

# Escalation of Inner-Imperialist Rivalry Marks the Opening of a New Phase of World Politics

## Theses on Recent Major Developments in the World Situation (April 2014)

*Document adopted by the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, April 2014*

The following document gives an overview of the most important political developments in the world during the last six months. It expands upon the analyses of the global political situation which the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) published in two documents, in March and September 2013, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

We draw our readers' attention to the fact that the resolution was adopted before the recent escalation of the protests in the east of the Ukraine. The RCIT's analysis and conclusion of these events can be read in our latest resolution on the Ukraine from 17 April.<sup>2</sup>

### I. A New Phase of World Politics Began in the Spring of 2014

1. In the spring of 2014, world politics entered a new phase. Its most important feature is the exacerbation of the *inter-imperialist rivalry between and the US and EU on one hand and Russia (with the tacit support of China) on the other hand* centered on the crisis in the Ukraine. While an armed confrontation between the two camps is unlikely in the near future, it is obvious that a new Cold War has started on the centennial of the start of World War I in 1914. This Cold War will prove to have been the preamble to future wars – first between proxies and later between the Great Powers themselves – if the international working class will not prevent this by taking power via the socialist revolution.

2. Another important characteristic of this new political phase is increased *counter-revolutionary mobilizations* in important countries. Thus, we saw the overthrow in the Ukraine by the reactionary Maidan movement which included an important fascist wing. Similarly, there have been reactionary movements and riots in Venezuela and Thailand which are attempting to bring down bourgeois-populist governments which enjoy mass popular support among the lower classes.

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<sup>1</sup> See RCIT: Aggravation of Contradictions, Deepening of Crisis of Leadership. Theses on Recent Major Developments in the World Situation Adopted by the RCIT's International Executive Committee, 9.9.2013, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 15, pp. 24-40, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-september2013/>; RCIT: The World Situation and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Communists. Theses of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, March 2013, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 8, pp.33-42, [www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-march-2013](http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-march-2013)

<sup>2</sup> See RCIT: Counterrevolution and Mass Resistance in the Ukraine, 17.4.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/mass-resistance-in-ukraine/>

3. In addition, we must point to the *retreat of the Arab Revolution*. The military dictatorship of General Sisi in Egypt has been able to consolidate its power. In Syria, the rebel movement has witnessed a bourgeoisification of its leadership. However, the fundamental process of the Arab Revolution has not been terminated and neither of these reactionary developments is irreversible, as is proven by the continuing just democratic struggle of the masses. In addition, new mass struggles like a third Intifada in Palestine are looming.

4. It is essential to understand the contradictory and uneven character of this new political phase. While there have been several reactionary movements and defeats for the working class, there are also *new revolutionary upheavals*. Most prominent has been the Bosnian revolution, a spontaneous and violent uprising of the Bosnian workers and youth. In addition, we see an important shift to the left among important sectors of the working class and youth in South Africa, resulting in splits from the ANC and the pro-ANC leadership of the trade union federation COSATU. Equally important, the mass protests against corruption and repression in key semi-colonial countries like Brazil and Turkey are continuing. To this one must add the impressive upswing of class struggle in Spain.

5. Finally the publication of the new report on climate change has once again demonstrated the devastating consequences of the climate crisis for whole mankind and in particular for the poorer nations living in the global South. It is now clear that the worsening of the climate situation is irreversible and the question is only how bad it will become. This will have tremendous consequences in accelerating the tempo “natural” disasters, catastrophic hunger, poverty and migration. This, in turn, will also accelerate the upheavals and revolts of the masses. It is not surprising that the US defense department, in its four-year strategic review released in the spring of 2014, calls climate change a “*threat multiplier*” along with poverty, political instability, and social tensions worldwide.

6. The developments of the new phase of world politics are marked by the continuing crisis of leadership. Nowhere does the working class possess a strong, combative revolutionary party armed with a revolutionary program and a steeled cadre. As a result, the fighting masses are either led by reformist bureaucracies, petty-bourgeois populists, or have no leadership at all. The counter-revolutionary offensive in Ukraine has demonstrated the total absence of any significant independent working class force. The reactionary mobilizations in Venezuela and Thailand are assisted by the disillusionment of various sectors of the masses against bourgeois-populist governments. The Bosnian Revolution, as well as the mass movements in Brazil and Turkey, suffers from the lack of any organized leadership. The mass protests in Egypt are led by the bourgeois Muslim Brotherhood which is itself undergoing a process of internal crisis and divisions. The rebel movement in Syria is dominated by petty-bourgeois Islamists who – while correctly rejecting both the pro-Western FSA leadership as well as the arch-reactionary ISIS – possess no independent strategy. In Spain, given the absence of an authentic revolutionary party, the rotten bureaucracies of the ex-Stalinist PCE and IU are gaining influence in the mass movement.

7. This new political phase clears the ground for the formation of authentic revolutionary parties nationally and internationally. It tests all forces in the workers’ movements and the so-called left in the fire of our historical class struggle. It exposes all those would-be socialists who choose in these historic times the camp of open counter-revolutionary forces or who, wrongly, stand aside in struggles where the proletariat is obliged to support a progressive camp. These events substantially sharpen the contradictions inside the reformist and centrist camps and will help the vanguard workers and youth to see through the “socialist” phrase-mongering of these forces. This will help to expose the

charlatanry of “Left Unity” as a reactionary illusion, and hence will make it easier for honest revolutionaries to find their way to Bolshevik-Communism.

8. The key task for the workers’ vanguard remains the building of revolutionary parties as well as the founding of a new World Party of Socialist Revolution. As urgent as this task is, it cannot be achieved by a pure feat of will or self-proclamation. The road to build combative revolutionary parties both nationally and internationally passes through the formation of solid Bolshevik pre-party organizations – composed mainly of militants from the working class – which will unite internationally on the basis of a sound revolutionary program, as well as common democratic-centralist discipline. Such authentic revolutionary organizations must be built inside the class struggle – not outside of it, in discussion clubs of the universities. From the outset, they must orient themselves to grow and to train their members not by means of the degenerated milieu of the petty-bourgeois left intelligentsia but the militant – although often politically raw – workers and oppressed. Instead of opportunistic adaption to the reformist and centrist left, they must combine the highest flexibility in united front work with sharp political demarcation and denunciation of all forces which cause political confusion among militant workers and youth. It is within the mass struggles and movements that small revolutionary organizations will find the forces with which to fuse in order to be transformed from being fighting propaganda groups into revolutionary cadre parties. This is the road of the Bolshevik-Communists.

9. This new political phase also increases the responsibility for authentic revolutionaries all over the world. For many working class militants, the world situation becomes more and more confusing. The emergence of new imperialist powers, the increasing rivalry between them, and the increasing appearance of forces acting as their proxies; the amalgamation of legitimate struggles of the workers and oppressed with conflicts between proxies; the leadership role of non-revolutionary and non-proletarian forces of progressive mass movements – all these complex and contradictory developments make it increasingly difficult for socialist activists to find the correct orientation. Under these conditions, it is the task of the RCIT to defend the revolutionary program, to derive the correct tactics for the class struggle, and to assemble the best revolutionaries under its banner.

10. What is the character of this new political phase? We view it as being neither (pre-) revolutionary nor counter-revolutionary but, rather as one with a contradictory, intermediate character. While the phase that transpired from the beginning of 2011 until the first half of 2013 overwhelmingly saw the masses on the offensive (Arab Revolution, Greece, Occupy Movement, Marikana/South Africa, Turkey, Brazil, etc.), the present phase has both counter-revolutionary and revolutionary features, as we have outlined above. It is currently marked by the qualitative deepening of the inter-imperialist rivalry, which on one hand will provoke increasing chauvinism and social-chauvinism in the workers’ movement. On the other hand, this resulting world disorder will also accelerate the search among many militants for a program and organization which advocate anti-imperialism and proletarian internationalism. Let us not forget that we are talking about different phases within one and the same historic revolutionary period which opened in 2008 with the deep crisis of the capitalist world economy. The fundamental dynamics of this period – the decline of the productive forces, the aggravation of the social contradictions, the inevitable provocation of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary upheavals as well as wars – mark all phases within this period. Hence, in such a period counter-revolutionary setbacks are inevitable given the devastating crisis of working class leadership. But at the same time no lasting counter-revolutionary stability is

possible because of the repeated clash of social and political contradictions. This period and its crisis-ridden character point repeatedly to the only alternative which stands at its end: *Socialism or Barbarism*.

11. In our last document on the world situation, we have already pointed out that while the aggravation of contradictions inevitably provokes a sharpening of the class struggle, the working class suffers from a crisis of leadership. This crisis of leadership in turn influences the forms and tempo of the class struggle. In particular, it can lead to increasing counter-revolutionary movements – including fascism as its highest or, more correctly, its lowest expression. The failure of the workers' movement and left to provide any revolutionary leadership for the heroic mass uprisings in 2011–13 has led to a certain retreat and to the increasing emergence of counter-revolutionary movements. However, this is neither inevitable nor irreversible. New eruptions of social and political contradictions are inevitable and will create new mass struggles and insurrections – as we have just seen it in Bosnia, beginning in the spring of 2014 – out of which new vanguard layers will emerge.

12. If we prepare a balance sheet of the past three years, we can say that the world has witnessed a massive intensification of the class struggle. We have seen the Arab Revolution which shattered and brought down dictatorships in a number of countries. We have seen the largest general strike in mankind's history (India). We have seen the largest mass mobilizations in key countries of the South for several decades (Brazil, Turkey, South Africa as well as Greece). All this confirms the RCIT's assessment of the nature of the present historic period as a "*revolutionary*." It also confirms our analysis that the centre of gravity of the world proletariat and its struggle for liberation has moved to the South.

13. The new political phase is the result of the fundamental dynamics and the process of the historic period we are living in. As we noted in the RCIT's world situation document issued in September 2013 the new period began in 2008 with an initial phase in which all classes were in a "*state of shock*." This was followed by a second phase which – starting in late 2010 / early 2011 – was characterized by a "*massive upswing of the class struggle*." In the class struggle, developments of the last three years we have identified an initial phase which we called an "*innocent phase*," in which the masses, full of illusions, either followed petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships in movements or elected them into office. Since then we have seen a process of disillusionment and growing opposition to these elected bourgeois-democratic governments or to the leadership of movements. At the same time, there has been no revolutionary party in existence which could have provided an alternative leadership and lead the struggle towards a higher stage. As a result, the masses suffered several defeats, and counter-revolutionary movements have also emerged. These developments contributed to the development of a new world political phase. No less, we have stated in the past that the aggravation of contradictions in the new historic period does not express itself only in the numerous mass struggles around the world, but also in the increasing imperialist aggressiveness and the rivalry between the imperialist powers. This qualitative intensification of imperialist aggressiveness and rivalry has contributed decisively to the change in the world situation.

## II. Key Features of the World Situation

14. The *world economy* remains in a state of very weak, fragile, and highly artificial recovery. US net business investment – that is investment after the deduction of the depreciation of existing stock – is still nearly one-third below the pre-crisis peak in the world largest economy.<sup>3</sup> It has dropped lower (as a share of GDP) in each successive recovery since the 1980s. Its present peak only reaches the trough levels witnessed during the two previous recessions!<sup>4</sup> (See Figure 1) Similarly net investment in Europe is at a historic low.<sup>5</sup> (See Figure 2) These figures reflect that capitalists do not expect sufficiently high rates of profit and therefore hesitate to increase their investment. The reason for this is, as Marx elaborated in Volume III of *Capital*, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. While the weak recovery will continue for some time, it will sooner or later turn into another, if not worse, worldwide Great Recession.

### *Heightening of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry*

15. The new Cold War between US/EU and Russia is the single most important event in the recent past, and marks the beginning of a new phase of world politics. This *heightening of inter-imperialist rivalry* comes as no surprise. From the beginning of the new historic period, we have consistently pointed out that, given the decline of the forces of production and the general crisis of capitalism, an escalation in the rivalry between the imperialist powers was inevitable. We already witnessed this tendency in the war between Russia and US-allied Georgia in 2008; in the rising Sino-Japanese tensions around the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands in the East China Sea; and in the Russian-American disagreement over the civil war in Syria. This *quantitative* increase of inter-imperialist rivalry reached a new *qualitative* level with the international conflict which broke out in the spring 2014 around the crisis in the Ukraine.

16. The international crisis after the pro-Western coup d'état has not only illustrated the well-established aggressive nature of Western imperialism. It has also demonstrated that Russia, too, has become a Great Imperialist Power, so much so that it was able to stand up against the West and annex the Crimea without serious punishment. This crisis has opened a series of mutual saber-rattlings between the imperialist camps: NATO plans to further expand to the East and to increase their military presence in Eastern Europe; at the same time, Russia wants to expand its sphere of influence of even to annex the eastern parts of the Ukraine and Transnistria. While a temporary diplomatic compromise on the Ukraine cannot be excluded as a possibility, it is obvious that this crisis has irreversibly brought out into the open the deep rivalry between the two imperialist camps.

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<sup>3</sup> Ed Dolan: US business investment still stuck. First Look at Q4 Domestic Income Shows Labor Share at Record Low, Corporate Profits at Record High, March 27th, 2014, <http://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2014/03/30/us-business-investment-still-stuck/>

<sup>4</sup> Credit Suisse: Global Equity Strategy. Four macro trends: Who benefits? Who gets hurt? 29 October 2013, p. 6

<sup>5</sup> Credit Suisse: Global Equity Strategy. Four macro trends: Who benefits? Who gets hurt? 29 October 2013, p. 9

17. These new developments confirm the RCIT's assessment that, in the past few years, Russia has gained increasing strength as an imperialist power, and China has also emerged as a new imperialist power. The RCIT has invested considerable resources in elaborating and disseminating such an analysis of Russian and Chinese imperialism, because it is the only key to understand the present dynamics of world politics. As we have shown in another document, ignoring the imperialist nature of Russia and China forces a number of centrists to walk into the theoretical trap of Kautskyanism, according to which the world incorrectly appears as one of *increasing convergence between the imperialist powers* US, EU, and Japan, i.e., the realization of Kautsky's false utopia of "ultra-imperialism."<sup>6</sup>

18. The heightening of inter-imperialist rivalry will inevitably lead to destabilization of international relations between the Great Powers. It will multiply the political, diplomatic, and economic conflicts between the imperialist states and will provoke an accelerated armaments race, militarism, and chauvinism on all sides. While, in the short term, the Cold War may not turn into a shooting war in Europe, open clashes between Japan and China are quite possible in the next few years. If the international working class does not succeed in overthrowing the ruling class in time, a Third World War is the most likely outcome of the escalating inter-imperialist rivalry on the backdrop of capitalism's decline. This rivalry and militarism will most likely increase qualitatively with outbreak of the next, and probably even deeper, Great Recession some time in the next few years. This further deepening of capitalism's crisis will also increase the desire of the desperate ruling classes to look for a military solution to their problems, i.e., by launching a new war.

19. The RCIT restates its Leninist position on conflicts between imperialist states: We defend the program which is associated with the term *revolutionary defeatism*. In both camps, revolutionaries must develop propaganda along the lines "*The main enemy is at home!*" and "*Turn the imperialist into a civil war!*" The international workers' movement must oppose all forms of sanctions issued by the imperialist states against their rivals. They must also resolutely oppose NATO's expansion towards the East as well as Russia's threats of invasion and its economic pressure against the Ukraine, which takes the form of raising gas prices and aggressively calling in debts.

20. An important issue in the next months and years will be the so-called *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP) between the US and the EU. Its declared goal is the liberalization of trade and investment between the two largest Western imperialist blocs. The international workers' movement in North America and Europe must vehemently oppose the TTIP. We say this not because we reject the economic internationalization between imperialist countries, but because the TTIP is a major attack against the working class and popular masses. The planned changes in business, labor, and consumer legislation will enormously strengthen the power of the imperialist monopolies against the state, the workers, and consumers.

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<sup>6</sup> See Michael Pröbsting: Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 21, pp. 31-32, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>

## *Counterrevolution in the Ukraine*

21. From the beginning of the political crisis in the Ukraine, the RCIT has closely followed developments there and has expressed its views in a number of statements (including joint resolutions with the Russian MAS).<sup>7</sup> Here, we will only elaborate some observations and conclusions about this key theatre of political events during the past few months. As we have pointed out from the start, the political crisis of the Ukraine originated as a conflict between different factions of oligarchs, whose respective orientations reflected the ongoing rivalry between US/EU imperialism on the one hand and Russian imperialism on the other for influence in the country. This is why the RCIT supported neither side in this conflict, but instead called for independent, working class mobilizations. Obviously the Yanukovich government represented the interests of a group of oligarchs with a pro-Russian orientation. However, at no time did the Maidan movement display a progressive, democratic nature. Rather, the movement was founded, top-down by pro-Western parties, on the very day that President Yanukovich refused to sign the association agreement with the EU. While undoubtedly the movement contained *some* liberal, middle class elements hoping for more democracy, as a whole it was dominated from start to finish by an unstable coalition of two right-wing conservative parties (Fatherland and UDAR), the fascist Svoboda party, and the Neo-Nazis of the *Pravy Sektor*. These reactionary elements attacked progressive and trade union forces as soon as the latter openly intervened with flags and banners.

22. In sum, the Maidan movement differed in a number of ways from a democratic mass movement with a non-revolutionary leadership like those which have arisen in other countries: (1) it came into being as a movement supporting a *reactionary* goal (joining the imperialist EU) instead of, for example, one fighting for democratic rights against a dictatorship; (2) from its emergence until its accession to power, the movement was tightly controlled by a small group of reactionary leaders (including fascists); and (3) the only time the masses identifying with the movement refused to follow its leadership was when the *Pravy Sektor* Nazis called for the cancellation of the compromise with the Yanukovich government. For these reasons, the RCIT maintains that the *dominant character* of the Maidan movement was *not* the desire for democratic rights (while this certainly played an important role among *some* sectors of the movement); rather we see this movement as having been a reactionary tool which fought for a reactionary goal (joining the EU) and for the interests of a pro-Western sector of the ruling class as well as those of Western imperialism.

23. For these reasons, we consider as politically criminal the support exhibited for the Maidan movement, as a kind of legitimate democratic struggle, by most of the larger centrist organizations (e.g., the Mandeliste Fourth International, Peter Taffee's CWI, the Cliffite SWP/IST, the ISO [USA], and the Morenoite LIT-FT). Once again, we witness how the lack of coherent Marxist methodology and analysis inevitably leads to centrist confusion and vacillations and ultimately into the camp of counter-revolution.

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<sup>7</sup> We refer readers to the RCIT's latest statement on the Ukraine crisis which contains in its appendix also references to all statements which we have issued until now on this event. See RCIT: Counterrevolution and Mass Resistance in the Ukraine, 17.4.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/mass-resistance-in-ukraine/>

24. The overthrow itself was the result of the *Pravy Sektor's* military initiative following their rejection of the compromise which the other three parties of the Maidan movement signed with the Yanukovych government. The rapid growth of fascist forces should serve as an alarm for workers' movements both in the Ukraine and throughout Europe in general. For the first time since 1945, fascists entered a European government. However, it would be inaccurate to denounce the present government in Kiev as a "fascist government." Rather, it is a pro-Western coalition government composed of right-wing conservative parties and fascists, the latter being a minority: Svoboda and *Pravy Sektor* hold eight out of the twenty-seven governmental portfolios, and account for four out of twenty-four regional governorships.

25. By attempting to abolish Russian as an official language in the Ukraine, the new right-wing government immediately demonstrated that it constitutes a threat for the large portion of the Ukrainian population whose native language is Russian. (According to recent polls, this includes about 43–46% of the country's *total* population, who actually are the *majority* of the population in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine.) In addition, following the coup, the Communist Party was outlawed in several regions, and left-wing and trade union organizations were attacked by the fascists. Under these conditions, the RCIT called for mass mobilizations and the formation of armed self-defense units to fight back against the fascist threat. We call for the right of self-determination for national minorities, including the right of secession. We support the resistance of the Russian-speaking population and the formation of self-defense movements in the south and east of the Ukraine against the fascists and the new right-wing government.

26. For these reasons, we defend the right of the people of Crimea to secede from the Ukraine and join Russia. While, given the presence of Russian soldiers, the referendum which was held was certainly not conducted under democratic conditions, there is no doubt that it reflected the authentic desire of the Russian majority of the Crimea to join Russia.

27. At the same time, Marxists must defend the right of right of self-determination for the national minority of the Crimean Tatars. The Tatars were formerly the majority in Crimea, but suffered systematic oppression and expulsion by the Tsarist Empire. For example, about 100,000 Tatars were expelled after the Crimean War (1853–56).<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the Tsarist regime encouraged systematic settlement of Russian colonialists in the Crimea. As a result, the Tatars became a minority in Crimea in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1897, they constituted 34.1% of the Crimean population and, by 1921, only 25.9%.<sup>9</sup> In 1944, the Stalin regime collectively deported the Crimean Tatars to Central Asia. Today, about 300,000 Tatars live in the Crimea. Following the recent Russian annexation of the Crimea, the Tatars can once again expect new oppressive measures against them. According to the *Moscow Times*, Crimean Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Temirgaliyev wants the "*Tatars to vacate part of the land where they now live in exchange for new territory elsewhere in the region*".<sup>10</sup> This is understandably perceived by the Tatars as a threat for new expulsions, to which the official leaders of the Crimean Tatars have responded with demands for full autonomy and a referendum on this issue. Not surprisingly, these demands have already been rejected by the pro-Russian Crimean government. The

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<sup>8</sup> Alan W. Fisher: *The Crimean Tatars*, Stanford 1978, p. 89

<sup>9</sup> Gwendolyn Sasse: *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict*, Harvard 2007, p. 275

<sup>10</sup> Crimean Tatars Asked to Vacate Land, Regional Official Says, *The Moscow Times* 19 March 2014, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/crimean-tatars-asked-to-vacate-land-regional-official-says/496451.html>



RCIT unconditionally supports the struggle for full and equal national rights for the Crimean Tatars, without giving the slightest political support to their bourgeois leadership.

28. The Ukrainian working class will face continuous attacks by the new right-wing government, which has already announced a 50% rise in the price of gasoline effective as of 1 May, as dictated by the IMF. The government is also planning to lay off many public sector workers. These economic attacks against the workers will be exacerbated by Russia's decision to raise the price of natural gas exported to the Ukraine. All this demonstrates how vital it is that the struggle *against* the looming fascist threat and *for* the defense of the rights of the Russian-speaking population of the Ukraine *must* be combined with mobilizations against these social attacks. Ukrainian socialists must link this struggle with a call for an immediate break with the IMF, NATO, and the EU, the nationalization of the country's industry and financial sector under workers' control, and the overthrow of the present government. To fight for the implementation of such a program, it is absolutely incumbent upon Ukrainian workers to establish an independent, revolutionary workers' party.

### *Reactionary Mobilizations in Venezuela and Thailand*

29. The semi-fascist mobilizations against the Maduro government in Venezuela represent another attempt by sectors of the old elite and US imperialism to destabilize the country in order to provoke a coup d'état. As the RCIT has claimed in its public statements (including a joint statement made with the comrades of the CSR in Venezuela) it was the task of the workers' vanguard to mobilize – alongside the Bolivarian mass organizations – for the defeat of these provocations.<sup>11</sup> However, Marxists also have to note the substantial shift to the right by the bourgeois-populist Maduro government by its conclusion of a new "*Pacto de Punto Fijo*" with the capitalists' federations (Fedecámaras, Consecomercio, Fedeindustria, and Fedenaga). In addition, the Maduro government has increased the social attacks against the working class. However, this shift to the right increases the potential for divisions and splits in the Bolivarian movement. Hence, the coming period offers excellent opportunities to finally break the near monopoly of the bourgeois-populist PSUV over the working class movement and to build an independent and revolutionary workers' party.

30. Since late 2013, the old reactionary elite in Thailand has been trying to overthrow the current government of Yingluck Shinawatra by mobilizing demonstrations of its middle class dominated "*Yellow Shirts*" of the right-wing "Democrat Party."<sup>12</sup> While these provocations have not been sufficiently strong to bring down the government, they have created the pretext for the constitutional court to declare the last elections invalid (in which the right-wing opposition refused to stand because it feared another electoral defeat). Worse, this constitutional court is currently attempting to unseat the

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<sup>11</sup> See RCIT and CSR: Venezuela: Only the Working Class under the Leadership of a Leninist Combat Party can achieve a Revolutionary Socialist Solution of the Crisis!, 16.3.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/venezuela-joint-statement/> as well as other statements of the RCIT on Venezuela (see <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/>)

<sup>12</sup> See also RCIT: Thailand: Defeat the looming reactionary Coup D'état!), 4.12.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-looming-coup-d-%C3%A9tat/> as well as Michael Pröbsting: Thailand: CWI's Disgraceful Support for the Bosses' "Yellow Shirts", 15.1.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/cwi-on-thailand/>

government. The political base of the current bourgeois-populist government – the “Red Shirts” who are mostly workers and peasants – has now started their own mobilizations against these threats putting up to 200,000 demonstrators on the streets. Socialists in Thailand should identify the right-wing “Yellow Shirts” as the current main enemy. They should work alongside the “Red Shirts” in order to break them away from their capitalist leadership and to build a revolutionary workers’ party.

### *The Arab Revolution – In Retreat, for Now*

31. Since our last report on the world situation, the military dictatorship of General Sisi in *Egypt* has succeeded in consolidating its power. Following the coup d’état on 3 July 2013, it barbarously smashed the protest camps of the Muslim Brotherhood, carried through a fraudulent referendum on a new constitution, and is now about to elect General Sisi as the new president. All those reformists and centrists who denied the reactionary nature of the coup d’état and the defeat it signified for the working class, or who even welcomed it as a “Second Revolution,” have been proven as completely bankrupt and useless to meet the tasks of the workers’ vanguard. In spite of its massive wave of terror, the regime has not been able to break the resistance. The ongoing mass demonstrations against the dictatorship and the workers’ strikes for economic demands show that the Egyptian Revolution has not been smashed.<sup>13</sup>

32. Furthermore, the crisis of the bourgeois Muslim Brotherhood, in particular among its young supporters, and the betrayal of the leadership of the independent trade unions which supports the dictatorship, create a political vacuum for revolutionaries. Provided that revolutionaries understand the nature of the current political process and derive appropriate strategic and tactical conclusions from it, they can utilize the search for a new orientation amongst the workers and youth vanguard in order to build a revolutionary workers’ party.

33. The *Syrian Revolution* has suffered a number of setbacks. The lack of a revolutionary leadership has given reactionary forces like the pro-Western FSA and the radical-Islamist ISIS substantial influence in the leadership of the rebel movement. This has created enormous difficulties for the revolutionary struggle. It has weakened the resistance and has given the Assad dictatorship the opportunity to regain some territory.<sup>14</sup>

34. However, contrary to the propaganda disseminated by Assad’s, the revolution is neither dead nor is it completely controlled by reactionary forces. Many local popular committees continue to exist and take local matters into their own hands. In addition, a powerful alliance of petty-bourgeois rebel forces has been formed in order to defeat the ultra-reactionary ISIS. Naturally, revolutionaries in Syria

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<sup>13</sup> We refer readers to the RCIT’s latest statement on the situation in Egypt which contains in its appendix also references to all statements which we have issued until since the coup d’état in July 2013. See RCIT: Egypt: Mobilize International Solidarity against General Sisi’s Machinery of Repression! 28.3.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/stop-repression-in-egypt/>

<sup>14</sup> We refer readers to the RCIT’s latest document on the civil war in Syria which contains in its footnote 39 also references to our statements and articles which we have issued in the last 12 months. See Yossi Schwartz: The Myth of Assad’s Syria as an Anti-Imperialist Regime, November 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/myth-of-assad-s-anti-imperialism/>

and internationally must continue to support the Syrian Revolution. The struggle of rebel forces against the ISIS-scum is justified and necessary. At the same time, revolutionaries must work hard to advance the formation of an independent workers' party based on a revolutionary program to offer the masses a political alternative to the Islamists and pro-Western forces.

35. We also stand on the side of the Kurdish people who fought and fight heroically for freedom. Defend the Kurdish people both against Assad and the reactionary Islamists from ISIS! The Syrian Revolution was, is and will be also the revolution of the Kurdish people for freedom. For a united socialist Kurdistan of the workers and peasants!

36. *Libya* faces an ongoing revolutionary process marked by a very weak government, a lack of revolutionary leadership, and the dominance of petty-bourgeois Islamist forces. In our previous world situation document, we pointed out that last year Libya witnessed a number of strikes and wage increase struggles by public sector workers. The government is deeply unpopular. In March 2014, Prime Minister Ali Zeidan was voted out by parliament and fled the country to Europe. The parliament itself fears new elections and has unilaterally prolonged its existence, even though its term has already expired. Strikes and occupations of ports and oil refineries are continuing and are mixed with the desire of the population of the east for more autonomy and a share in the income of oil exports. These struggles can easily turn into another civil war, seeing how there are between 100,000–200,000 armed militia fighters (out of a total population of only 6 million people). Socialists should emphasize the need for action committees in places of work, neighborhoods and villages, as well as the formation of workers' and popular militias which are under the control of the working people.

### *Flashpoint of the Class Struggle*

37. The *Bosnian Revolution* has been the most important case of workers' uprisings in the last half year.<sup>15</sup> The uprising has involved a combination of strikes, demonstrations, and a spontaneous violent insurrection in which working class youth played a major role. It opened a revolutionary situation in which the state apparatus and the ruling class were paralyzed and the workers and poor could have taken the power. However, the lack of a revolutionary leadership has meant that the ruling class, with the support of the imperialist EU, could re-stabilize the situation to a certain degree. However, the uprising of the masses has left a number of "*plenum građanki i građana*" (citizen plenum) in all larger cities like Tuzla (the working class heart of Bosnia) Sarajevo, Bihac, etc. These assemblies are not soviets, since they are not based in the residential and working centers of the proletariat. They can rather be compared with the *Asamblea Popular* which came to life in Argentina in 2002. In these assemblies, the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia has a disproportionately large influence and, hence, they play the role of lobbyists in the existing bourgeois parliaments, rather than serving as the organizing centre of the class struggle. While it is essential that revolutionaries intervene in these assemblies, the

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<sup>15</sup> We refer readers to the RCIT's statement on the Bosnian uprising: Victory to the Bosnian Revolution! 9.2.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/bosnian-revolution/> See also several reports and articles as well as articles in other languages by Almedina "Nina" Gunić and others on the RCIT's website at <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/>, <http://www.thecommunists.net/home/bosanski-hrvatski-srpski/> and <http://www.thecommunists.net/home/deutsch/>.

decisive task is to build the struggle in workplaces, to establish workers' assemblies, as well as to found a revolutionary workers' party in order to break the masses away from corrupted bourgeois parties like the SDA, SDP BiH, etc.

38. The Bosnian Revolution is of historical importance for two reasons. It is so far the peak of the struggle of the masses in the ex-Stalinist states in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe have risen up against the political and social agenda of restored capitalism.<sup>16</sup> Together with the unfinished democratic revolution in Bulgaria, the mass movements in Slovakia against the huge corruption of the government, the general strikes in Slovenia and Rumania, the progressive mass movement in Croatia against the joining to the European Union and the struggle of the Roma people for equality, the Bosnian Revolution shows the way forward to the working masses of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This indicates that the dark period in these countries, which started after 1991, is coming to an end. This gloomy period was itself the result of three combined factors: (1) the *political* atomization of the working class by decades of Stalinist dictatorship; (2) the failed political revolution of 1989–91; and (3) the *social* atomization of the proletariat through achieved by the capitalist restoration.

39. Secondly, the Bosnian Revolution is remarkable because of its multi-national and anti-nationalist character. Naturally, the Bosniak workers are playing the dominant role, but this is only logical because: (1) they are the strongest national group; (2) they are the most urbanized, industrialized, and proletarianized national group; and (3) they are much less influenced by reactionary nationalism, precisely because it was they who stood at the centre of the legitimate national liberation struggle in 1992-95 against the terror bands of Karadzic, Mladić, and Milosevic.

40. Various developments in *South Africa* prove that, since the heroic Marikana miners' strike in summer 2012, the country has entered a new, pre-revolutionary phase. In addition to a number of militant strikes, we are seeing for the first time a split of significant sectors of the working class with the popular-frontist ANC-SACP government. The most important event of this historic development is NUMSA's break with the popular frontist ANC-SACP government. NUMSA calls for the formation of a united front against the neoliberal attacks of the government, as well as for the formation of a "Movement for Socialism" which many workers interpret as a call for a new mass workers' party. In addition, the petty-bourgeois left-populist *Economic Freedom Fighters*, led by the former ANC Youth leader Julius Malema, attracts a lot of support among black youth and militant workers. Finally, there is also the *Workers and Socialist Party* (WASP), which is led by the right-centrist DSM/CWI, but which has received support from sectors of the workers' vanguard.<sup>17</sup>

41. The above developments can only be characterized as historic. They indeed open the road to the formation of a mass workers' party. Unfortunately, the NUMSA leadership remains trapped in a Stalinist schema of the "national-democratic revolution," and has announced its return to the old ANC program of the 1950s (the "Freedom Charter"). In addition, the leadership of NUMSA vacillates around the question of whether to build a new workers' party now, and refuses to put forth

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<sup>16</sup> The only event which had a similar character was the Albanian popular insurrection in spring 1997. However, this insurrection was less directed against the social consequences of capitalism (closure of factories, privatization, etc.) and more limited against the corrupt and authoritarian government of Sali Berisha.

<sup>17</sup> We refer readers to the latest RCIT statement on South Africa: South Africa: Forward to the Building of a Mass Workers' Party Based on a Revolutionary Program! 5.2.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/south-africa-workers-party/> as well as other documents in South Africa at <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>.

candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections. This is shameful, and revolutionaries in South Africa should explain in their independent propaganda to the workers' vanguard that the NUMSA leadership is heading in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, regardless of such criticism, South African revolutionaries must make every effort to participate in the movement initiated by NUMSA and fight shoulder by shoulder with the workers' vanguard.

42. What should be the position of Marxists vis-à-vis the 2014 South African general elections to be held on May 7? Naturally, they cannot call upon workers to vote for the popular-frontist ANC-SACP list, which has implemented a neoliberal policy for the last two decades. Should they, perhaps, give critical support to Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters? While Marxists should definitely deploy the united front tactic in relation to the EFF so as to reach its young militant supporters, a critical vote for the EFF is *not* permissible, since it is not a working class organization.

43. We propose that revolutionaries in South Africa give *critical electoral support for the WASP*. Why? Because it is the only *working class* party standing for these elections. While it is small and will probably receive only a small number of votes, it definitely represents more than simply the DSM/CWI, as it has roots among the workers' vanguard. A strong turnout for the WASP will constitute an important call to the workers' vanguard to found an independent mass workers' party to the left of the ANC and SACP. However, such electoral support – lest it be seen as opportunistic – must be combined with sharp criticism of the WASP program and leadership. WASP's electoral manifesto does not explain that socialism can only be achieved via a workers' revolution. It tirelessly repeats the old reformist slogans of "*democratization of the police*" instead of openly calling for armed self-defense units of the workers and poor to defend the working class against massacres similar to Marikana.<sup>18</sup> All this reflects the rotten program of the DSM/CWI which is based on the illusionary dogma of a peaceful transformation to socialism, and their equally reformist notion that police officers are "*workers in uniform*." Worse, the DSM/CWI leadership has chosen Moses Mayekiso as their "presidential candidate." While Mayekiso had a militant past as a trade union leader during the 1980s, subsequently he integrated himself in leading positions of the ANC and the SACP and later became a corrupt capitalist involved in shady deals. (For example, Mayekiso served as CEO of *Sanco Investment Holdings* which in 1999 received R2.5 million for its service in a huge arms deal with the Swedish corporation SAAB, something Mayekiso himself has admitted.)<sup>19</sup> Mayekiso is a quintessential example of a once leader of the workers who has transformed himself into a traitorous servant of the bourgeoisie. By selecting Mayekiso as their "presidential candidate," the WASP/CWI leadership demonstrates its cynical attitude to the cause of working class liberation. Socialists who are campaigning for WASP must sharply denounce Mayekiso as well as the WASP leadership which supports him, and should call for his immediate removal from the list.

44. The spontaneous mass uprisings in *Brazil* last year constituted a key event of the international class struggle. These demonstrations were the largest since the end of the military dictatorship in 1985. While, in general, the wave of mass mobilizations has declined, it has repeatedly flared up and is likely to return to full strength when Brazil hosts the world cup competition this summer. In addition, this movement has inspired more militant workers' strikes as well as mass protests during the negotiations related to the privatization of the Libra pre-salt oilfields off the coast of Brazil. The reaction of the PT government of Dilma Rousseff to these developments has been a combination of

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<sup>18</sup> WASP: Only Socialism means Freedom. 2014 Election Manifesto

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Mail & Guardian: How arms dealers pampered Sanco, 08 Apr 2005 <http://mg.co.za/article/2005-04-08-how-arms-dealers-pampered-sanco>

vague promises and an increase in repression, as has been demonstrated by the escalation of police violence against demonstrators as well as the militarization of the *favelas*.<sup>20</sup>

45. Revolutionaries continue to advocate the formation of action committees in workplaces and neighborhoods as well as the organizing of self-defense units to repel the repression of the state apparatus. They argue for the preparation of a general strike to unite the resistance and to launch a counter-offensive against the government. It is also urgent to conduct debates within the unions, about the need to split with the PT, and to found an independent workers' party based on a revolutionary program.

46. Similarly, in *Turkey* we have also witnessed a decline in the wave of mass mobilizations which shook the Erdoğan regime last summer.<sup>21</sup> However, they too have not entirely disappeared but have repeatedly flared up. This became unmistakable during the huge mass demonstration at the funeral of the 15-year old youth, Berkin Elvan, in mid-March 2014. With two million people demonstrating in fifty-three provinces throughout Turkey, this was the largest mobilization since the military coup d'état in 1980.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, since the summer of 2013, a new political phase has opened in Turkey.

47. This has helped to cause a deep split inside the Turkish ruling class between the Erdoğan regime on one hand and its former ally, the conservative Islamist Gülen movement on the other. The remaining Kemalists in the state apparatus and the CHP are trying to finesse this. While the Erdoğan regime tries to stabilize its power by adopting steps characteristic of an authoritarian regime (e.g., police repression against demonstrations, restrictions of Twitter and YouTube), there is also the danger of a coup d'état by the old Kemalist elite, either via the military or the constitutional court. Socialists must not support either of these bourgeois camps. They should, however, use the increased space to advance the class struggle, as well as the national liberation struggle of the Kurdish people, and to build an independent workers' party based on a revolutionary program.

48. It is in *Spain* that the most important events related to the class struggle in Europe took place during the last six months. During this period the country saw mass demonstrations against the conservative PP government's initiative to outlaw women's right of abortion. This constitutes the most important attack on women's rights in Europe for decades. In late March, the country witnessed the magnificent, two million strong "*Marcha de la Dignidad*" (March of Dignity) against poverty and unemployment. This was organized by 300 collectives and social platforms. However, the reformist, ex-Stalinist PCE and *Izquierda Unida* (IU) exert an inordinate bureaucratic influence on these mobilizations, as they control a strong organizational national apparatus.

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<sup>20</sup> We refer readers to the latest RCIT article on Brazil: CCR: From the June protests on the streets towards the path of electoral illusions? 11.1.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-report/>. In footnote 10 of this article reader can find references to other statements and articles of our assessment of the class struggle in Brazil in 2013.

<sup>21</sup> We refer readers to the RCIT statement on Turkey: 'Long live the Protest on Taksim Square!' – 'Long live International Solidarity!' 'Yaşasın Taksim direnişimiz!' – 'Yaşasın halkların kardeşliği!', 3.6.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/turkey-victory-to-protest-on-taksim-square/>. See also Yossi Schwartz: Turkey: Down with the repressive Regime of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the AKP! 3.6.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/down-with-erdogan-regime/>

<sup>22</sup> Fevzi Kizilkoyun: Two million marched, 417 arrested during Berkin Elvan protests as 'disproportionate force' probed, *Hürriyet*, 14.3.2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/two-million-marched-417-arrested-during-berkin-elvan-protests-as-disproportionate-force-probed.aspx?PageID=238&NID=63566&NewsCatID=341>

49. Revolutionaries in Spain should fight within these movements to advance the formation of action committees of the masses and organize the struggle against the hegemony of the reformist bureaucracy. They should call for a national congress of delegates from all local, regional, and national organizations and initiatives of the working class and the youth. The central slogan should be a call for a general strike as a tool to unify working class resistance and to orient it to the workplaces. Most importantly, socialists should advocate the need to build a revolutionary workers' party.

50. At the *elections to the European Parliament* between 22 and 25 May 2014, socialists should deploy the tactic of critical electoral support wherever the preconditions for such exist. Such a tactic is valid whenever reformist or centrist parties of the workers' movement stand in elections. (This tactic is also valid for petty-bourgeois forces which lead liberation struggles of oppressed or discriminated against nations.) As Lenin explained at the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920, this tactic involves a call to vote for such reformist or centrist workers' parties, while at the same time warning about their treacherous leaderships, but also calls for the workers to organize the struggle themselves while placing demands on their supposed leaders in order to unmask them. There are a number of countries where left-reformist parties are standing in elections and which represent the hopes for the struggle against the relentless austerity offensive of the ruling class. Hence the RCIT proposes to socialists in their respective countries to give critical electoral support to the IU in Spain, SYRIZA in Greece, the *Linkspartei* in Germany, or the *Front de Gauche* in France. In addition, Socialists in the Basque Country should consider critical electoral support for the left-wing nationalist *Basque Country Gather* (EHB). In countries where the social democratic party is the only force of the workers' movement, critical electoral support for them may *possibly* be the correct tactic.

51. Against the backdrop of the deepening economic and political crisis of capitalism, the *national question in Europe* takes on greater significance. As in all other democratic issues, Marxists have to differentiate between the aspirations of an oppressed, discriminated against, or non-equal nation and those of oppressor or privileged nation. Therefore the RCIT supports the legitimate struggles of the former and vehemently opposes those of the latter. We support the right of national self-determination for the discriminated nations. This means that we call for equality in terms language rights, access to the state resources, etc. In those cases where the majority of a non-equal nation wishes an independent state, Marxists have to support this. Thus they call for an *independent workers' republic* for the given nation and combine this with the slogan of *United Socialist States of Europe*.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, they have to launch vehement *agitation* against nationalism and for the international unity of the working class. In other cases, Marxists will support the call for autonomy and forms of self-government of the respective territories. Such support for national and democratic rights has to be applied to all non-equal nations, irrespective of whether they are situated within imperialist or semi-colonial states, and regardless of whether they would, after secession, find themselves within another imperialist or a semi-colonial state (if the working class cannot take power in time). This is only logical since all democratic demands against discrimination – like equal rights for women, youth, lesbian and gays, etc – apply not only to the working class members of these groups but also those of the middle class and the bourgeoisie.

52. Based on this methodological approach, the RCIT supports the desire of the Basque and the Catalan people to leave the oppressive Spanish state and to form their own republics. We say: "*For an*

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<sup>23</sup> Therefore we reject the approach of the Moreonite tradition which has repeatedly raised the slogan for an independent state, not as a workers' state but as bourgeois-democratic state, i.e., one with a capitalist class character.

*independent Workers Republic of Catalonia and of the Basque Country!*” The harsh long-time suppression of the Basque nationalists by the Spanish state and the recent decision of Madrid to ban the planned referendum on independence in Catalonia demonstrate that the national question in Spain has an explosive democratic character. The Spanish workers’ movement must mobilize against the reactionary Spanish state and at the same time advocate the joint workers’ struggle against the austerity offensive of the PP government. On the other hand, there are also reactionary separatist movements like the Venetian one. This is reactionary campaign of a privileged non-nation which must be resolutely opposed by the workers’ movement.

53. The recently published IPCC Report on the *Climate Change* has again confirmed the warning of Marxists and many progressive ecological initiatives about the dramatic threats of climate change. While the entire world will be affected by the consequences of climate crisis, it is the poor countries of the South who will bear the main brunt of this catastrophe. According to the report, rainfall patterns will change and cause flooding which will threaten to wipe out homes, businesses, and energy supplies. Droughts will lead to a shortage of safe drinking water. Storms will damage the infrastructure. As a result, food production could fall by 2% per decade in the coming period. In short, the climate crisis will substantially spread poverty and hunger. Once again, this demonstrates that the decline of capitalism in the present historic period poses mankind with the alternative: *socialism or barbarism*. Of course, there is nothing inevitable about the climate crisis. According to the IPCC scientists, a figure of \$100 billion per year could help the poor countries to deal with climate change. (Typically, this figure was deleted in the final version of the report at the insistence of the US and other imperialist governments.) The climate crisis will also further contribute to the destabilization of the world capitalist system and provoke more civil wars. It is not surprising that the strategists of the ruling class already prepare themselves for more turmoil and armed conflicts. Such writes the Pentagon in its latest issue of the *Quadrennial Defense Review*: “Climate change may exacerbate water scarcity and lead to sharp increases in food costs. The pressures caused by climate change will influence resource competition while placing additional burdens on economies, societies, and governance institutions around the world. These effects are threat multipliers that will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions – conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence.”<sup>24</sup>

### III. Imperialism, War and the Revolutionary Program

54. We have pointed out that the new world political phase is marked by the heightening of inter-imperialist rivalry and the emergence of a Cold War between the US/EU and Russia (and China). This makes the understanding and application of the Leninist program against imperialist militarism and wars mandatory for the workers’ vanguard. The starting point for every Marxist must be the famous dictum of the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz who summarized the essence of any military conflict by the famous words, often repeated by Friedrich Engels and V.I. Lenin: “*War is merely a continuation of policy by other means.*”<sup>25</sup> In Marxist terms this means that the working class

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<sup>24</sup> US Department of Defense: 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, p. 8

<sup>25</sup> Carl von Clausewitz: *Vom Kriege* (1832), Hamburg 1963, p. 22; in English: Carl von Clausewitz: *On War*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1946/1946-h/1946-h.htm>



must fundamentally oppose its imperialist government equally in times of peace as well as in times of war. It must use – regardless of whether in peace or war – every weakness and crisis of its class enemy to undermine and ultimately overthrow it. This is why Lenin and the Bolsheviks and later Trotsky and the Fourth International made the principle “*Turn the imperialist war into a civil war!*” a pillar of the revolutionary program.

55. To win the workers’ vanguard, and later the entire proletariat, for such a revolutionary anti-war program, Marxists must, even in times of peace, consistently make the case for proletarian internationalism on all issues. They must explain the need for the workers to break *with every form of political and ideological identification with the imperialist national state*. Trotsky explained this in his crucial document *War and the Fourth International*: “A ‘socialist’ who preaches national defense is a petty-bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism. Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party that has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace. Only by realizing fully the objectively reactionary role of the imperialist state can the proletarian vanguard become invulnerable to all types of social patriotism. This means that a real break with the ideology and policy of “national defense” is possible only from the standpoint of the international proletarian revolution.”<sup>26</sup>

56. From this follows the need for Marxists to mobilize the working class in the imperialist countries not only against all forms of militarism and aggressive foreign policy. They must also explain that the workers must unconditionally support the struggles of the oppressed people against the imperialist states – in particular those who are in conflict with their “own” ruling class. Trotsky summarized this principle in his statement: “*The struggle against war and its social source, capitalism, presupposes direct, active, unequivocal support to the oppressed colonial peoples in their struggles and wars against imperialism. A “neutral” position is tantamount to support of imperialism.*”<sup>27</sup>

57. Another expression of proletarian internationalism is the unconditional support of Marxists for the complete liberation of national minorities, including the migrants, living in their own and in all other imperialist countries. Thus Bolshevik-Communists advocate the struggle for equal rights for migrants, who are, in their vast majority, a nationally oppressed layer of super-exploited labor, and national minorities. As the RCIT has elaborated repeatedly, this includes the struggle for equal wages, access to jobs, equal language rights, etc. In addition, Bolshevik-Communists oppose the reactionary control of immigration by the imperialist states. The transformation of the imperialist states into armed fortresses to keep out poor masses from the semi-colonial world is a prime example for the existing global Apartheid regime which divides the world – and hence the world proletariat – in exploiter and exploited nations. Marxists in the imperialist countries must resolutely oppose their aristocratic ruling class and raise the slogan for “*Open Borders.*” This slogan against imperialist border control will substantially increase in importance given the rising tide of migrants from the South hoping to enter the rich North due to the barbaric super-exploitation of the South and the dramatic, worldwide climate change. During the present period of globalization, in which migrants constitute an ever increasing proportion of the working class in imperialist countries, the struggle for full equal rights for migrants is one of the most important issues about which Marxists must prepare the proletariat in the imperialist world in their campaign against future imperialist aggression and wars. In addition, the fact that migrants represent a substantial minority of the proletariat will create

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<sup>26</sup> Leon Trotsky: *War and the Fourth International* (1934), in: *Trotsky Writings 1933-34*, p. 305

<sup>27</sup> Leon Trotsky: *Resolution on the Antiwar Congress of the London Bureau* (1936), in: *Documents of the Fourth International*, New York 1973, p. 99

tremendous difficulties for the imperialist ruling class in their future wars. This is because, from the start, they have a sizeable minority which is much less, or not at all, inclined to rally to the defense of the “national fatherland” – in particular if, for example, the ruling class wages wars against oppressed peoples with whom the migrants share either national or religious links. To summarize, the proletarian internationalist struggle for equality of migrants and open borders constitutes *the* most important political and ideological preparation of the working class in the imperialist countries for the coming waves of chauvinism against the backdrop of increasing inter-imperialist rivalry.

58. Concerning the issue of imperialist aggression and war, Marxists have to fight against various opportunistic trends inside the workers’ movement. First, we have to fight against pacifism which opposes imperialist wars with helpless appeals to morality and the United Nations, and which renounces violence out of principle. While there is a progressive aspect to such sentiments when they are advanced by politically-raw workers who, in this way, attempt to express their hatred for imperialist wars, when propagated by various petty-bourgeois, social democratic, and Stalinist forces this ideology is utterly reactionary. In such cases it is an ideology cynically used to disarm the workers and oppressed peoples when, in fact, the latter can *only* achieve liberation from the imperialist yoke by means of an armed class struggle.

59. Secondly, Marxists must acutely fight against those reformist and centrist forces which, in one way or another, opportunistically adapt to their own bourgeoisie. If they already adapt to their own ruling class in times of peace, it is guaranteed that they will completely capitulate when the pressure to do so increases. The Japanese Communist Party’s support for its governments colonial claims to various islands in the East China Sea, or the refusal of various centrist groups like the CWI or the IMT to defend the semi-colonial nations who have become victims of the aggression of their own imperialist bourgeoisie (Malvinas war 1982, Afghanistan since 2001, Iraq 2003, Palestine, etc.), are glaring examples of this. These forces openly adapt to social-patriotism. In fact, they are social-imperialists.<sup>28</sup> Trotsky already emphasized that Marxists have observed the concrete policy of such “socialist” groups: *“At the same time, it is necessary to follow attentively the inner struggle in the reformist camp and attract in time the left socialist groupings developing towards revolution to a struggle against war. The best criterion of the tendencies of a given organization is its attitude in practice, in action, toward national defence and toward colonies, especially in those cases in which the bourgeoisie of a given country owns colonial slaves. Only a complete and real break with official public opinion on the most burning question of the “defence of the fatherland” signifies a turn, or at least the beginning of a turn from bourgeois positions to proletarian positions. The approach to left organizations of this type should be accompanied by friendly criticism of all indecision in their policy and by a joint elaboration of all theoretical and practical questions of war.”*<sup>29</sup>

60. Finally there are those reformist and centrist forces who oppose the foreign policy of their own imperialist bourgeoisie by giving – directly or indirectly – support to the rival imperialist power. This is often justified by claiming that these powers are less imperialistic or not imperialistic at all, that they are more democratic, etc. For example various Stalinists and centrists claim that China is a kind of workers’ state or at least a non-imperialist capitalist country. Others claim that Russia is not an imperialist but a semi-colonial or a “pre-imperialist” state. All these serve as justifications for lending

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<sup>28</sup> On the Marxist position in the struggle of the oppressed people against imperialism see Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, 2013, Chapter 12 and 13, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>

<sup>29</sup> Leon Trotsky: *War and the Fourth International* (1934), in: *Trotsky Writings 1933-34*, p. 328

these powers support against the US and EU. Conversely, there are also various petty-bourgeois progressive forces in Russia and China who justify tactical support for the US or the EU because these countries are less authoritarian. All this is a complete betrayal of the principles of proletarian internationalism. Such an opportunistic adaption to a rival imperialist power has nothing to do with anti-imperialism. It is in fact just another form of social-patriotism. Ignoring the imperialist character of Russia and China forces one to walk not only into the theoretical trap of Kautskyanism but also into the political trap of an inverted social-imperialism.<sup>30</sup> Marxists must follow the principle as formulated by Trotsky: *“The struggle against war, properly understood and executed, presupposes the uncompromising hostility of the proletariat and its organizations, always and everywhere, toward its own and every other imperialist bourgeoisie.”*<sup>31</sup>

61. The sharpening of the inter-imperialist rivalry will increase conflicts and wars in the semi-colonial world which are in fact proxy-wars between different Great Powers. An actual example for this is the Maidan movement and the new right-wing government in the Ukraine which acted as a proxy of US and EU imperialism. Naturally, in such cases Marxists must not lend any support for such forces as many centrists have done so in the Ukraine.

62. At the same time, it would be an equal criminal mistake to subsume all struggles in the semi-colonial world as imperialist proxy-wars. While it is unavoidable that various imperialist powers will try to utilize national and democratic struggles in the South to advance their own influence, this does not mean that the struggle for democracy and national liberation ceases to exist as a progressive factor in world politics. This would be a reactionary conclusion which would condemn socialists to stand at the sidelines of the class struggle. In fact it would be a capitulation to the bankrupt methods of *“imperialist economism”* against which Lenin warned already a century ago. As we wrote in another document, Marxists have to *“concretely analyze if a given democratic or national liberation struggle becomes fully subordinated to the imperialist maneuvers and doesn’t possess any significant internal dynamic of a workers and peasant liberation struggle. If this is the case, Marxists must change their position and give up critical support for the national liberation struggle.”*<sup>32</sup> This was the method on which Lenin and the Bolsheviks based their policy:

*“Britain and France fought the Seven Years’ War for the possession of colonies. In other words, they waged an imperialist war (which is possible on the basis of slavery and primitive capitalism as well as on the basis of modern highly developed capitalism). France suffered defeat and lost some of her colonies. Several years later there began the national liberation war of the North American States against Britain alone. France and Spain, then in possession of some parts of the present United States, concluded a friendship treaty with the States in rebellion against Britain. This they did out of hostility to Britain, i.e., in their own imperialist interests. French troops fought the British on the side of the American forces. What we have here is a national liberation war in which imperialist rivalry is an auxiliary element, one that has no serious importance. This is the very opposite to what we see in the war of 1914-16 (the national element in the Austro-Serbian War is of no serious importance*

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Pröbsting: Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 21, p. 32, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>

<sup>31</sup> Leon Trotsky: Resolution on the Antiwar Congress of the London Bureau (1936), in: Documents of the Fourth International, New York 1973, p. 99

<sup>32</sup> See Michael Pröbsting: Liberation struggles and imperialist interference. The failure of sectarian “anti-imperialism” in the West: Some general considerations from the Marxist point of view and the example of the democratic revolution in Libya in 2011, in: Revolutionary Communism, No. 5 (English-language Journal of the RCIT), p. 30, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/liberation-struggle-and-imperialism>

*compared with the all-determining element of imperialist rivalry). It would be absurd, therefore, to apply the concept imperialism indiscriminately and conclude that national wars are "impossible". A national liberation war, waged, for example, by an alliance of Persia, India and China against one or more of the imperialist powers, is both possible and probable, for it would follow from the national liberation movements in these countries. The transformation of such a war into an imperialist war between the present-day imperialist powers would depend upon very many concrete factors, the emergence of which it would be ridiculous to guarantee."*<sup>33</sup>

63. We have to be prepared that the heightened inter-imperialist rivalry will also increase the confusion and economist deviations in the left-reformist and centrist camp. Against this, the RCIT repeats: The struggle against imperialism and capitalism is *impossible* without the consistent support for the liberation struggle of the oppressed people for democratic rights and national liberation. Those, who fail in this task, fail to understand the essence of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and mislead the workers' vanguard.

#### **IV. Crisis of Working Class Leadership and the Building of the New International**

64. As we outlined above, the new political phase bears a highly contradictory character because of its amalgamation of inter-imperialist rivalry, unfinished revolutions, and counter-revolutionary events. Given the absence of an authoritative revolutionary party, this will have enormously confusing effects for the workers' vanguard. This increases the responsibility of the authentic revolutionary forces to provide the workers' vanguard with a scientific analysis of the world events as well as with clear programmatic answers and perspectives. The RCIT dedicates all its resources to fulfilling this responsibility.

65. The highly contradictory nature of the new political phase will also accelerate the outright bankruptcy of illusions in "the unity of the left" which have been so fashionable in the last few years among left-reformists and centrists. We will see more and more events where these groups will stand on opposite sides of the barricades and, thus, prove how idiotic it was to propagate unity at all costs – a unity devoid of a joint methodology and program. (See, for example, the events in the Ukraine, Syria, and Egypt where left-reformists and centrists of all sorts stood on different sides of the barricades.) Bolshevik-Communists have to refine the lessons of the complete bankruptcy of "left unity" and explain the need for socialists to break with such a liquidationist approach. While most centrists pooh-poohed the Leninist conception of a vanguard party, it is now clearer than ever that only a solid program and a disciplined organization can provide the type of leadership the working class needs.

66. The highly contradictory and confusing character of the new phase will also polarize and politicize the workers' movement. It forces all socialists to take a stand and hence will intensify discussions and debates about perspectives and programs. This will provide excellent opportunities for Bolshevik-Communists to intervene in these debates and win the best elements for a revolutionary perspective. At the same time, it will accelerate the decline of the old centrist left. It has already proven incapable of finding an orientation in the new historic period, and has been marked by crises,

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<sup>33</sup> V. I. Lenin: The Junius Pamphlet (1916); in: CW 22, p. 310-11

splits, and decline. This is only natural when organizations with non-revolutionary programs, orientations, and mentalities collide with the sharp contradictions of an historic revolutionary period.

67. We have repeatedly stated that the crisis of leadership of the working class becomes more and more painfully noticeable in the present historic period. The enormous aggravation of the contradictions, the stagnant state of the world economy, the sharpening of the inter-imperialist rivalry, the climate crisis – all these demonstrate over and again what we have been stressing for several years. This period is marked by an historic crisis of capitalism which poses the alternative “*Socialism or Barbarism*” and is consequently marked by acute political clashes which will place the “*Actuality of the Revolution*” on the agenda. As a result, increasing urgent has become the need for the timely formation of revolutionary parties on a national level and a *World Party of Socialist Revolution*, which will be the Fifth Workers International. As we have written in another document, *the tempo of the class struggle accelerates much faster than the tempo of accumulation of class struggle-orientated workers organizations*. Hence, class consciousness and class organizations lag far behind the struggle.<sup>34</sup> It is likely that mankind will see historic events in the next few decades which will decide its future, if it has a future at all.

68. Therefore revolutionaries must emphasise that this is absolutely not the time for Marxists to build discussion clubs and purely propaganda circles. No, even when the authentic revolutionary forces are weak, they must build Bolshevik combat organizations with an orientation to exemplary mass work and agitation, serious theoretical work, clear propaganda and sharp polemics against the bankrupt forces inside the movements of the working class and the oppressed. These pre-party organizations must orientate themselves neither to the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia nor the labor aristocracy, but first and foremost to *the proletariat of the South as well as the lower strata of the proletariat in the old imperialist metropolises*. Equally, we repeat that the forces for new revolutionary parties and the new Workers’ International will not accumulate by the addition, the “regroupment,” or the “left unity” of revolutionaries with left-reformist and centrist forces. Of course there are and will be healthy forces among the socialist left around the world. But only those sharing the orientation towards the new layers of the vastly expanding world proletariat which is joining the class struggle will themselves be able to contribute to the building of the new International. We call upon all militant workers and youth to join the RCIT in its efforts to build a revolutionary leadership which can lead the working class towards victory before the ruling classes suck mankind down into the abyss of barbarism.

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<sup>34</sup> See RCIT: The World Situation and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Communists. Theses of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, March 2013, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 8, p. 41, [www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-march-2013](http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-situation-march-2013)

Figure 1: US Net Business investment has rebounded – but only to the trough levels seen during the past two recessions

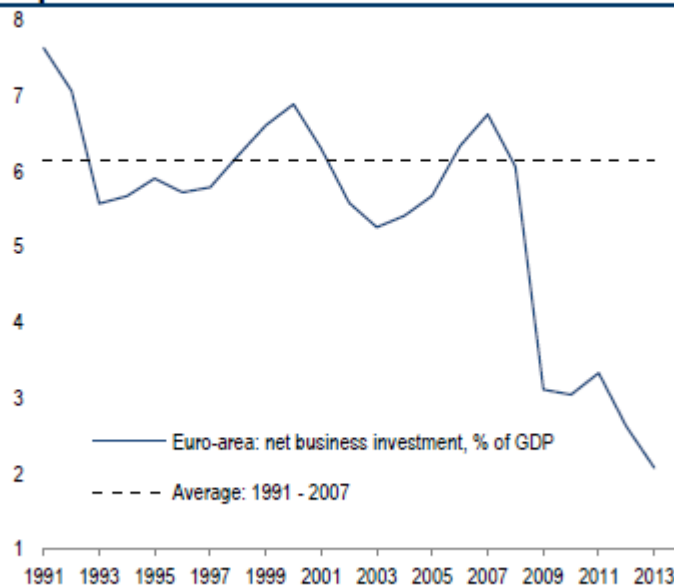
**Figure 9: US net business investment has rebounded – but only to the trough levels seen during the past two recessions**



Source: Credit Suisse Economics research, Thomson Reuters

Figure 2: Net Business Investment to GDP is at a 20-year low in Europe

**Figure 20: Net business investment to GDP is at a 20-year low in Europe...**



Source: Credit Suisse Economics research, Thomson Reuters