderships. Such an attitude is in full opposition to the approach of nearly all left reformists and centrists today who refuse to support the anti-imperialist struggles in Palestine, Afghanistan etc. even if they take place under reactionary leaderships. At the same time the thesis also makes clear that communists must retain absolute political independence from such (petty-) bourgeois leaderships. Again such an attitude contrasts the approach of many left reformists and centrists today who adapt politically to forces like the Bolivarian movement of Chavez or Stalinist Castroism in Cuba – not to mention the pathetic tradition of Stalinism which subordinated under many bourgeoisie nationalist regimes in the last 80 years.

Of course, the "Theses on the Eastern Question" does not contain all aspects of a fully rounded communist strategy and set of tactics for the colonial and semi-colonial world. This is hardly surprising given the fact that the lessons of the Russian Revolution have not already been generalized. This only took place when Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the Bolshevik Party and the October Revolution in 1917, elaborated his theory of Permanent Revolution in the late 1920s. This theory found its programmatic expression in the famous "Transitional Programme", adopted at the founding congress of the Fourth International in 1938. All this historical limitations however do not reduce the value of the Comintern thesis.

The "Theses on the Eastern Question" was published in German language in the two volumes on the Fourth Comintern Congress "Protokoll des IV. Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Internationale", published by the Carl Hoym Verlag in 1923 on pp. 1034-1044. In English language it has been published in the Internet at <http://marxists.org/history/international/comintern/4th-congress/eastern-question.htm>

* * *

I. The Growth of the Revolutionary Movement in the East

The Second Congress of the Communist International, on the basis of Soviet experience in the East and the growth of national revolutionary movements in the colonies, drew up a general statement of principles on the national and colonial question in the epoch of prolonged struggle between imperialism and proletarian dictatorship.

Since then the post-war political and economic crisis of imperialism has intensified and the struggle against imperialist oppression in the colonial and semi-colonial countries has grown considerably stronger.

Evidence of this can be seen in: i) the collapse of the Sevres treaty on the partition of Turkey and the possibility of the complete restoration of Turkey's national and political independence; ii) the whirlwind growth of the national revolutionary movement in India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Morocco, China and Korea; iii) the hopeless internal crisis of Japanese imperialism, which is giving rise to the present rapid development both of certain elements of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and of independent class struggle on the part of the Japanese proletariat; iv) the awakening of the workers' movement in all the Eastern countries and the establishment, in most of them, of Communist Parties.

These four facts indicate a change in the social basis of the colonial revolutionary movement; this change tends to intensify the anti-imperialist struggle and at the same time to challenge the exclusive control of this struggle by feudal elements and by the national bourgeoisie, who are prepared to compromise with imperialism.

The imperialist war of 1914-1918 and the subsequent protracted crisis of capitalism, and especially of European capitalism, has weakened the economic hold of the Great Powers over the colonies.

On the other hand, the same factors which have narrowed the economic basis and the political sphere of influence of world capitalism have also aggravated imperialist competition over the colonies and so disturbed the balance of the entire world imperialist system (the struggle for oil, Anglo-French conflict in Asia Minor, Japanese-American rivalry for domination of the Pacific, etc.).

It is precisely this weakening of imperialist influence in the colonies, together with the steadily growing rivalry between different imperialist groups, that has facilitated the growth of indigenous capitalism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, a growth that is continuing to move beyond the narrow, restricting confines of the imperialist rule of the Great Powers. Up to now Great-Power capital has been trying to isolate the backward countries from world economic trade by insisting on monopoly rights to the super-profits from its commercial, industrial and fiscal exploitation of these countries. The demand for national and economic independence put forward by the nationalist movement in the colonies is in fact a reflection of the needs of bourgeois development in these countries. The progress of indigenous productive forces in the colonies thus comes into sharp contradiction with the interests of world imperialism, since the essence of imperialism is its exploitation of the different levels of development of the productive forces in the different sectors of the world economy in order to extort monopoly super-profits.

II. The Conditions of Struggle

The great diversity of national revolutionary movements against imperialism reflects the backwardness of the colonies and the different stages reached in the transition from feudal and feudal-patriarchal relations to capitalism. This diversity puts a special stamp on the ideology of these movements. Capitalism in the colonial countries usually originates and develops from its feudal base in mixed, incomplete and transitional forms, with commercial capital predominating; this means that the differentiation of bourgeois democracy from feudal-bureaucratic and feudal-agrarian elements frequently proceeds in a lengthy and roundabout manner. This is the main obstacle to a successful mass struggle against imperialist oppression, for in all the backward countries foreign capitalism turns the feudal (and in part also semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois) elites of these societies into agents of its rule (the warlords, the *Tushuns*, in China, the native aristocracy and the land tax-farmers – *zamindars* and *talukdars* – in India, the feudal bureaucracy and aristocracy in Persia, the capitalist plantation owners in Egypt, etc.).

For this reason, the ruling classes of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples become increasingly unable and unwilling to lead the struggle against imperialism as it develops into a revolutionary mass movement. Only among peoples like the nomads and semi-nomads, where the feudal-patriarchal system has not yet disintegrated to the point where the native aristocracy is completely split off from the masses, can representatives of the elite come forward as active leaders in the struggle against imperialist oppression (Mesopotamia, Morocco, Mongolia).

In the Moslem countries, the national movement is guided in its early stages by the religious-political slogans of the pan-Islamic movement, and this gives the Great-Power diplomats and officials the opportunity to exploit the prejudices and ignorance of the broad masses and turn them against the national movement (British imperialism dabbles in pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism and plans to transfer the Caliphate to India; French imperialism pretends to “Moslem sympathies”). However, as the national liberation movements grow and mature, the religious-political slogans of pan-Islamism will be replaced by political demands. This is borne out by the recent struggle in Turkey to remove temporal power from the Caliphate.

The basic aim shared by all the national revolutionary movements is to bring about national unity and achieve state independence. The actual realisation of this aim depends on the extent to which the national movement in any particular country can break all links with reactionary feudal elements, embody in its programme popular social demands and so win the support of the broad working masses.

The Communist International, though well aware that in different historical circumstances fighters for national political independence can be very different kinds of people, gives its support to any national revolutionary movement against imperialism. However, it still remains convinced that the oppressed masses can only be led to victory by a consistent revolutionary line that is designed to draw the broadest masses into active struggle and that constitutes a complete break with all who support conciliation with imperialism in the interests of their own class rule. The bonds

that link the indigenous bourgeoisie with the feudal-reactionary elements allow the imperialists to disorganise the mass movement by exploiting to the full feudal anarchy, the rivalry of different leaders, races and tribes, the antagonism between town and country, and the struggle between castes and national-religious sects (China, Persia, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia).

III. The Agrarian Question

In the majority of Eastern countries (India, Persia, Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia), the agrarian question is of paramount importance in the struggle for liberation from the bonds of Great-Power despotism. By exploiting and ruining the peasant majority of the backward nations, imperialism deprives them of the basic means of existence, but the resulting surplus rural population cannot migrate and cannot be absorbed by industry, which is poorly developed and exists in only a few centres scattered around the country. The pauperised peasants remaining on the land become serfs.

While in the advanced countries before the war industrial crises acted as the regulator of social production, in the colonies this regulator is famine. As imperialism’s main concern is to obtain maximum profits for minimum capital outlay, it will support to the bitter end the feudal and usurious forms of exploiting labour power in the backward countries. In some countries, such as India, imperialism takes over the existing feudal state’s monopoly right to the land and turns the land tax into tribute to Great-Power capital and its bailiffs, the *zamindars* and *talukdars*; in others, it extracts its land-rent by acting through the existing organisation of great landowners, as in Persia, Morocco, Egypt, etc. The struggle to free the land from feudal dues and requisitions thus assumes the character of a national liberation struggle against imperialism and the great feudal landowners (examples are the Moplah rising against the landowners and the British in India in the autumn of 1921 and the Sikh rising in 1922). Only an agrarian revolution committed to the expropriation of the great landowners can arouse the vast peasant masses, who will be a key factor in the struggle against imperialism. The bourgeois nationalists’ fear of agrarian demands and their efforts to water them down in every possible way (as in India, Persia, Egypt) are an indication of the close connection between the native bourgeoisie and the great feudal and feudal-bourgeois landowners, and the former’s intellectual and political dependence on the latter. The revolutionary forces must use these hesitations and uncertainties to make a thoroughgoing criticism and exposure of the compromises made by the bourgeois leaders of the nationalist movements. It is precisely these compromises that hinder the organisation and rallying of the working masses, as is shown by the bankruptcy of the tactic of passive resistance (“non-co-operation” [the tactic pursued by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress]) in India.

The revolutionary movement in the backward countries of the East will not succeed unless it bases itself on the activity of the broad peasant masses. This is why the revolutionary parties in all the Eastern countries must formulate a clear agrarian programme that includes the demand for the complete overthrow of feudalism and its institutions. To draw the peasant masses into an active struggle for na-

tional liberation, revolutionaries must advocate a radical change in the basis of land ownership, and as far as possible must force the bourgeois-national parties to adopt this revolutionary agrarian programme.

IV. The Workers' Movement in the East

The new workers' movement in the East is a product of the recent development of indigenous capitalism. Until now even the hard core of the working class in these countries has been in a state of transition, from the small craft workshop to the large capitalist factory. Where it is the bourgeois-nationalist intelligentsia that involves the revolutionary movement of the working class in the struggle against imperialism, its representatives will initially take the lead in the organisation and activity of the newly-formed trade-union organisations. At first the proletariat does not take its actions beyond the limits of the 'common national' interests of bourgeois democracy (the strikes against the imperialist bureaucracy and administration in China and India). Often, as the Second Congress of the Communist International pointed out, the representatives of bourgeois nationalism, exploiting the political and moral authority of Soviet Russia and adapting to the class instinct of the workers give their bourgeois-democratic aspirations a 'socialist' or a 'Communist' guise, in order – though they may not themselves be aware of it – to divert the first embryonic proletarian groups from the real tasks of a class organisation (the Eshil-Ordu party in Turkey giving a Communist coloration to its pan-Turkism; some representatives of the Kuomintang in China preaching 'State Socialism').

Nevertheless, the trade-union and political movement of the working class in the backward countries has made great progress in the last few years. The formation of an independent proletarian class party in almost every Eastern country is a significant step forward, even though the overwhelming majority of these parties have still a great deal of internal work to do in order to rid themselves of dilettantism, sectarianism and many other shortcomings. The fact that from the very beginning the Communist International realised the potential importance of the workers' movement in the East is of tremendous importance, for it clearly reflects the genuine international unity of proletarians throughout the world under the banner of Communism. The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals have so far failed to find a single supporter in any one of the backward countries, precisely because they are acting merely as 'servants' of European and American imperialism.

V. The General Tasks of Communist Parties in the East

While the bourgeois nationalists look at the workers' movement from the viewpoint of its importance for their success, the international proletariat considers the new workers' movement of the East from the viewpoint of its revolutionary future. Under capitalism the backward countries cannot share in the achievements of modern technical knowledge and culture without paying an enormous price in the form of savage exploitation and oppression by Great-Power capital. The workers in the East have to ally with the proletariat of the advanced countries, not

only in the interests of their common struggle against imperialism, but because only the victorious proletariat of the advanced countries will give them disinterested aid in the development of their backward productive forces. Alliance with the proletariat in the West will pave the way to an international federation of soviet republics. For backward peoples the soviet system represents the smoothest form of transition from primitive conditions of existence to the higher Communist society which is destined to replace the entire capitalist world economy of production and distribution. This is borne out by the experience of the soviet system in the liberated colonies of the former Russian empire. Only the soviet form of government is able to ensure that the peasant agrarian revolution is consistently carried through. The specific conditions of agriculture in certain parts of the East (artificial irrigation), maintained in the past by a unique system of collective labour organised on a feudal-patriarchal basis but now undermined by capitalist greed, also require the kind of state organisation that can meet social needs in a planned and organised manner. In view of the special climatic and historical conditions, co-operatives of small producers will definitely play an important role in the transitional period throughout the East generally.

The objective tasks of the colonial revolution go beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy because a decisive victory for this revolution is incompatible with the rule of world imperialism. The colonial revolutionary movement is at first championed by the indigenous bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia, but as the proletarian and semi-proletarian peasant masses become more involved and the social interests of the ordinary people come to the fore, the movement starts to break away from the big-bourgeois and bourgeois-landowner elements. A long struggle still lies ahead for the newly-formed proletariat in the colonies, a struggle that will cover an entire historical epoch and will confront both imperialist exploitation and the native ruling classes, who are anxious to monopolize for themselves all the gains of industrial and cultural development and to keep the broad working masses in their former 'pre-historic' condition.

The struggle for influence over the peasant masses will prepare the indigenous proletariat for political leadership. Only when the proletariat has done this preliminary work in its own ranks and in those of the social layers closest to it can it challenge bourgeois democracy, which in the conditions of the backward East is even more inadequate than in the West.

The refusal of Communists in the colonies to take part in the fight against imperialist tyranny, on the pretext of their supposed 'defence' of independent class interests, is the worst kind of opportunism and can only discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. No less harmful, it must also be recognised, is the attempt to remain aloof from the struggle for the immediate everyday demands of the working class in the interests of 'national unity' or 'civil peace' with the bourgeois democrats. A dual task faces the Communist and workers' parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries: on the one hand, they are fighting for a more radical answer to the demands of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, directed towards the winning of national political independence; on the other hand, they are organising the masses of workers and peasants to fight

for their own class interests, making good use of all the contradictions in the nationalist bourgeois-democratic camp. By putting forward social demands, Communists will stimulate and release revolutionary energy which can find no outlet in liberal bourgeois demands. The working class of the colonies and semi-colonies must be firmly convinced that it is only the overall intensification of the struggle against Great-Power imperialist oppression that can promote it to revolutionary leadership. On the other hand, it is only the political and economic organisation and the political education of the working class and the semi-proletarian layers that can increase the revolutionary scope of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Communist Parties of the colonial and semi-colonial Eastern countries are still in a more or less embryonic stage and must take part in every movement that gives them access to the masses. At the same time they must campaign hard against patriarchal-craft prejudices and bourgeois influence in the workers' unions in order to safeguard these rudimentary trade unions from reformist tendencies and turn them into militant mass organisations. They must make every effort to organise the numerous agricultural labourers and farm-girls and the craft apprentices of both sexes around the defence of their everyday interests.

VI. The Anti-Imperialist United Front

The workers' united front is the slogan advanced in the West during the transition period, characterised by the organised gathering of forces. Similarly in the colonial East at the present time the key slogan to advance is the anti-imperialist united front. Its expediency follows from the perspective of a long-drawn-out struggle with world imperialism that will demand the mobilisation of all revolutionary elements. This mobilisation is made all the more necessary by the tendency of the indigenous ruling classes to make compromises with foreign capital directed against the fundamental interests of the mass of the people. Just as in the West the slogan of the workers' united front has helped and is still helping to expose the social democrats' sell-out of proletarian interests, so the slogan of an anti-imperialist united front will help to expose the vacillations of the various bourgeois-nationalist groups. This slogan will also help the working masses to develop their revolutionary will and to increase their class consciousness; it

will place them in the front ranks of those fighting not only imperialism, but the remnants of feudalism.

The workers' movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must first of all establish itself as an independent revolutionary factor in the common anti-imperialist front. Only when its importance as an independent factor is recognised and its complete political autonomy secured can temporary agreements with bourgeois democracy be considered permissible or necessary. Similarly, the proletariat supports and advances such partial demands as an independent democratic republic, the abolition of all feudal rights and privileges, the introduction of women's rights, etc., in so far as it cannot, with the relation of forces as it exists at present, make the implementation of its soviet programme the immediate task of the day. At the same time the proletariat seeks to put forward slogans which further political links between the peasant and semi-proletarian masses and the workers' movement. Explaining to the broad working masses the need for unity with the international proletariat and the Soviet republics is one of the most important functions of the anti-imperialist united front. The colonial revolution can triumph and defend its gains only if accompanied by a proletarian revolution in the advanced countries.

The danger of a deal between bourgeois nationalism and one or more of the rival imperialist powers is much greater in the semi-colonial countries (China, Persia), or in the countries gaining state independence thanks to inter-imperialist competition (Turkey), than it is in the colonies. Every such agreement means a wholly unequal division of power between the indigenous ruling classes and imperialism; though it may be disguised as formal independence, it leaves the country exactly as before – a semi-colonial buffer state, the puppet of world imperialism.

While the working class may and sometimes must make partial and temporary compromises to gain a breathing-space in the revolutionary struggle for liberation from imperialism, it must be absolutely opposed to any attempt by the indigenous ruling classes to maintain their class privileges by agreeing to open or tacit power-sharing with imperialism. The demand for a close alliance with the proletarian Soviet republic is the key-note of the anti-imperialist united front. This slogan must be accompanied by a determined struggle for maximum democratisation of the political system, which will deprive the most politically



Lenin speaking at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920

and socially reactionary elements of their popular support and will give the workers' organisations the freedom to fight for their class interests (the demands for a democratic republic, agrarian reform, a reform of the tax system, the organisation of the administrative apparatus on the basis of popular self-government, labour legislation, the restriction of child labour, maternal and child welfare, etc.). Even in independent Turkey the working class does not enjoy freedom of association, which is a good indication of the bourgeois nationalists' attitude to the proletariat.

VII. The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Pacific

The continuous, steady growth of imperialist rivalry is another pressing reason for organising an anti-imperialist front. This rivalry has now become so intense that a new world war, this time in the Pacific, is inevitable unless international revolution forestalls it.

The Washington conference was an attempt to avert this threat, but in fact it only deepened and sharpened the contradictions of imperialism. The recent struggle between Wu Pei-fu and Chang Tso-lin in China was a direct result of the failure of the attempt by Japanese and Anglo-American capitalism to reconcile their interests at Washington. The new war threatening the world will involve not only Japan, America and Britain, but also the other capitalist powers (France, Holland, etc.), and threatens to be even more destructive than the 1914-1918 war.

The task facing the Communist Parties of the colonial and semicolonial countries bordering on the Pacific is to organise an intense propaganda campaign that will make the approaching danger clear to the masses, will call them to an active struggle for national liberation and will insist on an orientation to Soviet Russia as the bastion of all the oppressed and exploited masses.

In view of the coming danger, the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries – America, Japan, Britain, Australia and Canada – must not merely issue propaganda against the war, but must do everything possible to eliminate the factors that disorganise the workers' movement in their countries and make it easier for the capitalists to exploit national and racial antagonisms.

These factors are the immigration question and the question of cheap coloured labour.

Most of the coloured workers brought from China and India to work on the sugar plantations in the southern part of the Pacific are still recruited under the system of indentured labour. This fact has led to workers in the imperialist countries demanding the introduction of laws against immigration and coloured labour, both in America and Australia. These restrictive laws deepen the antagonism between coloured and white workers, which divides and weakens the unity of the workers' movement.

The Communist Parties of America, Canada and Australia must conduct a vigorous campaign against restrictive immigration laws and must explain to the proletarian masses in these countries that such laws, by inflaming racial hatred, will rebound on them in the long run.

The capitalists are against restrictive laws in the interests of the free importation of cheap coloured labour and with it the lowering of the wages of white workers. The capitalists' intention to take the offensive can be properly dealt with in only one way – the immigrant workers must

join the ranks of the existing trade unions of white workers. Simultaneously, the demand must be raised that the coloured workers' pay should be brought up to the same level as the white workers' pay. Such a move on the part of the Communist Parties will expose the intentions of the capitalists and at the same time graphically demonstrate to the coloured workers that the international proletariat has no racial prejudice.

To put this into practice, representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the Pacific countries must meet together at a Pacific conference in order to work out the correct tactics and the best organisational methods for securing the real unification of the proletariat of all races in the Pacific.

VIII. The Tasks of the Metropolitan Parties Regarding The Colonies

The immense importance of the colonial revolutionary movement for the cause of international proletarian revolution means that work in the colonies, especially by the Communist Parties of the imperialist powers, must be stepped up.

French imperialism bases all its calculations on the suppression of proletarian revolutionary struggle in France and Europe by using its colonial workers as a reserve army of counter-revolution.

British and American imperialism still continue to divide the workers' movement by winning the labour aristocracy over to their side with the promise of a certain share in the super-profits drawn from colonial exploitation.

Every Communist Party in a country that possesses colonies must undertake to organise a campaign for ideological and financial solidarity with the proletarian and revolutionary movement in the colonies. The pseudo-socialist colonialist tendencies of some categories of well-paid European workers in the colonies must be firmly and stubbornly opposed. European worker-Communists in the colonies must strive to organise the indigenous proletariat and to win its confidence by raising concrete economic demands (raising the level of native workers' pay to that of the European workers, labour protection, social insurance, etc.). The formation of separate Communist organisations of Europeans in some colonies (Egypt, Algeria) is a hidden form of colonialism and furthers imperialist interests. Any attempt to build Communist organisations on ethnic lines contradicts the principle of proletarian internationalism. All the parties of the Communist International must continue to explain to the broad working masses the vital importance of the struggle against imperialist domination in the backward countries. The Communist Parties working in the Great-Power countries must set up permanent colonial commissions, consisting of Central Committee members, to work on these lines. The Communist International must assist the Communist Parties of the East, starting with help in setting up a press and bringing out periodicals and papers in the local languages. Special attention must be given to work among the European workers' organisations and among the occupying troops in the colonies. The Communist Parties in the Great-Power countries must not miss a single opportunity to expose the predatory nature of the colonial policies adopted by their respective governments and by the opportunist bourgeois parties. ■

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 5th Workers International on a revolutionary basis!
Join the RCIT!

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



