

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

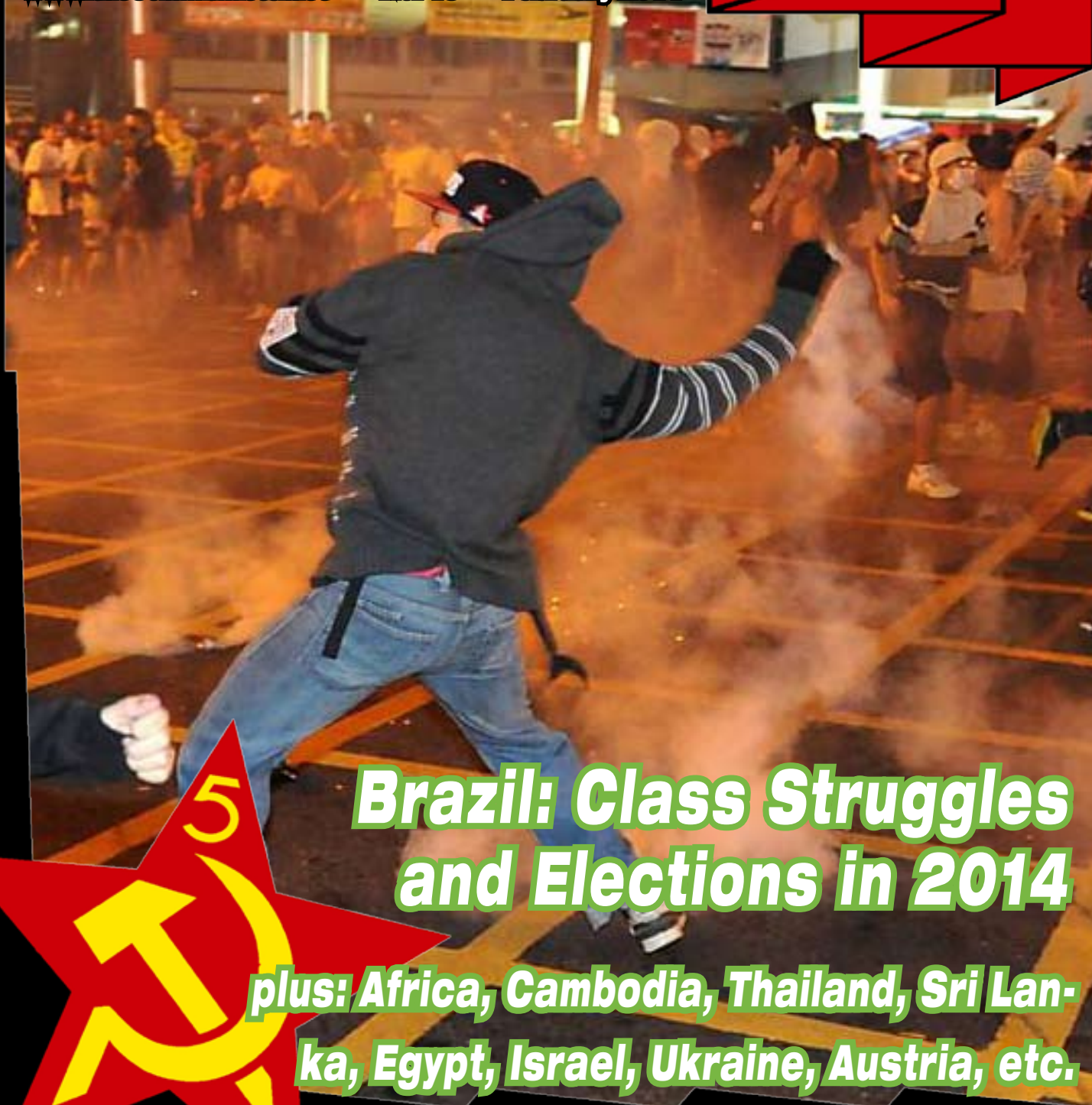


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**Brazil: Class Struggles
and Elections in 2014**

**plus: Africa, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka,
Egypt, Israel, Ukraine, Austria, etc.**

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED UNITE!

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Revolutionary Communism

No. 18, February 2014

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Greetings for New Year 2014 from the RCIT

Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 31.12.2013

Dear comrades, brother and sisters!

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) sends greetings to all fighters for the liberation of the working class and the oppressed! Let us make 2014 a successful year in advancing both the struggle for liberation as well as the struggle to build an instrument for this task: a World Party of Socialist Revolution.

The past year has seen numerous heroic struggles of the masses against the capitalist rulers and their lackeys. We send our greetings to the workers, peasants and youth who have taken part in so many struggles against exploitation and oppression.

Let us give a few examples:

* The liberation struggle against the reactionary dictatorship of Assad in Syria which until now has cost the lives of more than 100.000 people.

* The protests against the military coup d'état of General Sisi on 3rd July in Egypt during which the army killed about 3.000 demonstrators.

* The spontaneous mass uprisings in June in Brazil against high transport prices and corruption in politics.

* The equally spontaneous mass uprisings in Turkey against police brutality and the Erdogan regime.

* The mass protests in India against the regular sexual violence and humiliation of women.

* In South Africa tens of thousands of workers and youth are breaking with the ANC and the treacherous Stalinist CPSA and strive for a radical political alternative.

* The general strikes in Greece against the EU-Troika imposed austerity policy and the mass protests against the fascist Golden Dawn party.

We also send our greetings to those who are resisting imperialist occupation in Afghanistan, in Somalia, in Mali or the Central African Republic. We welcome their struggle to drive out the Great Power mercenaries.

Let us remark that a number of the imperialist interventions in the past 15 years have been ordered by governments led by social democratic parties. These social democratic bureaucrats are simply social-imperialists as Lenin formulated it so well. Equally we condemn the ex-Stalinists of the European Left Party. Their French Party – the so-called “Communist Party” and the Front de Gauche – have directly or indirectly supported these interventions.

Finally we denounce those Stalinists who rally to support the bourgeois dictatorship of the Assad the butcher, who hail the reactionary coup d'état in Egypt and who praise the Chinese Stalinist-capitalist regime.

Equally we reject those petty-bourgeois Islamist forces which mislead the liberations struggles in the Arab Revolution and try to exploit them for their reactionary agenda.

All this underlines the desperate need to build an alter-

native leadership of the working class and the oppressed. As Bolshevik-Communists we say that the struggle for liberation cannot win as long as we have not succeeded in the formation of a revolutionary combat party nationally and internationally. Only such a party can give the necessary leadership for those struggles. Only such a party can transmit the communist program into the masses. It is therefore the central task of all consistent revolutionary forces to focus on building such a combat party.

The RCIT is dedicated to build such a party nationally and internationally. While we are fully aware that our forces remain small compared with the huge tasks ahead, we have every reason to look into the future with full optimism. Building the RCIT is the central contribution we can make to advance the formation of the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

In the past year we have expanded our international tendency from 4 countries (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, USA and Austria) to 6, winning new comrades in Occupied Palestine/Israel and Brazil. We are discussing and collaborating with a number of organizations and activists in other countries and we hope that we can join forces with them in order to advance the formation of a strong Bolshevik international organization.

We have developed communist positions on all major issues of the international class struggle and published them on our website www.thecommunists.net and in our monthly international journal “*Revolutionary Communism*”. We have produced two books – on imperialism and on capitalist restoration in Cuba. A publishing house will publish a German translation of one of them – THE GREAT ROBBERY OF THE SOUTH – in two months time.

We have also intervened in the class struggle: at the Palestinian demonstration against the Praver plan, the struggles of Pakistani workers and oppressed nations, the struggle of the Tamil plantation workers for a living wage or at the teachers trade union congress in Brazil – to give just a few examples. Most recently RED*REVOLUTION – the youth organization affiliated with the Austrian section – initiated and led two school students strikes with thousands young people participating.

In short: 2013 was a very intense and successful year for the RCIT!

We look forward to deepen the discussions and collaborations with revolutionaries in other countries with the view of joining forces. Let us march forward!

Workers and Oppressed, Unite!

Forward in building the Fifth Workers' International on a revolutionary basis!

Forward in building the RCIT!

Revolutionary Greetings,
International Secretariat of the RCIT ■

Central African Republic: Workers and peasants from all communities: Unite to expel French imperialism!

**Bring down the dictatorship of multi-national corporations and army command!
Build a workers' and peasants' government!**

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23.12.2013

1. The “socialist” Hollande government of imperialist France plans to send up to 6,000 French troops into the Central African Republic (CAR) – its former colony. It is using the current civil war as a pretext for its latest colonial intervention. In reality, Paris aims secure its control over the country, so rich in natural resources, raise its role amongst the Great Powers, and divert potential unrest at home in the context of the ongoing social crisis in France. The RCIT calls for the defeat of French imperialism and condemns the French and European left reformists (FdG, PCF/ELP) who either openly or discreetly support this colonial adventure. Workers and peasants in CAR must unite to expel the French imperialists and to defeat the reactionary forces which are instigating communal divisions. The workers' movement in France must break with the social-imperialist leadership and agitate for the defeat of the French army.

2. While the Central African Republic is rich in natural resources, its population is one of the poorest in the world. Its main export commodity – accounting for 40-55% of export revenues – are diamonds whose quality rank fifth in the world. In addition, the World Bank estimates that at least 30% of the diamonds produced each year leave the country clandestinely yielding extra profits for the owners. It is also estimated that this mostly impoverished country possesses the fifth largest gold deposits in the world. In addition, the CAR has large uranium fields essential for the French nuclear industry. All these natural resources place the Central African Republic in the focus of imperialist power interests.

3. Africa's colonial legacy and its continued super-exploitation by imperialist monopoly capital – in collaboration with the local capitalist elite – and its dependency of the Great Powers have made it impossible for the continent to rationally develop its productive forces and ensure that its population shares the benefits of the immense potential wealth in natural resources. CAR is a prime example for this. More than 70% of its 4.5 million people are engaged in subsistence farming. 62.8% of the population lives on less than \$1.25 a day. Less than half are literate. Life expectancy is only 51.3 years for women and 47.7 years for men. Unsurprisingly, CAR now ranks 180 out of 186 countries on the *United Nations' Human Development Index*. 47% of the children between 5-14 years are forced to work in order to survive. CAR's diamond industry depends on the super-exploitation of about 80,000-100,000 mostly unlicensed miners who dig with picks and shovels for daily rations.

4. The Central African Republic's economy is effectively controlled by large imperialist monopolies. The French corporation *Areva* has a large stake in the country's uranium sector. The Canadian multinationals *Energem Resources* and *Axmin* are among the five leading companies

in diamond mining and gold extraction respectively. The British corporation *Pan African Resources* and the US company *Tamija Gold & Diamond Exploration* are mining gold in the CAR. Recently, the Chinese corporation CNPC and others have also become key players in the country.

5. An important factor in understanding the current civil war is the increasing rivalry between imperialist monopolies and their respective states, rivalry which has only accelerated in the past five years due to capitalism's intensified decline since the start of the Great Recession in 2008. On this background, the Great Powers have increased their competition for profits and power. While France and its monopoly capital traditionally dominated its ex-colony, in recent years China has become the second biggest export destination of CAR. Accordingly, Chinese monopoly capital has also significantly increased its share of investments in the country.

6. Since attaining formal independence from the French colonial empire in 1960, the CAR has been run by a series of brutal and corrupt dictators whose rule rests on their support by imperialist powers (first and foremost France) and by the domestic army command. The most prominent of these tyrants have been Jean-Bédél Bokassa (the CAR's one-time “emperor”), Ange-Félix Patassé, and most recently François Bozizé who seized power in a military coup in 2003. Unfortunately for Bozizé, he fell out of favor with Paris when he started cultivating business deals with Chinese imperialism in addition to those with the French.. As a result, Paris became increasingly inclined to drop its support for President Bozizé, a development which undermined the tyrant's suppression of the *Séléka Coalition* which finally toppled him in March 2013.

7. The massive military intervention of the “socialist” Hollande government – the second French military intervention in Africa after its incursion in Mali in January 2013 – clearly demonstrates that French imperialism is determined to secure hegemony in Africa. The “humanitarian concerns” ostensibly behind France's intervention are simply propaganda intended to justify its colonial adventure before world public opinion. At least symbolically, these concerns are belied by the unabashed wearing of Nazi slogans on the uniforms of some French. The three authentic reasons for France's military involvement in the country are, first, to save the CAR for French monopolies; second, to push out imperialist rivals; and, third, to raise France's profile as a Great Power both inside the European Union and worldwide.

8. On the background of utter misery, corrupt and tyrannical regimes, and inter-imperialist rivalry, the country has been marked for more than 50 years by repeated rebellions, coup d'états, and civil wars. The latest rebellion of the *Séléka Coalition* began with the country's Muslim minority – about 15% of the overall population, accord-

ing to the 2003 census. (Christians make up about half of the population.) Many Muslims reside in particularly poor areas of the CAR, in the sparsely-populated northeast portion of the country. This region has traditionally been neglected by the central government and its population suffered repeated abuses during the years of Bozize's dictatorship. Reactionary forces in the country have continually tried to transform the current conflict as a religious-communal civil war; Western imperialism is using this as a pretext for intervention.

9. The RCIT calls the workers' movement and all authentic socialists and anti-imperialists in France and worldwide to agitate and mobilize against French imperialism's new colonial war. The task is to organize demonstrations, strikes, and direct action in order to defeat the French army. We call for support of the resistance by those forces in the CAR who have taken up the struggle against the imperialist invaders. At the same time, we warn the workers and peasants in the CAR not to give any political support for petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces pretending to be anti-imperialist.

10. The workers and peasants in the CAR must unite in order to overcome any attempts by reactionary forces on all sides to instigate communal hatred. Indeed there have been various reports of spontaneous solidarity between Muslims and Christians and about the formation of joint militias against reactionary sectarian forces. This spontaneous solidarity must be transformed into the conscious and nationwide building of anti-sectarian and multi-ethnic workers' and peasants' militias to defeat reactionary communalist forces.

11. The only solution lies in a program which aims for the expulsion of the imperialist troops as well as the multi-national corporations. The key industries must be expropriated and nationalized by the workers and peasants. The regime, as well as the reactionary militia leaders, must be defeated and replaced by a workers' and peas-

ants' government based on popular councils and militias. 12. It is not surprising that the French "socialists" act as loyal stooges for their imperialist masters. Such so-called "socialists" have *always* been social-imperialists and have only become more so recently. The RCIT also unequivocally condemns the French and European left reformists of the *Front de Gauche* (FdG) and the *French Communist Party* (PCF) whose leader, Pierre Laurent, is also president of the ex-Stalinist *Party of the European Left*. These left reformists supported France's colonial adventures, first in Mali and now in the CAR. Their only criticism of the French incursion is limited to advising that such interventions should be undertaken under the command of the United Nations – the robbers' cave of the imperialist Great Powers. Characteristically, they have backed the Hollande government in parliament and the PCF has now decided to form an electoral alliance with the Socialist party in the first round of the upcoming municipal elections in Paris. These ex-Stalinists and new-born social democrats are also social-imperialists who in reality betray the working class.

13. More than ever, it is urgent to build a revolutionary workers' party in France, the CAR, and worldwide to fight against imperialism and reactionary dictatorships, and to lead the popular masses towards liberation. Such a party must combine the struggle for national liberation and against social cuts with the call for a workers' government and a socialist revolution nationally and internationally. This can be only be achieved by an organized struggle of the working class, led by a revolutionary party in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. From the very start, creating such a revolutionary workers party must be done in conjunction with the efforts to establish a new World Party of Socialist Revolution. In our opinion, such a new party will be the *Fifth Workers' International*. The RCIT calls revolutionaries to unite in a Bolshevik organization based on an internationalist and communist program.

International Secretariat of the RCIT ■



Source: Wikipedia, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/Central_African_Republic_Map.jpg

Cambodia: Long Live the Heroic Struggle of the Textile Workers!

Prepare for a General Strike! Build an Independent Workers Party! Fight for a Workers' and Peasants' Government!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 18.1.2014

1. Hundreds of thousands of Cambodian textile workers – most of them women – are engaged in a heroic struggle for higher minimum wages. Their protests have been met with brutal repression by the police unleashed by the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen. At least four workers have been killed and many hurt. Cambodia is a poor semi-colonial country which is largely dependent on and exploited by Chinese imperialism. Its garment and shoe factories are of key importance for the globalized world economy, and the imperialist capital extracts huge extra profits through super-exploitation of the Cambodian workers. The key task is to transform the bold struggle of the textile workers into a general strike for better working conditions and against the government. At the same time it is urgent to build an independent political alternative of the working class – a new mass workers' party – which will fight for a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

2. Cambodia's textile workers are engaged in a militant struggle to raise their extremely low minimum wages from US\$80 per month to US\$160. In addition they demand – among other things – that employers provide a food allowance of US\$3 per day (covering three meals), and that the army and police stay out of labor conflicts. They started their struggle on December 24th, and on 3 January – when the strike involved hundreds of thousands of workers – the military intervened and killed and injured dozens of workers. The struggle is led by a broad united front of various trade unions like the *Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union*, the *National Independent Federation Textile Union of Cambodia*, the *Collective Union of the Movement of Workers*, the *Cambodian Alliance of Trade Union*, the *Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia*, the *Worker Friendship Union Federation*, and the *Independent Youth Union Confederation*. (For details, see the interview with Chrek Sophea in the *Green Left Weekly*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/55616>)

3. Female and male workers have fought back bravely against the police and military and have even set some factories on fire. The violent character of the class struggle demonstrates once more the dangerous illusion spread by social democrats, Stalinists, and various centrists (like the CWI and IMT), that a peaceful road to socialism is possible. The Cambodian events rather prove the famous statement of Marx and Engels at the end of the *Communist Manifesto* that, in their struggle against the capitalist class, the working class cannot achieve their goals without a forcible struggle.

4. Cambodia is a poor semi-colonial country of 15 million people. Its economy is still largely agricultural, the sector in which 60.1% of the country's labor force is working (2010). However it is also home to a small but rapidly growing industry (13.1% of the labor force). The most important sector of Cambodia's industry is the clothing

sector (garment and shoe) which employs about 700,000 workers – 92% of them are women – and accounts for 20% of the country's GDP and 80% of its exports.

5. The country is totally dominated by Great Powers and the imperialist world market. 63.8% of Cambodia's capital formation has its origin in foreign corporations. Given its low wages, Cambodia is an attractive destination for imperialist corporations. Among the foreign investors, China is the largest, with nearly 24% of all Foreign Direct Investment. The textile industry is an example of Cambodia's dependence of imperialist corporations. Only 7.6% of its textile enterprises are owned by Cambodians, while two-third of the industry are controlled by China (41.3%, including 21.5% from Hong Kong) and Taiwan (24.6%). At the same time, Western textile and retail corporations like Walmart, Levi Strauss, H&M, Nike, and Adidas also appropriate a significant proportion of the surplus value extracted from the Cambodian textile workers. Cambodia is an example of the world in which we are living: imperialist powers and monopolies subjugate and super-exploit the poor countries and receive a rising share of their profits from their capital exports to these semi-colonial countries. This is the world of imperialism in which the inequality and contradictions between the capitalists and the workers and poor, as well as between the imperialist countries and the semi-colonial world, are increasing.

6. Furthermore Cambodia is highly indebted to imperialist financial capital. It has external debts equivalent to 40% of its Gross National Income. Again, Chinese banks and financial institutions are Cambodia's largest creditor of and thereby extract huge amounts of extra-profits. The dominant position of Chinese corporations once more confirms the RCIT's analysis of China as an emerging imperialist power which exploits poor countries around the world, and which has become a serious rival to the old imperialist powers like the US, Japan, and the EU.

7. Cambodia has been ruled since 1981 by the thoroughly bourgeois, ex-Stalinist *Cambodian People's Party* (CPP) of Prime Minister Hun Sen. Similar, to other Stalinist parties, the CPP – which represented the Stalinist bureaucratic caste and ruled the country with the help of the Vietnamese armed forces – restored capitalism to the country in the 1990s, while retaining its political power. This demonstrates once again the Marxist assessment of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a petty-bourgeois caste which – if circumstances allow – is ready to utilize the reactionary Stalinist state apparatus (whose bourgeoisified form resembles the capitalist state apparatus and represents the opposite of a healthy workers' state) to destroy the planned property relations and restore capitalism.

8. While Hun Sen's CPP represents the dominant faction of Cambodia's bourgeoisie, which serves as a lackey for Chinese imperialism, the *Sam Rainsy Party* (SRP, Cambodian National Rescue Party) is the largest opposi-

tion party representing the pro-Western sector of the bourgeoisie. The Sam Rainsy Party tries to exploit the workers unrest for their own political ends. Therefore, many workers rightly refuse to support either the CPP or the SRP, and insist that the trade unions must stay independent of them.

9. The brutal crackdown of the Hun Sen government shows that the workers have to organize a massive fightback. They need to organize *self-defense units* to repel the repression forces. In addition, they need to prepare for a *general strike* for higher wages and to eventually bring down the Hun Sen regime. Of particular importance is the need to build an independent *Workers' Party* so that the working class cannot be manipulated by existing bourgeois forces like the CPP and the SRP. A militant trade union movement could play a leading role in the formation of such a Workers' Party.

10. Such a Workers' Party would put together a revolutionary program which includes the *expropriation of big business* – including the imperialist corporations – and the

nationalization of the banks under workers' control. Another important task would be to rally the poor peasants for a program that *expropriates the big landowners and foments an agrarian revolution*. However, in doing so, the Workers' Party has to patiently explain to the workers and poor peasants that sustainable democratic reform and social improvement can only be achieved if the working class takes power and creates a *government of workers and poor peasants, based on councils and popular militias of armed masses*.

11. Such a Workers' Party based on a revolutionary program must from the beginning be built in conjunction with efforts to create a new World Party of Socialist Revolution which, in our opinion, will be the Fifth Workers' International. The RCIT looks forward to discussing these matters and collaborating with revolutionaries in Cambodia and Asia, in order to advance the formation of such a revolutionary organization.

International Secretariat of the RCIT ■



Source: Wikipedia, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/aa/Cambodia_1997_CIA_map.jpg

Thailand: CWI's Disgraceful Support for the Bosses' "Yellow Shirts"

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 15.1.2014

The right-centrist "Committee for a Workers International" (CWI) has recently published an article in which it expresses its support for the arch-reactionary demonstrations of the so-called "Yellow Shirts" in Thailand. (1) The CWI in Belgium wrote in an article: "The world-wide crisis has hit Thailand and sharpens the already existing contradictions. The cooling of the Chinese economy equally had consequences for Thailand. This led to a deterioration of the economic situation in the country. In particular the urban population which is dependent of the industry has been hit. Combined with the continuing corruption of the regime there are many reasons to protest. It would be therefore wrong to view the protests as a maneuver of the 'Democrat Party'. The 'Democrat Party' certainly has joined the protests with strong forces. But the leaders of the protests have no intention to bring the urban elite and the military back to power. We rather see a rejection of the existing 'gangster-capitalism' which is in power and of which Thaksin is the most important symbol."

Not only is the above statement wrong, but it leads the CWI directly into the camp of open counter-revolution. As we have shown in our resolution on Thailand in early December 2013, there is no doubt about the bourgeois, capitalist character of the current government of Yingluck Shinawatra, the sister of the deposed and exiled former Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. However the current protests are not in any way a protest "against gangster-capitalism." Rather, they are an attempt by the neo-liberal opposition "Democrat Party," the political expression of the urban elite and the army command, to provoke a military coup d'état.

In addition, the protests are not in any way spontaneous, but have from the start been initiated, led, and controlled by the leaders of the "Democrat Party".

These reactionaries hate the government of Yingluck Shinawatra and her brother, Thaksin, because they are not sufficiently neo-liberal and because they have made limited social concessions to the urban poor and peasants. This is precisely why the "Democrat Party" has lost every election in the past 12 years while the pro-Thaksin forces have been victorious. Only by means of a military coup in 2006, has the dominant faction of the ruling class and their "Democrat Party" succeeded in bringing down Thaksin.

Having been consistently defeated in general elections, the "Democrat Party" is now trying to prevent the upcoming early elections scheduled to be held in Thailand on February 2nd. Their calculation is to provoke so much political instability that the military will stage yet another coup (as the army command has already done 18 times in the past eight decades!), thereby preventing the elections from being held, all for the sake of securing "law and order."

During the past 12 years, the masses have proven, both in elections as well as in repeated mass mobilizations and bloody street battles, that they are determined to defeat the reactionary "Yellow Shirts."

In its recently published resolution on Thailand, the *Revo-*

lutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) has summarized the consequences of the present situation: "Thailand's main opposition force, the misnamed Democrat Party, is organizing reactionary demonstrations aimed at overthrowing the government. These so-called "Yellow Shirts" are stirring up an atmosphere which could lead to another military coup d'état. The RCIT considers these demonstrations as a reactionary maneuver by the traditional political elite of Thailand. The working class and the poor peasants must organize mass counter-mobilizations without giving any political support and confidence in the government of Yingluck Shinawatra. To overcome the social and political misery, the working class must build an independent workers party based on a revolutionary program which leads the popular masses towards social revolution." (2)

Naturally, the pro-Thaksin Pheu Thai Party is in itself also an enemy of both the working class and the poor peasantry. But in order to break the workers and poor away from these bourgeois forces, socialists have to identify the main enemy in the current situation – the wealthy bourgeoisie, the army command, and their lackeys in the "Democrat Party." Only by taking such an approach are socialists capable of adopting a correct stand in the present conflict:

"As we have said, the main problem is the political subordination of the workers and peasants in the "Red Shirts" movement to Thaksin's leadership. At the moment, a central challenge is to fight against the ambitions of the reactionary army command, the "Yellow Shirts," the King, etc., to smash the limited democratic achievements and launch another coup d'état. Such a struggle necessitates the mass mobilization and militant organizing of the workers and peasants who have been demobilized by the bourgeois Yingluck government, since the latter is hoping for another compromise with the army command. Such a struggle will include temporary blocs and united front actions with the "Red Shirts" movement, and even with those in the bourgeois-populist Pheu Thai Party who are willing to mobilize on the streets against the coup d'état. The goal must be to split the working class away from the Thaksin leadership and to organize them in an independent workers' party. The RCIT believes that such a party must raise the program of permanent revolution, i.e., the intermeshing of the democratic and socialist revolutions, which will lead to an armed uprising of the workers and poor peasants in order to overthrow capitalism and build a workers' and peasants' republic."

The CWI, which notoriously lacks any understanding of authentic Marxism and which consistently adapts to reformism, has failed once again to take the right side in an ongoing class conflict centered on an important democratic issue. Seeing how this has occurred so many times in past, it is hardly by accident. To provide only a few previous examples, we cite the CWI's refusal to support and defend: the nationalist Irish in Northern Ireland against the British state and their loyalist lackeys; the black and migrant peoples in the August Uprising against the police in Britain in 2011; the Afghan and Iraqi resistance against US/UK imperialism; and the Palestinians in Gaza against

Israel. (3)

Once again, the CWI's position regarding the situation in Thailand illustrates how, without any revolutionary program, theory, and practice, a self-proclaimed "Trotskyist" organization is doomed to fail in providing the working class authentic revolutionary leadership, and instead runs into the danger of joining the counter-revolutionary camp. The RCIT is fully aware that there are many serious and dedicated class fighters in the ranks of the CWI. We call upon them to break with this organization which has crossed the class lines so many times.

Footnotes:

(1) In German: Thailand: Proteste beginnen von Neuem, CWI Belgium, 13.01.2014, <http://www.slp.at/>

artikel/thailand-proteste-beginnen-von-neuem-5457; in Dutch: Straatprotest in Thailand: terug van niet lang weg geweest, 5.12.2013, <http://www.socialisme.be/lsp/archief/2013/12/05/thailand.html>: We translate from the German version.

(2) RCIT: Thailand: Defeat the looming reactionary Coup D'état! Mobilize the Working Class and Poor Peasants as an independent force against the "Yellow Shirts", Army Command and Monarchy! 4.12.2013, <http://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-looming-coup-d-%C3%A9tat/>

(3) See on this e.g. 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, Chapter 13. ■



Sri Lanka: The Haves and the Have Nots

by Kamal K., United Lankan Workers Party (RCIT-Section in Sri Lanka), January 2014

Our country is confronted by two crucial contradictions. One is the economic problem which affects every stomach of Sri Lanka irrespective of race, religion, etc. The other is the national question – the oppression of the Tamil minority. There are two societies in Sri Lanka, namely the Haves and the Have Nots.

The small minority of the Haves consists of the capitalist class which comes mostly from the ruling Sinhala nation. They live from the profits produced by the Sri Lankan proletariat amongst which the Tamil workers – in particular the Tamil plantation workers in the central provinces – constitute an important sector.

The haves are led by the ruling clique, which comprise the most powerful families who are loyal followers of President Mahinda Rajapakse and his clan. These powerful families have their representatives amongst the ministers, deputies and other parasites. They utilise the state apparatus as watch dog to terrorize the working people. Therefore they carry out regularly abductions, murder, rape, drug business and so on.

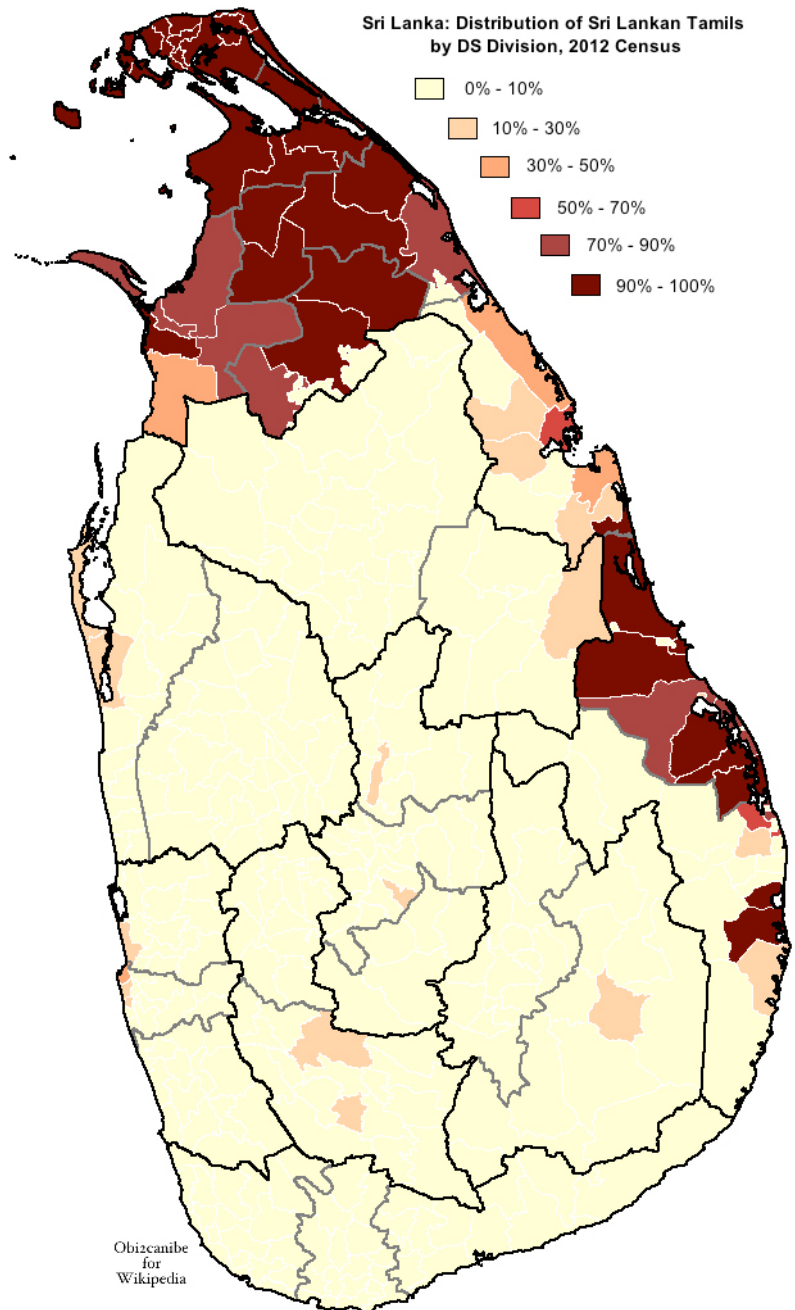
The have nots, on the other hand, are living in deep poverty. They constitute the huge majority of the 21 million population of our country. According to official World Bank statistics 38.2% of the people are living in poverty with an income of less than 2.50 US-Dollar a day. Most of the rest of the people have an income barely higher than this. The majority of those in employment are wage labourers (57%), the rest are mostly poor peasants or urban small traders.

Sri Lanka is a prisoner of its accumulated debt via which the imperialist banks and financial institutions are squeezing the working people. The country's debt is 24 Billion US Dollar which is the equivalent of 48% of its Gross National Income. Its biggest creditor is China, the emerging imperialist power, ahead of the older imperialist power, Japan. These imperialist jackals extract huge profits via the credit regime which is paid by the workers and peasants of our country.

An important tool to split the workers and peasants in Sri Lanka is the national oppression of the Tamil people. 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. They suffered a terrible defeat in 2009 when Rajapakse's army defeated the *Tamil Tigers* – a petty-bourgeois nationalist guerilla movement with strong roots amongst the Tamil masses. The army slaughtered tens of

thousands of Tamil women, men and children and drove hundreds of thousands from their homeland. The Tamils have since long aspired for an independent state "*Tamil Eelam*". This is why we as socialists raise the slogan of an *independent, socialist Tamil Eelam*" – as the Tamil liberation movement formulated it in its historic Vattukottai Resolution in 1976.

The only salvation for the Sri Lanka people is the unity of the working class – both Sinhala and Tamil – in the struggle against the semi-dictatorship of Mahinda Rajapakse and the capitalist class. This is why the ULWP fights for a workers and peasants government which leads the people to a socialist future! ■



Source: Wikipedia, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6e/Sri_Lanka_-_Sri_Lankan_Tamils_2012.png

Egypt: Down with General Sisi's pro-Army Constitution! Boycott the Referendum!!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12.1.2014

Egypt will hold a referendum on its newly-drafted constitution on January 14th and 15th. The vote will be the first stage of what it is called the political "road map" outlined by the Egyptian army after it overthrew Mohamed Morsi, the country's first democratically-elected president, on 3rd July 2013. While we in the RCIT opposed Morsi's rule and supported the progressive mass protests against him, we totally opposed his removal by the army. He was deposed by the army because the US and the Egyptian generals couldn't trust him to put down the popular revolution.

Egypt's Military Dictatorship receives support by Israel and the US

The role of the Egyptian army in the service of the imperialist order in the region can be learned from the Israeli government: *"Israel has urged the US to back the Egyptian military, saying losing Egypt to Islamists could pose a risk to the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday. According to an Israeli official quoted by the paper, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have traditionally played an important role in providing the Palestinians support to stay in the negotiations and to make concessions, and without them there is a chance the talks will fail."* (1)

Consistent with this, note that, by September, 2012, the Egyptian army had closed down 162 tunnels between Gaza and Egypt.

The US is relying on the Egyptian army to support the new constitution. In his visit to Egypt last November, US Secretary of State John Kerry is reported to have said: *"The road map is being carried out to the best of our perception' ... referring to the plan by the Egyptian authorities to conduct a national referendum on an amended Constitution and hold parliamentary and presidential elections by next spring. 'There are questions we have here and there about one thing or another', he added in a joint news conference with his Egyptian counterpart. 'I think it's important for all of us, until proven otherwise, to accept that this is the track Egypt is on and to work to help it to be able to achieve that.'" (2)*

A thoroughly reactionary Draft Constitution by the grace of the Army Command

On track? The new constitution grants immunity to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) for any crime committed by the counter-revolutionary army commanders for a period of 5–10 years. An article of the constitution will allow General Sisi to retain his post as defense minister in the event he loses the presidential election. The military representatives in the constitution-drafting committee also called for allowing the military to name the defense minister during the next two presidential terms.

Thus, if the previous constitution put together by the Morsi government in 2012 was bad for the masses, as it attempted to stifle the revolution, the amended constitution now proposed is an all-out assault on the revolution that began in 2011, and aims to totally crush it and restore the *ancien régime* of Mubarak brought down by the masses.

Muslim Brotherhood and Left oppose the Constitution

Initially, the *Anti-Coup Alliance* led by the *Muslim Brotherhood* had considered calling on its supporters to vote against the constitution. However, the intensive police crackdown on the supporters of this movement, which is destroying its social base and weakening its chances of defeating the new constitution at the polls, is now calling for its supporters to boycott of the referendum. Hamza al-Farawy, a spokesman for the Anti-Coup Alliance which demands Morsi's reinstatement, said that the group rejected any vote under military rule.

The military junta is not only cracking down of the Muslim Brotherhood, but is also repressing political groups and activists who initially backed the July 3rd coup, such as the *April 6th Youth Movement* and the centrist *Revolutionary Socialists (RS)*. These latter groups have also denounced the new constitution because of several controversial articles, in particular one which allows civilians to be tried by military tribunals as well as the unlimited power granted to the army.

On the other hand, Mohamed Salem, secretary-general of the state-backed *Egyptian Federation for Trade Unions*, has said the union will endorse the new constitution proposed for Egypt. *"We should all unite together; so we have decided to vote 'Yes' in the constitutional referendum,"* Al-Ahram's Arabic news website reported. (3)

Salem said the union supports the proposed constitution, in spite of a 50% reduction in the number of seats in parliament to be allotted to representatives for workers and peasants, and regardless of the growing opposition of the Egyptian working class to the new constitution. This declaration of support by the labor bureaucracy is an open betrayal of the workers!

The Struggle against the Army-led Counterrevolution continues!

But the rank and file of the workers themselves knows what is in their own interest. After the coup in July last year, the number of protests declined significantly which led some short-sighted observers to assume that the revolution is finished. In fact, what we have witnessed in the past 6 months are the advance of the counter-revolution, massive terror against the opposition, and violent intimidation of the working class and the popular masses. Sev-

eral thousands of people have been killed and many more wounded and arrested. More than 10,000 members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including its main leaders, are in jail.

According to official figures of 14 Egyptian human rights groups, a total of 2,665 people died between July and October 2013. This is 2.5 times as many (1,075) as were killed during the 2011 revolution which led to the ouster of Hosni Mubarak. (4)

However, despite its brutal terror campaign, the dictatorship has not succeed in breaking popular resistance. In the last few months, working class protests are on the rise, especially those led by the Mahalla textile workers who went out on strike in October, and the Sukhari Gold miners who stopped work in December. Their protests were smashed by the Egyptian police on December 15th. A sit-in of 5,000 steel workers from the Egyptian Iron and Steel Company in Helwan demanding higher wages also took place in December. As we know since the days of Isaac Newton, every motion has its counter motion, and thus the counter-revolution is facing stiff resistance. This being the case, *now is the time to prepare a general strike to once again ignite the revolution that was so severely set back by the coup!*

On December 25, the military-backed interim government declared that the Muslim Brotherhood is a "terrorist organization." Hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members have been arrested. Property of known Muslim Brotherhood leaders and activists has been confiscated. At least 87 schools affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood have been closed. Mursi's trial is to be resumed on January 28. He and other Muslim Brotherhood members face charges of inciting violence against anti-government protesters in December 2012; having escaped from prison during the 2011 uprising; and carrying out a "terrorist conspiracy" against Egypt. These charges carry a potential death penalty. *We in the RCIT call for the immediate release of all political prisoners by the Egyptian army!*

The army's assumption that it can put an end the revolutionary struggle was a miscalculation. On Friday, January 3rd, the largest anti-coup demonstrations since July took place in throughout Egypt. The army and the police attacked participants in demonstrations called for by the Muslim Brotherhood-led Anti-Coup Alliance. According to official Ministry of Health reports, during these latest demonstrations the forces of repression killed at least 14 protesters and injured 62, a figure which is most probably minimizing the actual number of dead and injured. The killings took place in Cairo, the Suez Canal city of Ismailia, Alexandria; Giza, Fayoum, and Minya. According to reports, while the army and the police used live ammunition, some of the demonstrators used home-made guns to protect themselves. Thus, the military dictatorship is driving Egypt to civil war.

The Military Dictatorship is the Main Enemy!

The RCIT opposed the military coup from the very beginning. While we have never given any *political* support to the Muslim Brotherhood, when the coup toppled the Morsi government, we called to form a united front composed of all forces opposing the counter-revolutionary coup that is aimed at restore the *ancien régime* of Mubarak. (5)

There is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood is a bourgeois Islamist organization with reactionary views on many issues. However the immediate, most dangerous enemy of the revolution is General Sisi and the army command, which enjoys the unlimited support of the Egyptian ruling class as well as the imperialist powers (including Israel). The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, is the largest mass political organization which represents, in particular, large sectors of the lower middle class and the urban poor. The bourgeois character of the Muslim Brotherhood-led Anti-Coup Alliance does not alter the fact that it stands at the top of the democratic mass struggle against the dictatorship.

Centrists Stand on the Sidelines

It is a shame that groups like the *April 6th Youth Movement* and the *Revolutionary Socialists* (close to the SWP in Britain and ISO in the USA) still refuse to support the mass struggle against the dictatorship led by the Muslim Brotherhood. Instead they organize small protests which represent nothing. They raise slogans like "*Against Al-Sissi, the Moslem Brotherhood, long live revolution*" and carry banners on the streets saying "*Reserved for revolutionaries, forbidden to Moslem Brothers, the army and feloul*". (6)

All this attests to pathetic centrist ignorance. These groups initially even welcomed the coup d'état of General Sisi! Later, reality forced them to admit that Sisi is not the liberator of the people but rather a tyrant. Today they are still incapable of recognizing the difference between the military dictatorship and those who fight on the streets and give their lives to defend democratic rights against this tyranny!

Prepare for the Overthrow of the Military Dictatorship! For a Workers Party!

The real choice in Egypt is not between the Egyptian army, a tool of American imperialism, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The real choice is between the pro-imperialist dictatorship and the struggle of the working class and popular masses for their rights. This struggle is now taking place in the mass demonstrations organized by the Anti-Coup Alliance as well as the strikes of the textile workers and others for higher wages. Revolutionaries must intervene in these struggles, fight against the bourgeois leadership, and transform the protests into a political class struggle led by the working class. Real democracy and social justice can only be achieved by a revolution led by the working class, a revolution that can only be won by means of a mass, armed uprising that will split the working class and peasant Egyptian soldiers from their officers, and bring them to the side of the revolution and against the counter revolution.

The RCIT calls all Egyptian workers and peasants to boycott the constitutional referendum. Prepare a General Strike against the military dictatorship! Fight for a revolutionary Constitutional Assembly!

Furthermore, we call for the formation of a mass workers' party to fight the coup, in which revolutionaries will be able to openly work for a revolutionary socialist program. Such a program will call, among other things, for the expropriation of the main factories and financial institutions

in Egypt and place them under workers' control. This party will fight for a workers' government supported by the peasants and the oppressed layers of society, including women, youth, and the unemployed.

We call all revolutionaries in Egypt to unite on the basis of an authentic revolutionary program and to seek discussion and collaboration with the RCIT. Forward in building a revolutionary workers party in Egypt as part of the Fifth Workers International!

Footnotes

(1) The Jerusalem Post: Israel warns US: Alienating Egyptian army could risk peace talks, August 20, 2012: <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Israel-warns-US-Alienating-Egyptian-army-might-risk-peace-talks-323642>

(2) Michael R. Gordon: Egyptians Following Right Path, Kerry Says, The New York Times, November 3, 2013 <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/04/world/middleeast/kerry-egypt-visit.html?>

(3) Ahram Online: Egyptian Federation for Trade Unions calls for 'Yes' in constitutional referendum, Wednesday 1 Jan 2014, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/90587.aspx>

(4) Salma Shukrallah: More Egyptians killed post-Morsi than during 2011 revolution: Rights groups, 4 Jan 2014, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/90800/Egypt/Politics-/More-Egyptians-killed-postMorsi-than-during--revol.aspx>

(5) See the following statements, among others, that we have made just before and in the months since the coup of July 3:

RCIT: Tasks of the Revolution in Egypt, July 2, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/tasks-of-egypt-revolution/>

RCIT: Egypt: Down with the Military Coup d'État! Prepare Mass Resistance! July 8, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-down-with-military-coup-d-etat/>

Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left's ignorance Notes on the role of US imperialism in the military's coup d'état and the failure of the Egypt left, July 11, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup/>

Michael Pröbsting: The Military's Coup d'État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics. A reply to the criticism of the WIVP and the LCC on the meaning of the Military's Coup d'État and the slogan of the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly, 17.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat/>

Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the reactionary military regime! Down with the army's puppet-government! No political support for Morsi and the Muslim brotherhood! For independent working class mobilization with a revolutionary perspective! 27.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime/>

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

RCIT: Egypt: Appeal for solidarity after steel workers arrested by army, Aug 13, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-solidarity-with-steel-workers/>

RCIT: Egypt: International Solidarity against the Army Crackdown! August 14, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-international-solidarity/>

Nina Gunić: Austria: Solidarity Demonstration in Vienna against the military dictatorship in Egypt. Down with Al-Sisi! Long live international solidarity! Report on the demonstration in Vienna against the military dictatorship in Egypt, Aug 18, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-solidarity-demo-in-austria/>

Yossi Schwartz: Israel and the Coup in Egypt. Israel's primary concerns regarding Egypt are the possible fall of the military regime or a descent into civil war, Aug 21, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/israel-and-egypt-coup/>

Nina Gunić: Egypt: Solidarity Rally in Austria – Workers and oppressed unite! Down, Down, Down with Sisi! Freedom, Freedom for Egypt! Report from a Rally in Austria in Solidarity with the Resistance in Egypt, Aug 25, 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-solidarity-rally-in-austria/>

(6) Jacques Chastaing: Egypt: Revolutionaries back on the streets, International Viewpoint, 8 January 2014, <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article3235> ■



Austria: Solidarity with the Resistance against the Military Dictatorship in Egypt!

Rally to commemorate the anniversary of the revolution in Egypt

Report by the Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION (Austrian Section of the RCIT), 26.1.2014

About 500 people – most of them members of the Egyptian migrant community in Vienna – participated in a rally on 25 January to commemorate the third anniversary of the revolution in Egypt. The Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION (RKOB) and the youth organization RED*REVOLUTION had also called for this rally which took place in Vienna's city center. (*)

Amongst the participants of the rally were many migrant youths mainly from Egypt but also from Turkey. Among them was a number of school students with whom we demonstrated together at the school student strikes against the attacks on education rights in December 2013. It was these young people who gave the rally a militant and lively character.

The demonstrators commemorated not only the revolution against the old dictator Mubarak three years ago, but also exclaimed numerous slogans against the new dictator General Sisi. Sisi came to power on 3 July 2013 by a military coup. This coup was supported by the U.S., EU and Israel. It was also welcomed by a large part of the left (e.g. the "Communist" Party of Egypt). In the six months since the coup, the new regime has murdered over 6,000 people and arrested tens of thousands.

Activists of the Revolutionary Communist Organiza-

tion LIBERATION (RKOB) and the youth organization RED*REVOLUTION held several speeches. Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT, whose Austrian section is the RKOB) emphasized in his speech the need to link the struggle for freedom in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. Johannes Wiener, spokesman for the RKOB, emphasized in his speech the importance of international solidarity with the liberation struggle of the Egyptian people. Timea, Elias and Rebecca, spokespersons of RED*REVOLUTION, commemorated in their speech the numerous martyrs who have fallen in battle against the military dictatorship. (For photos and video clips of the rally see the appendix.)

Footnotes:

(*) Nieder mit General Sisi und seiner Militärdiktatur in Ägypten! Kommt Alle zur Demonstration am 25. Jänner am Jahrestag der Revolution! Aufruf der Revolutionär-Kommunistischen Organisation BEFREIUNG (RKOB), 16.1.2014, <http://www.rkob.net/international/nordafrika-und-der-arabische-raum/aegypten-nieder-mit-sisi/>

See Fotos and Videoclips at: <http://www.rkob.net/international/nordafrika-und-der-arabische-raum/kundgebung-fuer-aegypten/> ■



Our Speakers at the Rally against the Military Dictatorship in Egypt in Vienna:
Michael Pröbsting, RCIT (left)
Timea, Rebecca, Elias, RED*REVOLUTION (centre)
Johannes Wiener, RKOB (right)



Down with Israel's war on the Palestinians! For A Free Red Palestine from the River to the Sea!

by Yossi Schwartz, *Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT-Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine)*, 25.12.2013

The current Israeli attack on the Palestinians in Gaza began on last Friday, December 20, when Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian and injured four others, who – according to the Israeli army famous for telling lies – were planning terrorist attacks. As a matter of fact, according to *Haaretz*, the Israeli army shot last Friday people who demonstrated against Israel killing of Palestinians in the West Bank. *“Gaza's Hamas-run government usually maintains a large police force in the area whose sole purpose is to prevent Palestinians from coming too near the Israeli border and to thwart rocket launches from the Strip. This time, however, it permitted the demonstrations, apparently out of a desire to allow Gaza residents to let off steam in light of the worsening situation in the Strip.”* (1)

On Tuesday a Palestinian sniper who belongs to the Popular Resistance Committees shot and killed a civilian employed by the Israeli army to repair the fence that is used to put a siege on Gaza. Israel “responded” with air strikes that killed two Palestinians, one of them a 3-year-old girl. According to *New York Times*: *“An Israeli laborer who was repairing the security fence along the border with Gaza was fatally shot on Tuesday by a Palestinian sniper, according to the Israeli military, and Israel immediately responded with airstrikes and tank and infantry fire against targets it associated with militant groups in the Palestinian coastal territory. A Palestinian girl, Hala Abu Sbeikha, 3, was killed and at least four of her relatives were wounded when a shell landed in front of their home in the Maghazi refugee camp in the central part of Gaza, local hospital officials said.”* (2)

Israel's siege of Gaza is assisted by the counter revolutionary Egyptian generals in power: *“The decision by the generals now running Egypt to shut down the tunnels from Sinai into Gaza seriously disrupted daily life in the Strip. With the smuggling of fuel from Egypt halted, fuel prices have doubled, forcing Gaza's government to institute electricity rationing. As a result, residents have suffered planned blackouts that last for about half of every day for many weeks now”.* (3)

This suffering according to *Haaretz* is the reason Hamas allowed demonstrations near the fence: *“It's important to Hamas to demonstrate its sovereignty over the Strip, and it organized impressively to deal with the damage caused by the enormous storm two weeks ago, using both cars and boats to rescue people trapped in flooded houses. But the worsening conditions in Gaza have sparked anger, and some of this anger has been released – with Hamas' consent, if not its encouragement – in demonstrations along the Israeli border.”* (4)

While it is possible that Hamas allowed demonstrations near the fence, it does not explain why the Israeli army is shooting to kill Palestinians including young children. Israel's killings of Palestinians in the last months are certainly connected to the US “peace plans”. *“Violence in the West Bank has increased in recent months. At least 19 Palestinians and four Israelis have been killed in the occupied territory since the U.S.-brokered talks on Palestinian statehood resumed in July after a three-year break”.* (5)

Netanyahu's government wants to show their American

friend that it is impossible to reach an agreement with the Palestinians and for this it needs to provoke a small Intifada that at the same time will be used to inflict serious pain on the Palestinians in order to prevent a strong massive Intifada.

Thus the reformists and the Liberals who have supported the new America imitative have encouraged the deadly illusion that the repression of the Palestinians by Israel can be ended by pressure by American imperialism. In reality, as long as the Israeli Apartheid state will continue to exist the Palestinians will suffer from the brutality of the Israeli army.

The *Internationalist Socialist League* (ISL, RCIT-Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine) calls for an end of the horrible siege of the Palestinian people in Gaza. The international workers movement and the popular masses must mobilize their forces to break the Zionist blockade which is supported by the reactionary military regime of General Sisi in Egypt and backed by the imperialist Great Powers. We stand for the unconditional defense of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the defeat of the Zionist aggressors! We support the calls of militant Palestinian youth for a Third Mass Intifada against the Zionist oppression.

In case of a war, the ISL and the RCIT will stand for the military victory of the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli army without giving political support to political forces like Hamas, Fatah or PFLP. This position is rooted in our principles and program which we applied already in all the past wars against the Palestinian and Lebanese people (e.g. the two Intifada, the wars in Lebanon as well as in Gaza in 2009 and 2012). (6)

The only way to end the repression of the Palestinians and at the same time secure the safety of the ordinary Israelis is by the victory of the democratic revolutionary struggle aiming at a democratic state from the river to the sea. This state can be created only by a workers-led revolution and the one state will be a workers state. Thus we call for a RED FREE PALESTINE FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA!

Footnotes:

(1) Amos Harel: Escalation on two fronts. Israel hoping to settle current round of violence with one swift attack, *Haaretz*, December 24, 2013

(2) Isabel Kershner: Killing and Retaliation at Gaza-Israel Border Continue Violent Cycle, *New York Times*, December 24, 2013

(3) Amos Harel: Escalation on two fronts...

(4) Amos Harel: Escalation on two fronts...

(5) Nidal al-Mughrabi: Israeli civilian, Palestinian girl killed in Gaza flare-up, *Reuters*, Gaza, December 24, 2013,

(6) See on this various articles from the ISL. For example *The ISL Position on Wars*, August 2009; ISL: The Zionist State Tries to Break Gaza Again – and Fails Again; The RCIT respective its predecessor organization (MRCI/LRCI/LFI) expressed the same position e.g. in MRCI: Theses on Zionism, Israel, Palestine and Arab Nationalism (1989), in: Trotskyist International No. 2; RCIT: New Wave of Israeli Terror against Gaza: Support the Palestinian Resistance! Defeat the Zionist killing machine! Statement from 15.11.2012 ■

Israel: Release All Palestinian Political Prisoners!

by Yossi Schwartz, *Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT-Section in Israel/Occupied Palestine)*, 3.1.2014

This week Israel released 26 long-term Palestinian prisoners, the third group of four that she has been forced to release under American pressure. Most of the 26 were imprisoned for more than 20 years. Their release is part of an American-brokered deal, a condition for the current round of the farce known as the "peace negotiations." US Secretary of State John Kerry's plan for "peace" between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is part of a *Pax Americana* for the entire region, and is presented as a plan that will integrate West Bank security units in a planned US-led, anti-Al Qaeda regional force. Simply speaking, it is a plan whereby US imperialism gets to control the region, and is thus part of the Western counter-revolutionary assault on the revolution in Egypt and other Arab states.

Israel and the *Pax Americana*

Israel, which in the past had hoped that it will be able to drag the US into a war against Iran, is not at all pleased with the US plan, as this may force Israel to relinquish parts of occupied Palestine. Therefore, Israel is attempting to sabotage of the American plans for the region. In this light, the ongoing killing of growing numbers of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is by no means coincidental. Rather, Israeli is currently driving by the use of brutal force for the eruption of a premature Intifada which will be smashed and then displayed to the US and Western Europe that "*there are no partners for peace,*" as Israel's Minister for Defense Ya'alon declared on December 26 2013. (1) Or, in other words, that Israel is *still* the main asset for the West for controlling the region and super exploiting it. These tactics may increasingly isolate Israel from its traditional friends. Already, the US is striving for warmer relations with Iran, because it cannot rely on Israel to be the main security asset of the West in the region. As a counter ploy, Israel is seeking closer relations with China and Russia, but it is very doubtful that these states will prefer Israel to the Arab states whose markets are much larger. Today, Israel is facing the same situation South Africa faced in the late 1980s, growing isolation and condemnations by the imperialist states. In order to save capitalism in South Africa, these imperialists were ready to sacrifice the apartheid regime. They relied on the ANC and the CPSA to do for them the job. Today, in our region, they want to rely, among others, on the Palestinian Authority, and this is the reason for the release of the Palestinian prisoners. The US and Europe want to see a mini-Palestinian state and as part of *Pax Americana-Europe*.

Zionist Annexation of the Jordan Valley

Israel, however, is not prepared to accept even such a mini-Palestinian state. For her, releasing of prisoners is cheap in comparison to giving up the West Bank. Consequently, a few days ago, a group of Israeli cabinet ministers endorsed a legislative proposal to annex part of the occupied West

Bank to serve as Israel's final defense line to the *east* of a future Palestinian state, thereby putting pressure on the floundering US-brokered peace negotiations.

This move to annex the Jordan Valley, which makes up almost 30% of the occupied West Bank, was approved by members of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party in the cabinet's legislative committee on Sunday.

The move came just days before another visit to the region by US Secretary of State John Kerry, who is pushing for a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. (2) In the context of the recent release of prisoners, this decision of the cabinet ministers can be seen as a "drawing a line in the sand," so to speak, showing the Americans and the world where the government's most serious priorities are.

The 26 freed Palestinian prisoners were cheered by their families and friends. Eleven of them, who are from the West Bank, were escorted to the presidential compound for an official welcome, while the remaining 15 went home to Gaza. Palestinian President Abbas is trying to present the release as a great victory for his policy of collaborating with the American imperialist plan. While we see the release of these prisoners as positive, overall Abbas' policy of collaboration with the imperialists, including Israel, is a disaster for the Palestinians and the Arab masses of the region.

To minimize the popular celebration, Israel released the Palestinians at 01:30 in the morning. However, more than a hundred relatives and friends from Azmut, the village of Hosni Sawalha and his cousin Muhammad Sawalha, came to greet the two men at the presidential compound. A group of young men chanted "With our blood and souls we will redeem the prisoners," as they danced in a circle. The mothers of the released prisoners were dressed in white, as if for a wedding.

But once they are free there are no guarantees that Israel will not jail them again. Some of the prisoners who were released in the Shalit deal are already back in prison.

Israel considers them as terrorist murderers with "blood on their hands." Israeli newspapers were filled this week with photographs of the Israelis killed by the prisoners about to be released as well as of the families of the victims, holding protests and vigils, but for the Palestinians they are heroes and freedom fighters.

Some of the Israelis killed by these men were from the lands occupied in 1948, which is considered "official" Israel; others were settlers from the lands occupied in 1967 – settlers used by Israel as armed militias to terrorize the Palestinians; and some of them were soldiers who were defending the occupation and the repression of the Palestinians at the time of their deaths.

Even the 2011 US Federal Report -- which profiles terrorist activities around the world -- cites seven "2011 terrorist incidents" that took place in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. Three of these reported incidents were identified as "price tag" incidents, a term which has come to describe, among

other things, Israeli “civilian” attacks against Palestinian life and property. These three incidents included the 2011 vandalism of the Muslim Mamilla Cemetery in Jerusalem, an arson attack on a Jerusalem mosque in December, and another arson attack on a mosque in the village of Burqa in December. (3)

Individual Terror and Mass Armed Struggle

We in the ISL do not believe that individual terror advances the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Rather, the road to freedom must be by means of a mass armed uprising led by the working class, mostly Palestinians, with the support of the Arab masses. At the same time, we reject the hypocrisy of Israel that has continuously used mass state terror to oppress the Palestinians.

Palestinian terrorist actions against ordinary Israelis only serve Israel. The Israeli state uses these actions to launch mass terror against the Palestinians, and these Palestinian attacks only galvanize the Israeli population in support of the use of mass terror by the state. Even though we do not agree with or condone the actions of the released Palestinian prisoners against ordinary Israeli victims, we recognize them as freedom fighters. Unlike the Israeli state, we do not consider the killing of soldiers and armed settlers as acts of terror, but as guerrilla warfare that can be used as tactic at times of working class revolution if subordi-

nated to the strategy of the working class revolutionary struggle. History has shown that, by itself, at best guerrilla warfare can only form a deformed workers state like those in China, Cuba, and the former Yugoslavia, where the new bureaucracy in power blocks any movement towards authentic socialism, and thus opens the door for capitalist restoration. We saw this in the former Soviet Union as well as in China and Cuba, all of which are now capitalist states. China and Russia have become now even imperialist states, where a section of the former “socialist” bureaucracy, has become part of the new capitalist ruling classes.

The History of Terror in Palestine

Israel’s propaganda claims that the Palestinians freedom fighters are terrorists, regardless of whether they act against civilians or the army and the armed settlers. This is the claim that was used by the South African apartheid regime against the black freedom fighters. The tactic of terror against civilians was brought to Palestine by the Zionists colonialist settlers. This is similar to how the white settler colonialists in South Africa, like Israel, carried out massacres of civilians. The most infamous of these terrorist attacks by white South African settlers was in Sharpville and occurred on 21 March 1960.

During the British Mandate three main Zionist organiza-



Demonstration for Gaza in January 2009 in Vienna (Austria): Contingent of the Austrian RCIT Section's predecessor

tions carried out terrorist actions against the Palestinians civilians: the Irgun led by Begin, Lehi led by Stern and Shamir, and the mainstream Hagana. In 1936–1939 during, the Palestinian uprising, the Irgun began terrorist actions against the Palestinians. During this period, the British disarmed the Palestinians but not the Zionist military organizations that acted together with the British against the national uprising.

On July 2, 1946, the King David Hotel in Jerusalem was bombed, killing 91 people. Menachem Begin, who was later Prime Minister of Israel, and who was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace, planned the destruction of the King David Hotel.

On April 9, 1948, a combined force of the Irgun and the Stern Gangs carried out a brutal massacre of 260 Arab residents of the village of Deir Yassin. Most of the victims were women and children. In 1948, there were between thirty and forty massacres of Palestinians carried out by the three Zionist military organizations. This terror forced the Palestinians to flee for their lives. Among the better known massacres were those carried out in Lydia (Lud), Ashdod, Caesarea, Haifa, Kabri, and Dawayma.

The massacre of Palestinians did not stop after 1948. It has continued by the Israeli state and by right-wing groups. On 29 October 1956, a unit of Israeli border guards told the *mukhtar* (alderman) of Kafar Kasam that a curfew is to begin at 16:45. The *mukhtar* told the soldiers that there were about four hundred villagers working outside the village and, thus, there was not enough time to inform them about the new times. An officer assured him that these villagers will be taken care of. Then the guards waited at the entrance to the village. Forty-three residents of Kafar Qasem were massacred in cold blood by the army as they returned from work.

On March 30, 1976, in response to the Israeli government's announcement of a plan to expropriate thousands of dunams of land for security and settlement purposes, a general strike and marches were organized in Arab towns from the Galilee to the Negev. The Israeli army and police killed, six Arab citizens, about one hundred were wounded, and hundreds of others were arrested.

In October 2000, Israeli police killed thirteen Palestinians (twelve of them Israeli citizens) demonstrating in support of the Second Intifada.

A complete list of the massacres carried out by official Israeli military forces follows: The King David Hotel Massacre; the Massacre at Baldat al-Shaikh; the Yehida Massacre; the Khisas Massacre; the Qazaza Massacre; the Semiramis Hotel Massacre; the Massacre at Dair Yasin; the Naser al-Din Massacre; the Tantura Massacre; the Beit Daras Massacre; the Dahmash Mosque Massacre; the Dawayma Massacre; the Houla Massacre; the Sharafat Massacre; the Salha Massacre; the Massacre at Qibya; the Kafr Qasam Massacre; the Khan Yunis Massacre; the Massacre in Gaza City; the Al-Sammou' Massacre; the Aitharoun Massacre; the Kawnin Massacre; the Hanin Massacre; the Bint Jbeil Massacre; the Abbasieh Massacre; the Adloun Massacre; the Saida Massacre; the Fakhani Massacre; the Beirut Massacre; the Sabra and Shatila Massacre; the Jibsheets Massacre; the Sohmor Massacre; the Seer al-Garbiah Massacre; the Maaraka Massacre; the Zrariah Massacre; the Homeen al-Tahta Massacre; the Jibaa Massacre; the Yohmor Massacre; the Tiri massacre; the al-Naher al-Bared Massacre;

the Ain el-Hilweh Massacre; the Oyoun Qara Massacre; the Siddiqine Massacre; the al-Aqsa Mosque Massacre; the Ibrahim Mosque Massacre; the Jabalia Massacre; the Aramta Massacre; the Erez Checkpoint Massacre; the Deir al-Zahrani Massacre; the Nabatiyeh (school bus) Massacre; the Mansuriah Massacre; the Second Sohmor Massacre; the Nabatyaih Massacre; the Qana Massacre; the Terqumia Massacre; the Janta Massacre; the 24th of June 1999 Massacres; the Western Bekaa villages Massacre; the Gaza Cast Lead Massacre (2008-2009); the Mavi Marmara Massacre (May 31, 2010); the Nakba Day Massacre (May 15, 2011).

Some of the best known cases of right-wing Israelis independently undertaking murderous terrorist actions are the following: In 1978, Yisrael Lederman, an army reservist, shot and killed a Palestinian civilian. He was released after serving only two years of his twenty-year prison sentence. In 1982, Alan Goodman, a U.S. citizen, attacked Palestinians at al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, killed a Palestinian Waqf guard and injured several Israeli policemen. He served 15 years of his life sentence and was deported to the United States. Between 1980-1984, a large group of young settlers, who called themselves TNT (a Hebrew acronym for Counter-Terror Terror) placed explosives in the cars of Palestinian mayors, shot and killed Palestinian students at a college in Hebron, and plotted to blow up the mosques on Jerusalem's Temple Mount and to explode busses carrying Palestinian civilians. Several of the 29 members of the group went on to become leaders of the West Bank settler movement. In 1983, Yonah Avrushmi, a Jerusalemite Jew, threw a hand grenade at a Peace Now demonstration near the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem. The blast killed Emil Grunzweig. Avrushmi was sentenced to life in prison, but his sentence was reduced and he was released in January, 2011. In 1984 Yehuda Richter, a Kach activist, opened fire on a Palestinian bus in the West Bank and injured several of the passengers. He was sentenced to five years in prison. In 1984 David Ben-Shimol, an IDF soldier, shot a rocket he stole from the IDF at a Palestinian bus in East Jerusalem, killing one Palestinian and injuring ten others. In 1990, Ami Popper, a 21 year old Israeli, shot and killed seven Gazan Palestinian day laborers in the Israeli town of Rishon le-Tzion, south of Tel Aviv. In 2005 Eden Natan-Zadah, a settler from Tapuah, south of Nablus, a deserter from the Israeli army, shot at passengers of an Israeli Egged bus in the Israeli Arab town Shafa'Amr (Shfaram) killing four Arab citizens of Israel and injuring nine others. Passengers overpowered him and killed him. Four of the Palestinian defenders were sent to jail. For the full list of right-wing terror see: http://peacenow.org/entries/short_history_of_israeli_right_wing_terrorism#.UsJvPNjdUYo

Palestinian Freedom Fighters and Zionist Terrorists

In contrast to those who compare Palestinian terrorist actions with the right-wing Israeli terrorist, we reject this comparison. The Palestinians are freedom fighters fighting oppression while the Israeli terror is part of the repression of the Palestinians. In addition, the terror of the Palestinians in response to the massive Israeli terror is no more than a drop in the bucket.

We say to our Palestinian brothers and sisters: A successful Intifada must be well-prepared and massive, as mas-

sive as the first Intifada. It needs a revolutionary leadership and massive international support; otherwise it will be crushed and only serve Israel.

We demand the release of all Palestinians political prisoners. The so called "peace negotiations" are no more than a cover for the continuation of the oppression of the Palestinians.

Israel and the Western Imperialists push the Palestinian Administration towards Total Capitulation

In spite of the growing pressures, Israel is not going to allow even a mini-Palestinian state. Even US Today writes:

"Israel likely will announce new plans for construction in Jewish settlements next week, an official said Wednesday, a move that is likely to trigger an international uproar and threaten peace talks with the Palestinians. The timing of the announcement would coincide with the expected release of a group of Palestinian prisoners. The government has announced new settlement construction plans during previous prisoner releases to blunt domestic criticism. The Israeli official said he "expects" an announcement on new construction next week, but declined to elaborate. He spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement. Israel's Channel 2 TV said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu planned to announce "massive construction" next week. Channel 10 TV spoke of 1,000 to 2,000 new homes. Both reports cited anonymous officials close to the prime minister." (4)

The imperialists are demanding from the Palestinian Authority to renounce the right of return of the Palestinian refugees – one of the main demands of the Palestinian people:

"French President Francois Hollande on Monday recommended that the Palestinian leadership show flexibility on the issue of the 1948 refugees' "right of return," and in exchange demand a halt to construction in the West Bank settlements as a way to make progress in the diplomatic talks." (5)

To renounce the right of return right would be a total capitulation to Israel by the collaborators in the PA. The fact that Abbas supports the US "peace plan" only proves that the PA is an obstacle on the road to freedom of the Palestinians and must be replaced with a truly revolutionary working class leadership fighting for a socialist revolution.

No Illusions in the imperialist "Peace Plan"! For Permanent Revolution in Palestine and the Middle East!

Some people are deceived by the term "peace plan." For them, peace is better than war. However the real question is: Peace for whom? The peace like the one Kerry is proposing is not peace for the Palestinians but the continuation of the war against the Palestinians, under a different name.

Today, only a very small fraction of Israelis will support a revolutionary struggle. However, Israel is a death trap for the Israelis and a major military defeat for Israel in one of the coming wars may change this attitude. As Jews said after the Russian Revolution in 1917: *"Better red than dead."* Jewish Israeli support for the Zionist state can also be diminished by victorious revolutions in Arab or other countries. This has happened before. The only event that ever split the Zionists was the Bolshevik Revolution that cre-

ated the Communist Party in Palestine that, at that time, was a revolutionary party, unlike Maki of today.

Clearly there is no solution for the Palestinians within the world imperialist order. Only a revolutionary struggle led by the Palestinian workers with support of the Fallahins and other oppressed layer of society, including a section of the Jewish-Israeli working class and the immigrant workers, can win the freedom of the Palestinians and guarantee safe and secure life for the Israeli Jews and immigrant workers. For this reason we call for *Free Red Palestine from the River to the Sea!* (6)

Footnotes

(1) Barak Ravid: Defense Minister Ya'alon: Israel has no partner for peace in Palestinians, Haaretz, Dec. 27, 2013 <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.565765>

(2) Israeli MPs push partial West Bank annexation, 29 Dec 2013 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/israeli-mps-push-partial-west-bank-annexation-20131229174659559902.html>

(3) Barak Ravid: U.S. State Department defines settler violence as terrorism, Haaretz, Aug. 18, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/diplomania/..lence-as-terrorism-1.45908>

(4) USA Today: Israel plans new settlement construction, December 25, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/12/25/israel-settlements/4200747/>

(5) Jack Khoury: In Ramallah, Hollande urges Palestinians to be flexible on right of return, Nov. 18, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.558761>

(6) Our programme for the revolutionary liberation struggle in Palestine has been elaborated in various articles from the ISL. For example *The ISL Position on Wars*, August 2009, <http://www.the-isleague.com/wars>. ISL: The Zionist State Tries to Break Gaza Again – and Fails Again, <http://www.the-isleague.com/gaza-war-2012-english.php>. The RCIT respective its predecessor organization (MRCI/LRCI/LFI) expressed the same position e.g. in MRCI: Theses on Zionism, Israel, Palestine and Arab nationalism (1989), in: Trotskyist International No. 2, <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/theses-zionism-israel-palestine-and-arab-nationalism>; RCIT: New Wave of Israeli Terror against Gaza: Support the Palestinian Resistance! Defeat the Zionist killing machine! Statement from 15.11.2012, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa/defend-gaza>. We have elaborated our historic analysis of Israel as a Zionist Apartheid state and the revolutionary programme for the Palestinian liberation struggle in numerous documents and articles. See e.g. Yossi Schwartz: Israel's War of 1948 and the Degeneration of the Fourth International, in: Revolutionary Communism, Special Issue on Palestine, No. 10, June 2013, www.thecommunists.net/theory/israel-s-war-of-1948-1; Yossi Schwartz: Israel's Six-Day War of 1967. On the Character of the War, the Marxist Analysis and the Position of the Israeli Left, in: Revolutionary Communism, No. 12, July/august 2013, www.thecommunists.net/theory/israel-s-war-of-1967; Michael Pröbsting: On some Questions of the Zionist Oppression and the Permanent Revolution in Palestine, in: Revolutionary Communism, Special Issue on Palestine, No. 10, June 2013, pp. 26-28, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/permanent-revolution-in-palestine>. ■

Brazil: From the June protests on the streets towards the path of electoral illusions?

Report from Corrente Comunista Revolucionária (RCIT Brazil), 11.1.2014

The mass demonstrations in the streets of the main cities in Brazil in June 2013, in which the people expressed their disgust with the traditional political elite and the widespread corruption in Brazilian politics, marked the end of two decades of lethargy and certain political stability. In other words, an entire period without large popular mobilizations ended and the system was seriously shaken.

In late 2002 Lula da Silva – historic leader of the social democratic PT (“Workers Party”) – was elected as president. In his eight years in office, Brazil faced a certain economic stability and a strong growth of its GDP. The country has become one of the main economies of the South and part of the famous BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). This stability allowed Lula to his successor of the PT, Dilma Rousseff, elected as president. But with the bursting of the global economic crisis starting in 2008 – with its epicenter in the U.S. and spreading around the world – the political triumph of PT governments in power ended.

The June Days

This was symbolized in the presence of millions of people in June 2013 in the streets of all major urban centers against the regional governments (regardless of which party was in power), the federal government and the repressive state apparatus. Millions demanded in medium and large cities the end of corruption and impunity and a stop of the theft of public money into the pockets of politicians and businesses. People also expressed their disgust about the massive spending for the Football World Cup, the neglect of public health, rising inflation and the price rise of public transport tickets. The demonstrators demanded radical changes and the improvement of the public services as well as more investment in health and education.

The leftist parties were present with their militants at the beginning of the protests. But they were soon practically expelled and sidelined. The attempt of the left parties – mainly PSTU and PCO – to assimilate with the thousands of demonstrators encountered enormous resistance because most of the protesters were from sections of the middle class or lower middle class. Trade unions and popular movements were not present. The ruling PT and the trade union federation CUT (which is linked to the PT), which could mobilize thousands of protesters when they were opposition in the old times, became one of the targets of the angry protesters this time. It was in this context that leftist groups and parties were harassed and assaulted on 19th June. Everyone who showed up with their red flags (PSTU, PCO and other smaller groups) was continuously followed by a group of protesters shouting “No Party”. There was pushing and shoving, exchanging insults, beatings and shatter of the red flags, which were then burned. Thereafter the parties and social movements continued

their participation but without red flags.

The protests were partly successful insofar as they led to the reduction or cancellation of the price increases announced earlier on public transport in some cities. At the same time, the federal government of Dilma Rousseff (PT) responded to the streets with the promise of political reforms and proposed some social reforms.

On the political level, the President calls for constitutional reforms and by this, she tried to shift the political responsibility for the economic and social problems of the country to the National Congress, which is mainly composed of industrialists and especially landowners. Congressional leaders felt the blow and promptly rejected the proposal. The PT government of Dilma Rousseff had no alternative but to retreat because it rules in alliance with some traditional parties of the bourgeoisie, i.e. it constitutes a kind of popular front government. Instead of a change in the constitution, the National Congress implemented a failed project of political reform. This policy reform had the official goal to increase the transparency of the elections by opening a discussion about who should fund political parties, the national companies or public funds.

The “More Doctors” Program

On the social level, Dilma deployed the “More Doctors” program. Launched on July 8, 2013 it was designed to meet the shortage of doctors in the cities of the interior regions as well as in the poor periphery of the large cities in Brazil. The program aims to bring 15.000 national and foreign doctors to these poor areas. This program will not permanently solve the problem of public health in Brazil, which would require three times as much investment. The purpose of this project is rather to palliate the problems of the health sector and to give an emergency response to the street demonstrations.

Brazil had 388,015 physicians before the arrival of foreign professionals. This is about 1.8 per 1000 citizens. In comparison this ratio is 3.2 in Argentina. However, the distribution of these professionals in Brazil is very uneven. In big cities there are more doctors, while the regions which are most distant of the industrial and commercial centers lack medical coverage. While the Federal District (Brasilia) and the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have rates well above the national average – 4.09, 3.62 and 2.64 doctors per thousand respectively – the states of Maranhão, Pará and Amapá only have rates of 0.71, 0.84 and 0.95 doctors respectively. In the Amazon region the situation has also worsened considerably. And even small municipalities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro State lack professionals. There is the same situation of lack of medical surveillance in the peripheries of the big cities, i.e. the poorest neighborhoods, where many doctors do not want to work.

In late July, a series of demonstrations and strikes were called by associations of doctors in protest against the gov-

ernments program. On 23 August 2013, the *Brazilian Medical Association* (AMB) and the *Federal Council of Medicine* (CFM) filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court to suspend the program. However, the Supreme judged the “More Doctors” program a constitutional project.

The “import” of doctors from other countries, mainly from Cuba, was also the target of harsh criticism from medical students associations. In addition, the parties in opposition to the federal government – especially the PSDB – reacted against the project with a hostile campaign full of reactionary and xenophobic ideology. This became obvious in the speech of the representative of the Regional Council of Medicine of Ceará State who said that the Cuban doctors came to Brazil as “slaves” in the service of Castro and that they are even “incompetent, because the medicine in Cuba is the most precarious”. A journalist from Rio Grande do Norte exposed his racism and class arrogance when he said that

the Cuban physicians “have the appearance of maids” (some female Cuban medical are black).

This reflects the highly privileged status of physicians and academics in general. According to a report of the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD) about the percentage of graduates in the population 25-64 years, this country of 200 million people is ranked at the last place in a group of 36 countries. The report tells us that in 2008 only 11% of the Brazilians in this age group have college degrees. Most of the medical graduates are from the white elite and the deeply reactionary bourgeoisie. Even with programs of positive discrimination of black and mulatto people, like the United States did, there are few blacks who enter the universities – particularly in the disputed areas as medicine, engineering and similar studies.



Source: <https://braziltheguide.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/brazil-map.jpg>

Shameful Capitulation of the PSTU

It was therefore outrageous that the PSTU (leading section of the LIT, which stands in the centrist tradition of Nahuel Moreno) opportunistically supported this reactionary protests led by the CFM against the arrival of foreign doctors. The PSTU's support for this reactionary movement of the medical elite proved completely disastrous when at the end of August in Fortaleza Cuban doctors were greeted by a crowd of angry doctors yelling and cursing, denouncing them as "slaves" (1). Soon after this, the PSTU was forced to recant its support for the CFM movement on its website. It had to explain that it is not a reactionary and xenophobic party. But it was too late. Its support for the right-wing and elitist movement of the doctors put the PSTU in the same camp as the most reactionary political parties in Brazil (2). Later the PSTU itself had to recognize that 74% of the population supports the "More Doctors" program.

We reiterate that the program does not in any way solve the health situation for the Brazilian people. No doubt, this is an electoral project of the PT government. Medicine in Brazil is first and foremost an extremely lucrative business. The rich have at its disposal easy access to hospitals both for treatment of cardiovascular problems or cancer diseases for example. But such treatments are expensive and are not available to the largely poor population. Medicine in Brazil is essentially curative, generating more profit for the pharmaceutical corporations and the hospitals. Unlike in developed countries and even in Cuba there is not as a project of preventive medicine. To this one must add that public sanitation is poor in certain remote regions of the country and in the urban slums.

Since the reflux of the mass demonstrations, both the parties which support the federal government as well as the opposition have made opportunist speeches in which they pose themselves as heirs of the June events. They claim to advocate the same demands of millions of people who took to the streets.

Brazil's Economy in Crisis

Brazil's economy was for years one of the shining stars of globalization. Not accidentally bourgeois economists speak about the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa – to name the most important countries of the South. Brazil experienced relatively high growth rates for a number of years – about +3.7% per year between 2000 and the beginning of the Great Recession in 2008. This economic growth helped the ruling class to keep a certain level of social peace.

However, Brazil could not escape the effects of the global crisis of capitalism. It has entered a recession in the past half year. Its GDP shrank by 0.5% in the third quarter 2013 compared with the previous three months (and minus 1.9% on an annualized basis). According to the investment bank Nomura, GDP might decline further in the fourth quarter. (3)

Inflation stands at 5.8% and is predicted to rise further to 5.92% in 2014, and to 10.5% at the end of that year. (4)

The rise of China as an imperialist power is also reflected in Brazil's trade. China has already overtaken the USA as Brazil's main trade partner and has become the number one country both for Brazil's exports as well as imports.

While Brazil is a relatively industrialized country, is remains a semi-colony, i.e. a country which is dependent on the imperialist Great Powers and super-exploited by the North American, Western European, Chinese and Japanese monopoly capital. Currently foreign capital provides 15.1% of Brazil's annual capital formation. (5) In addition Brazil has to pay nearly 1/5 of its export income to pay for its debts to foreign banks. (6)

Brazil's bourgeoisie will do everything in its power to put the consequences of dependency as well as of its current recession on the shoulders of the working class and the poor peasants.

The Football World Cup 2014 as cover for anti-working class policy

The year 2014 will be atypical for Brazil. Several events will take place which the ruling class will try to utilize to divert the masses's focus from protests and mass demonstrations. Next year Brazil will host the Football World Cup; there will be elections for governors and the president as well as for the state and federal parliaments. It is tradition in Brazil since the late 1950s when it did win world championship for the first time that the federal government seizes the chance to get political dividends. This became abundantly clear when the military dictatorship used the victories of Brazil in Mexico in 1970 to strengthen its popularity as thousands of political opponents were tortured and killed. Since then the people's passion for football has been used by politicians as a powerful instrument of political alienation.

The World Cup is organized by FIFA but it is paid with billions of dollars of public money to build fabulous stadiums. In this way the state is subsidizing the bourgeoisie of the construction sector with the working class taxpayer's money. The hotels industry will benefit from this event too.

Thousands of people are being driven from their homes to create the space for these stadiums, which after the end of the World Cup will be a real white elephant. There is also a public debate about the usefulness of spending billions on stadiums when this money is much more needed to build hospitals, kindergartens, schools, sanitation, better public transportation, etc. The controversy deepened with the declaration of the world famous soccer player Ronaldo Nazario, known as Ronaldo "the phenomenon", who is also a member of the Board of Directors of the FIFA's Local Organising Committee (COL). The former football player was asked about public spending for the World Cup and if he agrees with the huge amount of money used for stadiums for the World Cup. He replied: "Money is spent on safety and health, but without stadium we will not have the World Cup. We can not make the World Cup with hospitals." This statement had a strong negative impact on public opinion. Another famous world champion, Romario, now a congressman from the PSB (Socialist Party of Brazil), declared that "I am not against the Cup; I am against excessive spending being made for this. FIFA will make profits of billion Brazilian Real (tax free), and almost one billion Brazilian Real will enter the coffers of the COL. I am no part of either of these corrupt and unscrupulous entities. The Cup is already 5 billion Brazilian Real more expensive since the first Union budget and you know what is worse? A lot of the plans to improve the transportation

system and hence urban mobility, which would be a great progress for the people, were removed from the agenda, i.e. they will never be achieved." The federal governments own website points out that the costs of the World Cup so far are more than 25 billion Brazilian Real or 12.5 billion dollars. (7)

The government fears demonstrations during the World Cup and therefore wants to pacify the protest movements. Gilberto Carvalho, minister of the Presidency's General Secretariat, said that *"the government will work together with social movements in the host cities of the 2014 World Cup, to resolve problems that may arise as a result of the event. The government's intention is that people have less reason to protest. We hope that social movements can contribute for negotiations, for example, in removing families. We know that in some cities, when people were forced to remove from their homes, to carry out the projects, some treatments of people were not appropriate. We want to fix it. We will continue working to ensure that the population has less reason to protest"*.

The Presidential Election Campaign of 2014 has already begun

Elections are an opportunity for the bourgeoisie to appease the discontent and the protests of the working class. Both government and opposition unite to deflect the legitimate protests and the desires for change by focusing the attention of millions of people to the ballot box. Elections in Brazil take place every two years. After the presidential election in 2014, in 2016, along with the Olympic Games, there will be elections for councilors and mayors in more than 5000 cities around the country.

Recently both parties supporting the government as well as those who are in opposition to it appeared on TV where they presented themselves as natural heirs of the demands of protests of June. In the most opportunistic way, they presented images in advertisements which were assembled as if those parties were among the masses on the streets with their colorful flags making the same demands. This is obviously a scam, because all parties were driven from demonstrations. Of course many members of these parties were present but did not identify themselves as such and were not present in an organized manner.

The race for the presidential election in Brazil which will take place in October 2014 has already begun more than a year before. The former environment minister of Lula da Silva, Marina Silva, who did already run for president in 2010 and got almost 20 % of the vote, left the Green Party and tried to found a new party called *Rede Sustentabilidade* (Sustainability Network). However she was unsuccessful in this due to the refusal of the Supreme Court. The PSB (Socialist Party of Brazil) has broken with the federal government of Dilma Rousseff and its party president Eduardo Campos (who is also the governor of Pernambuco) announced himself as a probable candidate for president. He also indicated that Marina Silva might be his candidate for vice-president.

The main opposition party is the PSDB (Social Democratic Party of Brazil) which was defeated in the last three presidential elections. Again it is faced with the problem that its rival, President Rousseff, has recovered from the crisis in June and has currently approval rates of 43%. The PSDB lacks support in the social movements and the trade unions. The main campaigning banner of the PSDB can-

didate, Aécio Neves, against PT was the fight against corruption. But the corruption scandal that has exploded at the end of the first term of Lula da Silva has not prevented him from being reelected. And to make matters worse for the PSDB, the trial of the corruption scandal of the *"Toucan corruption"* (toucan is the nickname which PSDB is known) by the Supreme Federal Court will begin in 2014 (8). This corruption scandal hits the PSDB at the same moment as former leaders of PT, who are accused of corruption, have gone to jail. The truth is that both the PT government of Dilma Rousseff as well as the biggest opposition party PSDB are deeply involved in corruption.

Furthermore, unlike the presidential election in 2010 the PT lost one of the greatest advantages for the next presidential campaign against the PSDB in 2014– its image as a party opposed to the privatization of the state industry. During her last election campaign Dilma categorically stated in her TV advertisements that it would be a crime against Brazil to privatize the pre-salt oil fields. But in fact Dilma extended the privatization of federal highways initiated under Lula da Silva government, privatized major airports and finally in October 2013, the Dilma government mobilized the police, Army and the National Security Force to ensure the auction of Libra pre-salt oil fields. A consortium with Shell (Dutch, 20% share), Total (France, 20%) and the Chinese CNPC and CNOOC companies (10 % each) and Petrobras (which by law will also have a 10% share) won the auction. According to estimations of the National Petroleum, Gas and Biofuels Agency (ANP), Libra is able to generate approximately 300 billion US Dollar in revenues in the next 30 years of production. Under the agreement, the consortium agreed to pay a signing bonus of \$ 15 billion Brazil Real to the federal government. President Dilma Rousseff said in an interview that the auction of the pre-salt oil field in Libra was a success and that this can not be characterized as privatization. The president said there was a „fair balance“ between the interests of the State and the companies that will explore and produce oil. It's what she calls a *Public Private Partnership* as opposed to privatization. What an understatement! These are demagogic words to hide the truth.

CUT, the trade union federation linked to PT, made some half-hearted protests against the privatization of the Li-



bra oil fields, including its support for the strike of the oil workers in October 2013 which lasted a week. This strike coincided with the auction of Libra. However, on the very day of that auction they criminally failed to mobilize their rank-and-files militants, including oil workers in strike, to participate in the protests in Rio de Janeiro to prevent the privatization auction.

The experience with the item of corruption shows that both PT as well as the strongest opposition party PSDB are very similar. This became clear when the famous "Mensalão" scandal came into the public during the first term of the Lula government. (This scandal involved huge illegal monthly payments for deputies in parliament which the PT bribed.). Meanwhile another "Mensalão" scandal emerged in 2007 in which the Government of the State of Minas Gerais with Governor Eduardo Azeredo from the PSDB was involved. In both cases the charges were related to the financing scheme with irregular illegal public funds and private donations.

After nearly eight years of judicial proceedings in the Supreme Court, the principal leaders of the Workers Party (José Dirceu, José Genoíno) and other politicians of bourgeois parties are in jail. The trial was controversial, as in the case of Dirceu his conviction was achieved based on the assumption that as Minister for the Civil House of the Lula government at that time he *"was aware of and had responsibility for criminal acts committed by his colleagues"*. The members of the Brazilian Supreme Court used the theory of the famous German Jurist Claus Roxin in the sense that even without concrete evidence against an accused, the "domain of the fact" would allow a condemnation. The leaders of PT reacted to this theory stating that it was a political trial, and thus the convicted José Dirceu and José Genoíno are political prisoners. What the leaders of the PT can not hide is that the diversion of public money of "Mensalão" was precisely to ensure passage of the Pension Reform of public sector workers in order to increase the life-long working time for the right to retirement while decreasing the value of pensions. These events showed the working class that it is difficult to distinguish which of these parties is worse. What is clear is that both serve the bourgeoisie.

PSTU campaign

One of the major centrist parties to the left of the PT, the PSTU, announced on December 16 that Zé Maria will stand as its candidate against the candidacies of Dilma Rousseff (PT) and Eduardo Campos / Marina Silva (PSB). On its website the PSTU analyzes its opponents as follows: *"These two political camps, however, represent the same economic model and the same project for the country, which favors banks, corporations and agribusiness at the expense of the needs and demands of the workers, the poor and the youth."* At the same time the PSTU calls the PSoL and PCB for *"the constitution of a Left Front joining the PSTU, PSOL and PCB around a working class and socialist program and to head it we present the candidacy of Zé Maria for the presidency."* (9)

PSOL is a party formed by politicians which have split from the PT. Its goal is to revive the original project of the Workers Party, which has now become the preferred government party for the Brazilian banks and companies. However, in its policy PSoL has nothing to do with social-

ism. To give one example: In 2012 it won the mayoral election in Macapa, capital of northeastern state of Amapá. For this purpose it entered an alliance with both the DEM (the successor of ARENA, the official party of the military dictatorship which ruled Brazil for 20 years) and the PSDB, the right-wing main opposition party of the country. Since then PSoL has continued this alliance which repressed strikes of teachers and other public employees. Characteristically Zé Maria and the PSTU omitted this fact in their call for a Left Front.

The PCO (Workers Cause Party) traditionally launches its candidate for president without alliances. Its participation in the elections as a legal party serves more as party propaganda and it receives less than 1% of the vote in the polls.

For which perspectives should the workers vanguard fight amongst the masses?

The ruling class – with both the PT government and the official opposition parties – will try everything possible to deflect the attention of the working class and the poor towards the football world cup and the electoral process. How should the workers movement fight against this? How can the working class vanguard utilize the electoral events during this year to advance the interests of the workers and oppressed?

The *Corrente Comunista Revolucionária* (CCR) considers it as a central task of the workers vanguard – the progressive activists in the trade unions, social and popular movements, the landless peasants' organizations etc. – to oppose the governments attempt to pacify the protests before and during the football world cup. (10) Quiet the opposite; the coming months are an excellent opportunity to put pressure on the government by drawing the attention of the world public opinion to the burning problems of the popular masses. For the revival of mass demonstrations and strikes to demand higher wages, to fight inflation, to improve the conditions in the health sector, to abolish corruption, etc.!

For this it is necessary to build action committees in the enterprises, neighbourhoods and schools to unite all activists for the struggle. Equally it is necessary to drive forward the formation of a rank and file movement in the trade unions against the privileged trade union bureaucracy. During the June days there have been attempts to build *"assembléias populares"* (popular assemblies). Such progressive attempts of organizing the workers, poor, youth and the lower middle class should be broadened to build such assemblies in all enterprises, neighbourhoods and schools.

While revolutionaries fight against the bourgeoisie's attempt to channel the popular anger into the electoral process, they certainly do not ignore this terrain of struggle. Quiet the opposite; they will try to utilize elections to put forward a revolutionary perspective.

The CCR proposes to the workers vanguard militants to utilize the mass mistrust against the official parties of the bourgeoisie in order to advance the discussion amongst the working class about a political program as well as an alternative party. An important part of this discussion must be the formation of a new and authentic Working Class Party created out of their midst of the workers and poor and controlled by them.

For popular assemblies of the workers, poor and youth to discuss a program for the elections as well as to elect candidates from its midst! Similarly they should call to have a similar process inside the trade unions. The unions should break with their slavish subordination under the PT bureaucracy as well as other bourgeois parties! Revolutionaries should fight for a revolutionary Action Program as the basis for such a new Working Class Party without making it a precondition for its participation.

Revolutionaries should oppose the government's plans to either hold a referendum about political reforms or to elect a "selective" Constituent Assembly. If there are issues concerning the constitution to decide, the CCR proposes that the workers movement fights for a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly!

The task of revolutionaries is to elaborate and spread a revolutionary Action Program which deals with the most important issues of the class struggle – wages, inflation, poverty, oppression of women as well as black people, corruption, etc. – and links them with the perspective of expropriation of the bourgeoisie, nationalization of the industry and banks under workers control and the formation of a workers and poor government based on workers and popular councils and militias.

Most importantly, the workers vanguard must build a revolutionary party as part of the Fifth Workers International. Without a revolutionary combat party, the working class can never succeed in overthrowing the bourgeoisie via a socialist revolution. But without such a revolution, the people can never end the misery of capitalist exploitation and oppression!

As a first step, authentic revolutionaries should unite today in a Bolshevik organization on the basis of a revolutionary program. This is what the CCR and its international comrades of the RCIT are fighting for. Join us!

Footnotes

- (1) Médicos cubanos são vaiados por manifestantes em Fortaleza, 27.8.2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_n_HF4ukmJo
- (2) PSTU: Capitalismo, crise social e barbárie, 4.9.2013, <http://www.pstu.org.br/node/19980>
- (3) See Economist Brazil's economy: The deterioration.

Slow growth, stubborn inflation and mounting deficits, Dec 7th 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21591196-slow-growth-stubborn-inflation-and-mounting-deficits-deterioration>

(4) See David Biller: Brazil Economy Shrinks More Than Forecast on Investment Fall, Dec 3, 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-12-03/brazil-economy-shrinks-more-than-forecast-on-falling-investment.html>

(5) World Investment Report 2013: Annex Tables 05, <http://unctad.org/en/pages/DIAE/World%20Investment%20Report/Annex-Tables.aspx>

(6) World Bank: International Debt Statistics 2013, p. 82

(7) <http://www.portaltransparencia.gov.br/copa2014/home.seam>

(8) Dilma diz que é um crime privatizar a Petrobrás e o Pré-Sal, 17.9.2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLuKNgyBWx0>

(9) PSTU: Zé Maria's presidential candidacy statement, 2.1.2014 http://www.litci.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2400:ze-marias-presidential-candidacy-statement&catid=8:brazil&Itemid=61

(10) For our assessment of the class struggle in Brazil in 2013 we refer readers to our past articles:

The Fight for the Right to Public Transportation - Free and With Quality - Under Control of Workers in Brazil, 14.6.2013, El Mundo Socialista, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-fight-for-public-transportation/>;

Brazil: Solidarity with the Popular Uprising! Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and Blog El Mundo Socialista (Brazil), 19.6.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-solidarity-with-popular-uprising/>;

Brazil: Before the General Strike on 11th July, 2.7.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-general-strike-on-11-7/>;

Brazil: Trade Union Bureaucracy limits Workers' Resistance to symbolic Actions. A report on the National Day of Struggle on 30 August, 2.9.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brasil-national-day-of-struggle-on-30-8/>;

Brazil: Indefinite Nationwide Strike of Bank Workers!, 20.9.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-bank-workers-strike/> ■

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Ukraine: Neither Brussels nor Moscow! For an independent Workers' Republic!

A reactionary opposition mobilizes against a reactionary government. For independent working class mobilizations against both factions of the ruling class!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 18.12.2013

1. For several weeks Ukraine has been marked by mobilizations both against and for the country's accession to the European Union. At the same time, these demonstrations have also been mobilizations both against and for support of the government of President Viktor Yanukovich. Behind this conflict lies a struggle between different sections of Ukraine's ruling class. Ukraine is a semi-colonial country which is split between the dominant imperialist powers to its East and West – the European Union and Russia. The RCIT maintains that class conscious workers and socialists must support neither the pro-EU nor the pro-Russian faction of the capitalist class. The present mobilizations don't represent an independent organization of workers and youth to advance their interests, but rather the attempt of the right-wing and fascist faction of the bourgeoisie to bring down the equally reactionary Yanukovich government. It is urgent that class conscious workers and socialists advance an independent working class viewpoint and build militant trade unions as well as a Workers' Party based on a revolutionary program.

2. The recent protest demonstrations began in late November after Ukraine's government of President Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign an *Association Agreement* with the European Union. These demonstrations were instigated by an alliance consisting primarily of three parties: two right wing capitalist parties (the *Fatherland Party* of Arseniy Yatsenyuk and the imprisoned Yulia Tymoshenko as well as the *Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform* [UDAR] led by the professional boxer Vitali Klitschko). In addition, the fascist *Svoboda* (Freedom) party under the leadership of Oleg Tyagnibok joined this alliance. This opposition coalition has the full support of EU and US imperialism who openly demonstrate this by sending leading representatives like US senators John McCain and Chris Murphy as well as Elmar Brok (chairman of the European Parliament Foreign Policy Committee) to address the protest rallies. This foreign intrusion is the political expression of Western imperialism's advance in the Ukraine.

3. Russian imperialism is also trying to draw the Ukraine into its sphere of influence. Ukraine is highly dependent on Russia which is by far Kiev's largest trading partner (accounting for about 22-23% of Ukraine's imports and exports). Russian monopoly capital is one of the three big foreign investors in Ukraine (alongside Germany and Austria). Russian corporations like Gazprom, Lukoil, TNK BP, RUSAL, and the Alfa Group dominate the oil refining, metallurgy, and aluminum sectors, and also play a leading role in other key industries like gas and telecommunications. Chinese corporations are also increasingly active in making foreign investments in Ukraine's fertile agricultural sector in addition to others.

4. The Putin regime is pressuring Yanukovich to join the *Customs Union* of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia as well as the *Eurasian Economic Community* as a full member. The *Eurasian Economic Community* is an instrument dominated by Russian imperialism and currently includes the full member states Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (suspended), as well as Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine as observers. Both EU imperialism and Russian imperialism hope to drag the Ukraine into their respective orbits in order to increase their exploitation of the country and to increase, each its own, geopolitical influence.

5. The current conflict reflects divisions inside the Ukraine capitalist class which is dominated by a handful of oligarchs. The "*Donets Clan*", led by the country's richest billionaire Rinat Achmetov, represents the coal and mining capitalists in the Ukraine's east, which traditionally has close relations with Russia. President Yanukovich is the representative of the "*Donets Clan*". Another clan led by the oligarch Dmitry Firtash is based on corporations in the chemical and gas industry and controls the largest TV group "*Inter*." This group also has close connections with the camp of President Yanukovich and his *Party of Regions*, but gives tactical support for Klitschko's UDAR as well.

6. These different factions of Ukraine's ruling class are divided on how they can best raise their profits. They are torn and thus waver between the two imperialist Great Powers on their borders – the EU and Russia. The RCIT sees the campaign of the European Union to have Ukraine's government sign the *Association Agreement* as part of its drive to re-colonize the Ukraine. The EU is an imperialist bloc dominated by two great powers, Germany and France. Russia's pressure to drag the Ukraine into its *Customs Union* and its *Eurasian Economic Community* reflects basically the same desire. Moscow also wants to re-colonize the Ukraine.

7. The Ukraine itself is a capitalist semi-colony which is oppressed and exploited by both Western and Eastern imperialist powers. In the Ukraine – like in the rest of the former USSR – the aborted political revolution against the tyrannical Stalinist bureaucracy in 1989-91 led to the victory of the capitalist counter-revolution and the destruction of the planned economy and its social achievements. As a result, mass impoverishment and unemployment spread. According to the IMF, real wages in 1998 had fallen by more than 75% in relation to their 1991 level. Life expectancy declined by four years during this period. The destruction of the productive forces caused by the restoration of capitalism has been so devastating that Ukraine's output measured by its Gross Domestic Product today is still 35% below its level of 1989! The Great Recession of the

capitalist world economy in 2008/09 – which launched an historic world-wide revolutionary period in the wake of the continuing decline of capitalism – had a massive impact on Ukraine’s manufacturing. Industrial production first dropped by 5.2% (2008) and subsequently collapsed a further, staggering 21.9% (2009). Today, official unemployment figures stand at 8.5%.

8. In addition to the increasing domination of Ukraine’s industry by foreign corporations, the country’s banking sector is also characterized by a strong presence of imperialist capital. The share of foreign capital in the Ukraine’s banks amounts to 41.8% (2012), of which the three biggest foreign investors are Austrian, French, and Russian banks. Ukraine is also increasingly indebted to imperialist financial capital. In recent years, the country’s gross foreign debt has grown massively and, at the end of the first half of 2013, totaled \$134.4 billion, the equivalent of 75.7% of its Gross Domestic Product. All this further emphasizes that Ukraine is an industrialized but impoverished capitalist semi-colony dominated by Western and Eastern imperialist powers.

9. For these reasons, the RCIT opposes Ukraine’s joining either the European Union or Russia’s empire. We are aware that such a refusal by Ukraine to join both of the imperialist camps can only be a *first* step on the road to achieving true national independence. Such authentic independence is *only* possible if the working class in the Ukraine abolishes capitalism and builds an independent Workers’ Republic as part of a socialist federation of Europe and Asia. However, as a first step, we support those workers organizations in the Ukraine which oppose integration into both the EU and Russia’s empire.

10. As we have explained above, the recent mobilizations of demonstrators in favor of signing the *Association Agreement* with the European Union has absolutely no progressive character whatsoever. Of course, there are a number of people among the protestors who authentically hate the government and the misery in which they are forced to live. In spite of the non-progressive character of the demonstrations, we equally oppose the brutal police tactics against the protestors. But both the reactionary agenda of the protests (attempting to lead the Ukraine into the imperialist EU) and their thoroughly reactionary leadership (the Fatherland Party, UDAR, and the Svoboda-Nazis) make it clear that this is not an authentic popular democratic movement which could or should be supported by communists. Neither would it be legitimate for us communists to give any support to the pro-government mobilizations, or to the counter-demand to lead the Ukraine into the *de facto* Russian empire (*Customs Union* and *Eurasian Economic Community*). We do not exclude, in advance, the possibility that a massive crackdown of the movement by the Yanukovych regime might change the character of the demonstrations and transforms them into legitimate democratic resistance. But this is not presently the case.

11. Bolshevik-Communists condemn the so-called “Communist Party of Ukraine” (KPU). This party supports capitalism and was part of the part of first Azarov Government in 2010-2012 (together with the bourgeois Bloc Lytvyn and the Party of Regions). Today the leadership around Petro Symonenko supports the government and demands Ukraine’s entry into the Russia-dominated *Cus-*

toms Union. So while UDAR and the Fatherland Party are instruments of EU imperialism, the KPU is a tool of Russian imperialism.

12. The RCIT maintains that the working class must adopt an independent position in this conflict, and refuse to side with either camp of the greedy oligarchs and their parties, whether those in the government or in the opposition. Workers’ must equally refuse to side with the EU or Russian imperialism and reject Ukraine’s joining one of the two sides in what amounts to a conflict between two different imperialist camps. The only way forward is for workers to bring together their defense of their living conditions, their democratic rights, and the country’s independence by struggling for a workers’ government and a socialist revolution in Ukraine and throughout Eastern Europe. This can be only be achieved by an organized struggle of the working class, led by a revolutionary party in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. Under the present circumstances, where the working class lacks any meaningful mass organizations, it is essential to build strong and militant trade union and mass organizations of working men, women, and youth. Most important, is the creation of an independent workers’ party based on a revolutionary program.

13. From the very start, creating such a revolutionary workers party must be done in conjunction with the efforts to establish a new World Party of Socialist Revolution. In our opinion, such a new party will be the *Fifth Workers’ International*. The RCIT calls revolutionaries in the Ukraine to unite in a Bolshevik organization based on an internationalist and communist program. We look forward to discussing these issues and collaborating with revolutionaries in the Ukraine, in order to advance the formation of such a revolutionary organization.

International Secretariat of the RCIT ■



Austria: The Great Second School Student Strike on 12.12.2013!

Report from Red*REVOLUTION (Youth Organization affiliated with the Austrian Section of the RCIT), 12.12.2013

At least 5.000 school students marched today through the inner city of Vienna in protest against attacks on education rights. In addition smaller demonstrations of school students in other Austrian cities took place. The school student strike was called by Red*REVOLUTION (the youth organization affiliated with the Austrian Section of the RCIT). It was a protest march not only against the plans of the Austrian government to increase the pressure on school students for their final exams. It was also a protest march against the capitulation of the official leadership of the school student "trade union" which accepted these attacks.

As we already reported, Red*REVOLUTION has initiated these protests. We organized a first school student strike in Vienna on 6.12. (1) When the official school students leadership capitulated in secret negotiations with the government and called off a planned strike on 12.12., Red*REVOLUTION immediately started to mobilize for a strike on that day. This received a huge response amongst the school students and caused other organizations – including the school student organization of the social

democratic party – to join the strike. The social democratic student group has opposed our strike campaign from the beginning and instead supported the tactic of negotiations and delays of protests. This was no surprise since the minister of education who is responsible for the attacks is from the social democratic party in the coalition government.

Red*REVOLUTION mobilized in many schools for the strike. At the demonstration we organized a huge and militant contingent as can be seen in photos and videos on our website. (See the links below)

As a revolutionary organization we combined the protest against the attacks on education with anti-racist slogans as well as slogans in solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle. This also reflects the composition of our contingent as well as of the Red*REVOLUTION membership which is working class with a high share of migrant youth. A number of the school students in our contingent – many of them not members of our organization – knew us already from the demonstrations in solidarity with Palestine in November 2012 and against the military coup in Egypt in the last few months.



Red*REVOLUTION (Youth Organization affiliated with the Austrian RCIT Section)

It should be mentioned that the social democratic school student group and the centrists (CWI, IMT, Workers Power/LFI) formed an unholy alliance against *Red*REVOLUTION*. They used their financial resources (the social democratic youth group receives regularly huge sums from their mother party) to organize and to monopolize the loud speaker bus and to stop us leading the demonstration. This created some chaos and disorganization in that part of the demonstration which they dominated with their technical means. However despite their united efforts to weaken the dominance of *Red*REVOLUTION* at the demonstration, they could not avoid making it visible to all school students that our organized contingent was many times bigger than theirs. The difference between our contingent and theirs existed not only in size but also in discipline. While we had a well organized and highly disciplined contingent with many stewards (see pictures of our contingent), their contingent was completely chaotic. As a result a number of dangerous actions (throwing bottles etc.) took place in their area which injured several school students. They could not suppress this since they didn't have a considerable steward team.

The demonstration proved again that *Red*REVOLUTION* has grown massively in the past weeks and has become a significant force amongst the vanguard of the school students. The struggle continues!

Footnotes

(1) See our reports in English language: Austria: School Students protest against attack on education rights! 25.11.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/austrian-school-students-protest/>; Austria: School Students go on strike for their education rights! 5.12.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/austria-school-student-strike/>; Austria: Successful School Student Strike on 6.December 2013! 6.12.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/austria-successful-school-student-strike/>; Austria: Red*REVOLUTION calls for a second School Student Strike on December 12! 10.12.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/austria-2-school-student-strike-on-12-12/>

For more reports in German language go to the website of *Red*REVOLUTION* at: <http://www.redrevolution.at>

Links to pictures and videos on the *Red*REVOLUTION* website:

<http://www.redrevolution.at/inland-1/fotos-und-videos-12-12/>

We plan to upload more photos and videos in the coming days. Watch out!

Some links to reports in bourgeois media:

ÖSTERREICH: Mega-Demo: 4.000 Schüler legen Wien lahm, <http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/Mega-Demo-4-000-Schueler-legen-Wien-lahm/124630932>

Die PRESSE: http://diepresse.com/home/bildung/1503575/Demonstration_Wie-sollen-wir-die-Matura-schaffen?gal=1503575&index=7&direc=t=&_vl_backlink=/home/index.do&popup=

DER STANDARD: <http://derstandard.at/1385170820609/Zentralmatura-Tausende-Schueler-gingen-gegen-Reform-auf-die-Strasse>

Kronen Zeitung: Schüler- Demos gegen Zentralmatura in 6 Städten, http://www.krone.at/Oesterreich/Schueler-Demos_gegen_Zentralmatura_in_6_Staedten-Nein_danke!-Story-386160

Kurier: Tausende Schüler demonstrieren gegen Zentralmatura, <http://kurier.at/politik/inland/tausende-schueler-demonstrieren-gegen-zentralmatura/40.502.629> ■



and RKOB at the School Strike Demonstration at 12.12.2013 in Vienna

Austria: Successful Conference of Red*REVOLUTION and Greetings to Revolutionaries around the World

Report by the Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION (RCIT Section in Austria), 21.12.2013

Red*REVOLUTION, youth organization affiliated to the Austrian RCIT Section, hold its conference on 19th and 20th December. The conference took place after five weeks of massive campaigning and organizing of two school student strikes against attacks on education rights. As we reported Red*REVOLUTION had a very successful intervention in the mass movement and played a leading role in it.

As a result the youth organization could win many new members – nearly all of them between 14 and 16 years old – from the 13 different schools. These comrades succeeded to build committees of action on a number of schools in Vienna. It was its biggest conference since the movement was founded 14 years ago (initially under the name REVOLUTION).

In this context we point out that the centrist groups (CWI, IMT and Workers Power/LFI) had joined forces to call a school student strike on 18.12. without any serious preparation and roots. They hoped to gain something from the mass movement after they ignored it for several weeks and after the unsuccessfully joined forces with the social democratic youth group during the mass demonstration on 12.12. to bureaucratically sideline Red*REVOLUTION.

However their “school student strike” ended in embarrassment. At the assembly point no more than 100-150 activists of CWI, IMT and Workers Power/LFI and some school students turned up. This was a fifth of the people which Red*REVOLUTION alone had mobilized on 6th December! The centrist organizers decided to end the farce and called off the demonstration. Red*REVOLUTION refused to participate in this ridiculous “strike” and had warned in advance against this stupid maneuver which could only put risk on the school student activists given the repression by the school administration. In a public statement we characterized it as a “phantom school student strike” which only demonstrated that CWI, IMT and Workers Power/LFI have no roots amongst the school students.

The conference received greetings from RCIT sections and activists including a video message from TIGRE, the youth group affiliated to the ISL (RCIT Section in Occupied Palestine/Israel). It also received greetings from revolutionary organizations and activists in South Africa, Zimbabwe, USA, New Zealand and Australia. It also heard a short speech of the RCIT’s International Secretary.

The conference discussed and adopted three resolutions. One of them elaborated the perspective how to continue



Red*REVOLUTION (Youth Organization affiliated with the Austrian RCIT Section)

the struggle against the attacks on education rights and the need to link it with the fight back against the whole offensive of the capitalist class against the workers and oppressed. A second resolution elaborated the need to fight capitalism and orientation of the youth organization towards building amongst the working class youth and the oppressed. The third statement expressed greetings to revolutionaries around the world and emphasized the determination of *Red*REVOLUTION* to work closely with the Austrian RCIT section. The three resolutions will be published in German language soon. (Below you find a translation of the third resolution.)

At the end of the conference, delegates elected a new leadership of 9 comrades which reflected the massively increased membership. In addition the conference also elected a representative of *Red*REVOLUTION* who will participate at the leadership meetings of the Austrian RCIT Section. Four of these 10 leading comrades are women and half are migrant youth. We look forward to continue the successful work of *Red*REVOLUTION* and the Austrian RCIT section in 2014!

* * *

Revolutionary Greetings to All Oppressed and Exploited of the World!

*Statement of the Red*REVOLUTION Conference,
19th and 20th December 2013*

*Red*REVOLUTION* is a youth organization which is inde-

pendent of all parties in parliament. Our goal is to build a revolutionary youth movement which fights shoulder to shoulder with the working class struggles against capitalism and against any attack on us. We want to build a revolutionary youth movement which primarily comes from the ranks of the working class.

All existing parties can not and will not support our revolutionary program. We therefore also dedicate our forces to build of a new revolutionary party of the workers and oppressed (including us as young people) not only for Austria but worldwide.

In this spirit our conference sends revolutionary greetings to all workers and oppressed of the world!

We send our greetings to the *Revolutionary Communist Tendency International (RCIT)*, our partner in struggle, and their sections in each country! We come from the same tradition and fight as political brothers and sisters for building a strong revolutionary movement!

We therefore call our comrades of the RCIT to support our project to build a militant revolutionary youth movement. The goal of *Red*REVOLUTION* is the construction of an international revolutionary youth organization!

This means that we ask the RCIT via its Austrian section (*Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION, RKOB*) to support in the coming years the building of a politically affiliated and organizationally independent youth organization. Together we can build a strong, militant revolutionary youth movement! Together we can achieve in the coming years the formation of a revolutionary party of the exploited and oppressed of the world! ■



and RKOB at the School Strike Demonstration at 12.12.2013 in Vienna

Theses on Revolutionary Trade Union Policy

Resolution of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, January 2014

Introduction:

The following set of theses summarizes the theoretical understanding of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) regarding trade unions and the tasks of revolutionaries in trade union work. While such theoretical understanding is a necessary precondition for a consistent trade union policy, it cannot replace either the concrete analysis of specific national and local conditions or the accumulated experience of the revolutionary organization and its members involved in a given trade union. In fact, only a fusion of correct theory with the practical experience and understanding of the party and its militant workers can ensure successful revolutionary work in the trade unions.

* * * * *

Work in the trade unions takes a central place in the activities of revolutionary communists. The reason for this is that the trade unions are one of the most important mass organizations of the working class. The precondition for Bolsheviks to conduct revolutionary work in the trade unions is a correct understanding of the nature of trade unions and their place in the revolutionary strategy.

1. Trade unions are not a goal in themselves but one of several means on the road towards the proletarian revolution. Hence, the work of revolutionaries in the trade unions is subordinated to the winning of workers over to communism, and it is therefore only one of several means to achieve this. (1)

2. The task of communists in their trade union work is to win the unions over to supporting the revolutionary struggle for working class power. (2) Therefore communists fight in the unions for the adoption of a Transitional Program which is focused on the arena of the trade union struggle. (3)

3. For the same reason, revolutionaries fight in the unions against their deep integration into the bourgeois state and their direct or indirect affiliation with bourgeois parties (including reformist ones). They struggle to break the unions away from the agents of the bourgeoisie and win them over to an independent working class policy. This means that the revolutionary party should try – through persuasion and political struggle – to win the unions over to the goals of communism, and to achieve leadership inside the trade unions.

4. An important tactic for this goal can be the call – directed to the trade unions or other workers' organizations or sections of them – to form a Workers' Party. Communists should fight for a revolutionary program as a platform of such a Workers' Party without making it a precondition for participation. Usually new Workers' Parties are formed by militant minorities and if they are successful – which, of course, can never be guaranteed – may subsequently win over the mass of the workers to join them. But it cannot be expected that the new Workers' Party will begin as a party of the *majority* of the working class. (See

e.g., the history of the Social Democratic Workers Party in Germany in the late 1860s and early 1870s or of the Brazil PT in the 1980s.) *“In countries where no working class party – i.e. not even a reformist one – exist (like e.g. in many semi-colonial countries or the USA), Bolshevik-Communists advocate the formation of an independent workers' party. A similar tactic might be legitimate in situations where progressive sections of the working class turn away from the established bourgeois workers' parties and look for a political alternative. We turn to militant trade unions, movements for democracy and social justice, political organisations, and all workers and oppressed people who are looking for an alternative to reformism and call upon them to establish new working class parties.”* (4)

5. At the same time, revolutionaries are fully aware that the trade unions have natural limitations and, therefore, cannot replace the party. They are first and foremost the defenders of the workers as a labor force in the economic sphere. However, capitalism is a societal system composed of various classes and layers, and the interrelations between them based on capitalist exploitation and oppression. The struggle between the classes, therefore, entails not only the economic but also the political and ideological sphere. This is why revolutionary class consciousness does not arise spontaneously out of the economic class struggle but instead arises out of the political experiences of the working class and the conclusions reached by the revolutionary party, which it then transmits to the vanguard workers. (5) This is the reason that revolutionaries fight not only for trade unions but also for other forms of mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed, such as factory committees, youth movements, women movements, soviets, self-defense units, etc. These other forms of mass organizations are no less important than trade unions. However, the highest and most important form of working class organization is the revolutionary party. (6) It is only the Bolshevik party which completely expresses the historical interests of the proletariat and which can lead it – by leading the various mass organizations – to liberation. (7)

6. Trade unions can play a crucial role in mobilizing the working class for the revolutionary class struggle, but only on the condition that they are led by a revolutionary party. This is because the decisive issues in society are decided in the sphere of the *political* class struggle and not in the sphere of the *economic* class struggle. Such political issues, in one way or other, touch upon fundamental questions of power in capitalist society, and bring the working class to understand the necessity for taking power. Communists, therefore, reject the economist position which gives a priority to the economic or trade union struggle. While we fully recognize the importance of the economic struggle, we state that the goal is to raise the awareness and combat-readiness of the workers' vanguard for the political class struggle. As part of the political class struggle, we recognize the struggle for democratic issues. The highest form of the political class struggle, obviously, is the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

7. The trade unions have limitations not *only* because their focus is the economic sphere of defending the conditions of wage labor. They also have limitations for the following reasons:

i) They usually contain only a minority of the working class.

ii) They usually are rooted amongst the upper strata of the working class (more skilled, better paid workers) and in particular the labor aristocracy. (8)

iii) They are usually controlled by the labor bureaucracy which acts as agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the workers' movement, and which subordinates the unions to the bourgeois state and the capitalist class.

8. These factors have important consequences for the strategy of the revolutionary organization. First, revolutionary organizations consider work in the trade unions as a central but *not* exclusive area for their efforts to recruit workers. Work amongst political and social movements (or parties) in which militant sectors of the working class are involved, or amongst oppressed sectors of the working class (youth, women, etc.) can be equally important areas of revolutionary work.

9. Revolutionaries struggle for the expulsion of the labor bureaucracy and its agents from the ranks of the workers' movement. These forces are the biggest obstacle for the working class struggle in the ranks of the workers' movement. Naturally, this is a long-term task and involves the application of the united front tactic (calls to the rank and file, but also the reformist leaders for joint actions, etc.). But communists should state clearly that the trade unions can only become an authentic instrument of the working class if they are liberated from the bureaucracy and brought under workers control.

10. Revolutionaries have to regularly explain that the trade union bureaucracy and its leaders follow a reformist policy, that they must not be trusted and that they will only betray the workers. They must repeatedly remind workers that the bureaucrats sell out the workers interests to the capitalists, *not* because they "don't understand" what are necessary working class politics; nor because they "wrongly believe" in reformist strategies (social democratic, Stalinist, syndicalist, etc.). Rather, the ultimate and most basic reason for their repeated betrayals is *their own material interests* as bureaucrats. Their reformist ideology is a reflection of their petty-bourgeois social position as mediators between labor and capital ("*Social being determines consciousness.*"). They constitute – with their numerous privileges and their connections with the bourgeois state and the capitalists – not a proletarian layer, but a petty-bourgeois caste which is bribed by the capitalists. Revolutionaries must emphasize these material roots as the cause for the bureaucrats' betrayal, and not their erroneous political and ideological convictions. Otherwise, the illusion is created amongst the rank and file workers that it may be possible to convince the leaders of the correct policy, or that one just need simply replace the leaders instead of smashing the bureaucratic caste as such. (9)

11. Such a dialectical materialist analysis ensures that revolutionaries are not blinded by the concrete form of the ideological smokescreen which the bureaucrats use to cover their class-collaborationist policy. (10) It is possible for trade union bureaucrats to hide their narrow-minded defense of their privileged position with the help

of "Marxist" slogans, and any oppositional movement of rank and file workers striving for democratic rights in the union or for a more militant union policy might lack such a finely-honed "socialist" consciousness. From history we know that there have been such cases in the Stalinist states (e.g., the uprising of the Polish workers in 1980/81). But, more recently, since 2011, this has also happened during the Arab Revolution; for example in the guise of the "anti-imperialist" and sometimes "Islamic socialist" or "nationalist-socialist" dictatorships of Gaddafi or Assad, the latter of which also contains in its ranks two Stalinist lackey parties. Similarly we saw such a development in South Africa during and after the Marikana miners' strike 2012, when the trade union bureaucracy of NUM and COSATU (both of which are close to the Communist Party) attacked the militant workers under the guise of "Marxism-Leninism." For Marxists to assess the objective social meaning of a given class struggle, it is incumbent that, rather than taking at face value the ideological delusions of the participants, we examine the class forces *behind* the different camps, and the potentials and consequences of the outcome of this struggle for the working class and the oppressed.

12. The labor aristocracy is the most important social basis of the labor bureaucracy. We defend the Leninist definition of the labor aristocracy as "*a thin layer at the top of the proletariat, which the capitalists bribe by the extra profits that they derive from the exploitation of the semi-colonial countries and the lower layers of the working class in the metropolises by means of various privileges and which they hope to bind as loyal supporters. It is this layer that defends an attitude like 'things are still going well,' against the broad masses of the proletariat – because they themselves actually live relatively 'good' and for them the efforts of smashing the system appears too large.*" (11) The labor aristocracy usually is disproportional influential inside the trade unions. Marxists must fight against this influence, because the aristocratic workers bring a pacifying, reformist and corrupting spirit into the unions. (12)

13. However, as stated above, the problem of the trade unions is not reduced *solely* to the labor aristocracy but also contains the unions' dominance by the more, relatively privileged sectors of the working class. "*Moreover, the unions rely to a high degree on the upper, better-paid sections of the proletariat, and in particular on the labour aristocracy. The broad mass of our class and in particular the lower strata, however, are more or less neither organised nor represented by the union.*" (13)

14. From the above issues, we derive the following set of strategies for revolutionary communists:

i) Building a rank-and-file movement in opposition to the bureaucracy, one which can fight both for more democratic rights and a militant union policy, and which has the goal of liberating the union from the bureaucracy.

ii) Fighting to change the composition of the unions. This involves driving back the influence of the 'aristocratic type' of the upper layer and transforming the unions into an instrument dominated by the 'mass type' of the working class, which means the lower and middle strata – i.e. the huge majority – of the proletariat. "*The unionization of the lower strata of the working class (especially the migrants, women, precarious workers, etc.) is an indispensable task. These layers must not, therefore, play the role of the infantry in the union, but should play a central role and should also proportionally be represented in the trade union bodies according to their*

share among the employees.” (14)

iii) Striving to utilize every class struggle to build action committees which organize the militant workers (including the unorganized workers) independent of the bureaucracy. *“In every battle and in preparation for this the Bolsheviks-Communists are therefore keen to establish rank and file committees outside the bureaucratic control. They will often bring together the most active and most militant elements in Action Committees.”* (15)

15. Bolsheviks reject the concept that revolutionaries should attempt to split the unions in order to create small “revolutionary” unions. This would only isolate the communists and leave the mass of the workers under the reactionary influence of the bureaucracy. *“It would be fundamentally wrong to draw the conclusion that one should ignore the existing unions. The Bolsheviks-Communists reject such an ultra-left nonsense. The bureaucracy is not beaten by sectarian standing aside (separate from the union), but by the struggle for democratic, militant trade unions which are independent of state and capital. This struggle must be carried out wherever possible within the unions – regardless of the inevitable attempts by the bureaucracy to pursue the revolutionaries and expel them.”* (16)

16. However, we clearly differentiate between unwarranted attempts by small “revolutionary” forces to artificially split a union from the entirely legitimate and necessary rupture of the union by militant sectors of the masses. While it would be criminal to employ self-isolating divisive tactics of a small, politically organized, minority to create ‘pure’ unions, it would be no less criminal for revolutionaries to isolate themselves from militant sectors of the working class by not joining them. *“Sharp shocks through the class struggle can both cause new room for manoeuvring and radicalisation in the old trade unions (e.g. the UGTT 2011 in Tunisia) as well as lead to the creation of new unions. Bolshevik-Communists employ a tactical approach to this question but on the basis of a clear principle: seeking the unity of the union as long as possible as it serves the advancing of the struggle for the independence of the working class from the state, capital and bureaucracy; not being afraid of splitting or the formation of new unions if splitting does not lead to self-isolation of the revolutionaries, but allows the organising of large sections of the working class at a higher level of class independence.”* (17)

17. In all types of trade unions it is necessary for revolutionaries to organize themselves and their close collaborators in a communist fraction. These fractions – working under the discipline of the party’s leadership – should coordinate the activity of the communists in the unions. Their goal is, we repeat, to win the unions over for a revolutionary program and to transform them, under the leadership of the revolutionary party, into instruments for the advancement of the socialist revolution.

Footnotes:

(1) *“Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution.”* (Leon Trotsky: The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, 1938)

(2) *“The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.”* (Leon Trotsky: Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, 1940)

(3) *“The program of transitional demands adopted by the last congress*

of the Fourth International is not only the program for the activity of the party but in its fundamental features it is the program for the activity of the trade unions.” (Leon Trotsky: Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, 1940)

(4) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 25, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/the-leadership-we-have-and-the-leadership-we-need/>

(5) *“Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of all classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between all classes. For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the workers cannot be merely the answer with which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those inclined towards Economism, mostly content themselves, namely: “To go among the workers.” To bring political knowledge to the workers the Social Democrats must go among all classes of the population; they must dispatch units of their army in all directions.”* (V. I. Lenin: What Is To Be Done? (1902), in: LCW Vol. 5, p. 422, emphasis in the original)

(6) *“...the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the highest form of proletarian class organization”* (V.I. Lenin: ‘Left-Wing’ Communism – An Infantile Disorder, in: LCW Vol. 31, p. 50). The Communist International stated: *“The communist party is the chief and primary weapon for the liberation of the working class.”* (Communist International: Theses on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution adopted by the Second Comintern Congress (1920), in: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents Selected and Edited by Jane Degras, Vol. I 1919-1922, p. 135)

(7) *“If the theoretical structure of the political economy of Marxism rests entirely upon the conception of value as materialised labour, the revolutionary policy of Marxism rests upon the conception of the party as the vanguard of the proletariat. Whatever may be the social sources and political causes of opportunistic mistakes and deviations, they are always reduced ideologically to an erroneous understanding of the revolutionary party, of its relation to other proletarian organisations and to the class as a whole.”* (Leon Trotsky: The Mistakes of Rightist Elements of the Communist League on the Trade Union Question. Some Preliminary Remarks (1931), (Emphasis in the original), <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/unions/6-mistakes.htm>) See also: *“Independence from the influence of the bourgeoisie cannot be a passive state. It can express itself only by political acts, that is, by the struggle against the bourgeoisie. This struggle must be inspired by a distinct program which requires organisation and tactics for its application. It is the union of program, organisation, and tactics that constitutes the party. In this way, the real independence of the proletariat from the bourgeois government cannot be realised unless the proletariat conducts its struggle under the leadership of a revolutionary and not an opportunist party.”* (Leon Trotsky: Communism and Syndicalism, 1929)

(8) *“Trade unions, even the most powerful, embrace no more than 20 to 25 percent of the working class, and at that, predominantly the more skilled and better paid layers.”* (Leon Trotsky: The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, 1938)

(9) *“The bureaucracy of the trade unions is the backbone of British imperialism. It is by means of this bureaucracy that the bourgeoisie exists, not only in the metropolis, but in India, in Egypt, and in the other colonies. One would have to be completely blind to say to the English workers: ‘Be on guard against the conquest of power and always remember that your trade unions are the antidote to the dangers of the state.’ The Marxist will say to the English workers: ‘The trade union bureaucracy is the chief Instrument, for your oppression by the bourgeois state. Power must be wrested from the hands of the bourgeoisie, and for that its principal agent, the trade union bureaucracy, must be overthrown.’”* (Leon Trotsky: The Errors in Principle of Syndicalism. To Serve in the Discussion with Monatte and his Friends,

(1929), in: Leon Trotsky: The Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, New York 1990, p. 122, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/unions/4-errors.htm>)

(10) "Neither classes nor parties can be judged by what they say about themselves or by the slogans they raise at a given moment. This fully applies to groupings within a political party as well." (Leon Trotsky: An Analysis of the Slogans and Differences, in: Leon Trotsky: The Challenge of the Left Opposition 1923-25, New York 1975, p. 390)

(11) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 29, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/changes-in-the-working-class/>

(12) "Obviously, out of such enormous superprofits (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their "own" country) it is possible to bribe the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are doing: they are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert. This stratum of workers-turned-bourgeois, or the labour aristocracy, who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and in our days, the principal social (not military) prop of the bourgeoisie. For they are the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real vehicles of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie, the "Versaillese" against the "Communards". Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problem of the communist movement and of the impending social revolution." (W. I. Lenin: Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916) (emphasis in the original))

„One of the chief causes hampering the revolutionary working-class movement in the developed capitalist countries is the fact that because of their colonial possessions and the super-profits gained by finance capital, etc., the capitalists of these countries have been able to create a relatively larger and more stable labour aristocracy, a section which comprises a small minority of the working class. This minority enjoys better terms of employment and is most imbued with a narrow-minded craft spirit and with petty-bourgeois and imperialist prejudices. It forms the real social pillar of the Second International, of the reformists and the "Centrists"; at present it might even be called the social mainstay

of the bourgeoisie. No preparation of the proletariat for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is possible, even in the preliminary sense, unless an immediate, systematic, extensive and open struggle is waged against this stratum, which, as experience has already fully shown, will no doubt provide the bourgeois White guards with many a recruit after the victory of the proletariat. All parties affiliated to the Third International must at all costs give effect to the slogans: "Deeper into the thick of the masses", "Closer links with the masses"—meaning by the masses all those who toil and are exploited by capital, particularly those who are least organised and educated, who are most oppressed and least amenable to organisation." (V. I. Lenin: Theses on Fundamental Tasks of The Second Congress Of The Communist International (1920))

(13) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 27, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/the-struggle-for-the-unions/>

(14) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 28, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/the-struggle-for-the-unions/>

(15) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 30, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/action-comitee-factory-comitees-councils/>

See also: "Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions." (Leon Trotsky: The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, 1938)

See as well: „The strength and meaning of Bolshevism consists in the fact that it appeals to oppressed and exploited masses and not to the upper strata of the working class.“ (Leon Trotsky: Perspectives and Tasks in the East. Speech on the third anniversary of the Communist University for the Toilers of the East (21. April 1924); in: Leon Trotsky Speaks, Pathfinder 1972, p. 205)

(16) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 27, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/the-struggle-for-the-unions/>

(17) RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto (2012), p. 28, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/the-struggle-for-the-unions/> ■



Lenin speaks at the II. Congress of the Communist International

Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?

The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), August 2013

The following document is an excerpt of the book "CUBA'S REVOLUTION SOLD OUT?" which the RCIT has published recently. It has been written by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT. It has been published as the final chapter of the book in which the author summarizes the main findings of his study. You can find more details about the book and how to order it on our website <http://www.cuba-sold-out.net/>.

In this summary we want to present as a number of theses the main elements of the RCIT's analysis of the Cuban Revolution, its political expropriation by the Castroite-Stalinist bureaucracy and the capitalist counterrevolution in the last years.

1. The Cuban Revolution in 1959-61 was an important event in the 20th century. It was not simply a putsch by a small band of armed guerillas. It took place against the background of massive workers and peasants struggles which involved hundreds of thousands and millions of workers and peasants. Since no revolutionary workers party existed, the revolution was led by the petty-bourgeois Castroite M-26-7 guerilla movement which advocated a bourgeois reform program but no socialist revolution. Neither did the Stalinist PSP leadership seek such a revolution.

2. The Cuban Revolution soon met the outright hostility and subversion by US imperialism. The pressure of the counterrevolution on one hand and of the domestic class struggle on the other hand squeezed the Castroite bureaucracy. It's only possibility i) to keep power and privileges, ii) to accommodate the pressure of the masses but control them at the same time and iii) to withstand the aggression of US imperialism was to transform Cuba bureaucratically into a degenerated workers' state and make it a close ally of the Stalinist bureaucracy of the USSR. Hence the Castroite bureaucracy was forced to expropriate the foreign and domestic bourgeoisie, to oppress independent working class activity and to ally itself with the Soviet Union in 1960/61. In this process did the Castroite M-26-7 as well as the Stalinist PSP leadership decide to join forces and to form the PCC (in which the Castro leadership dominated).

3. Cuba, therefore, never was a "socialist country". While it remained initially a capitalist country after the overthrow of Batista (albeit with a highly mobilized working class and a feeble bourgeoisie), it became a degenerated workers state when the Castroite government was transformed into an anti-capitalist bureaucratic workers government and took decisive measures to nationalize and plan the economy while politically expropriating the working class in summer 1960.

4. Despite its bureaucratic degeneration, the Cuban Revolution provided the working masses with a number

of concrete social gains: wages rose, the peasants got access to land, a regionally exceptional high developed health care system was created as well as social benefits, a low retirement age, a regionally high level of women participation in the labor process, the right of abortion, etc.

5. However due to the failure in spreading the revolution to the Latin American continent and the domestic bureaucratic domination, the Cuban masses became more and more passive and cynical towards the regime. The regime also failed to build a diversified industry, so the economy remained dependent on sugar production and export.

6. We Trotskyists fought for a program of political revolution as long as Cuba remained a degenerated workers state (from 1960 until 2010/11) did. We called for the defense of the planning system and the proletarian property relations against any step towards capitalist restoration. At the same time, we called for the abolition of the bureaucracy's privileges as well as control over the economy and the society. Such a program also included the call for working class independence (right of workers to strike, action committees in workplaces, independent trade union, right to form parties, etc.). A successful political revolution required the formation of action councils (soviets) and armed popular militias to organize an armed insurrection in order to smash the Stalinist-bourgeoisified state apparatus and to replace it with a healthy workers state, i.e., a proletarian dictatorship as it existed in the young Soviet Union in the times of Lenin and Trotsky. Such a revolutionary workers state would have strived to internationalize the revolution in Latin America and all over the world. Such a perspective however did not materialize because of the absence of a revolutionary workers party and a revolutionary worker international.

7. The highly bureaucratized and dependent Cuban economy entered a deep crisis with the collapsed of the USSR in 1989-91. Since then, the Castroite regime has increasingly – albeit with zigzags – turned towards pro-market reforms. The Cuban Stalinist model was in a cul-de-sac.

8. The model of a successful capitalist restoration and a growing economy in China without loss of power for the Stalinist bureaucracy convinced the Castroite leadership that there was a way out for them. It therefore turned decisively towards the restoration of capitalism. This turn was expressed by the announcement of a series of drastic pro-capitalist measures in autumn 2010 and spring 2011 (around the Sixth Congress of the PCC). Castroism had returned to its bourgeois roots.

9. *Mass lay-offs in the state-owned enterprises and introduction of the law of value:* In 2011 and 2012 already between 360.000 and 500.000 workers were sacked from the state-owned enterprises. The Castro government wants to lay-off a million workers by 2016 – a fifth of the total labor force of the country!

10. *Massive boost of a private capitalist sector and advanc-*

ing the formation of a domestic capitalist class of private property owners: the private capitalist sector has already grown massively. The government announced to reduce the state share in GDP from originally 95% to around 40% by 2017.

11. *Cutting the social benefits in order to create an industrial reserve army of labor and hence a better exploitable working class:* The Castro regime ended the practice of paying 60% of the salary of workers laid off from their jobs. In addition, it increased retirement ages by five years for both sexes, raising it to 60 for women and 65 for men. In addition, the number of products sold at subsidized prices has been reduced, or the amounts made available substantially cut back.

12. *Opening the economy for imperialist capital and in particular for China's monopolies:* Foreign Direct Investment has substantially increased in the last years up to \$3.5 billion. Most of this investment is concentrated in a few major projects like oil exploitation. Cuba is increasingly dependent on China which is a major trading partner, foreign investor and creditor. Another key element of Cuba's transformation into a semi-colony of Chinese imperialism is the establishment of the first Five-Year Plan for Sino-Cuban cooperation in June 2011.

13. *Keeping the authoritarian rule of the Stalinist PCC:* The Communist Party is determined to keep the dictatorship as the Chinese model has done it. Part of this effort of a state-capitalist transformation of the country is the regime's policy of the recent past to put key sectors of the economy under the command of the army bureaucracy. According to one estimate, the military controls about 60% of the economy through the management of hundreds of enterprises in key economic sectors.

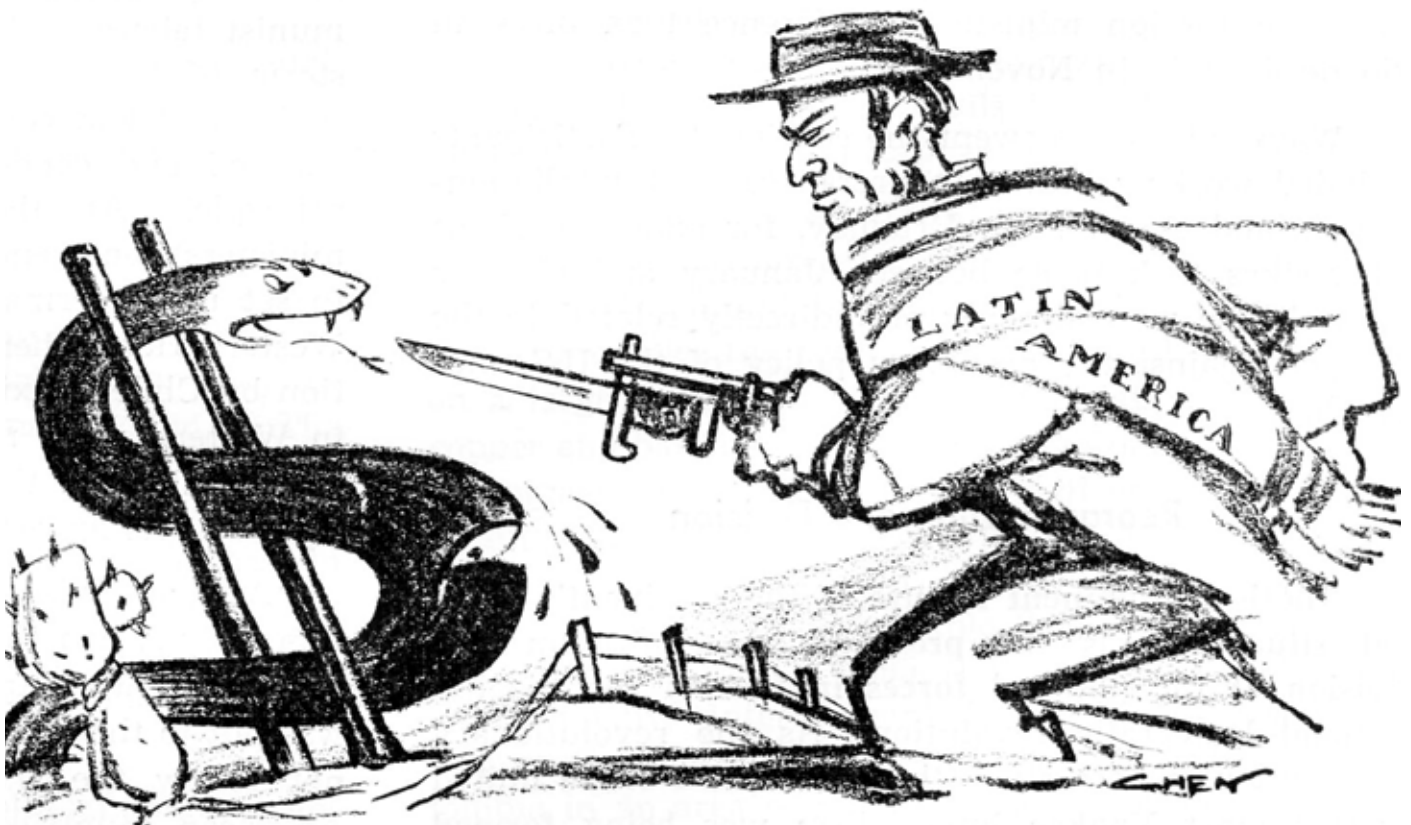
14. Cuba's transformation from a degenerated workers state into a capitalist semi-colony has altered the tasks for the working class. It is no longer to organize a political revolution but a social revolution in order to overthrow the Castroite regime and establish an authentic workers and peasant government.

15. Such a program for social revolution starts from the defense of the existing social gains of the Revolution and opposition against the brutal measures of capitalist restoration: this includes resistance against the mass layoffs, privatization of state enterprises and social cuts, defense of women's rights like abortion as well as the struggle for democratic rights (right to strike, forming independent trade unions, forming new parties, etc.)

16. Another important aspect of the revolutionary program is the struggle to defend Cuba against the permanent aggression of US imperialism, as well as against the subordination of Cuba to Chinese imperialism.

17. The program for social revolution must call for building workers', poor peasants' and soldiers' councils and armed militias. They should fight for an armed insurrection against the Castroite-capitalist regime and for the establishment of a Workers' and poor Peasants' Government based on such councils and militias. A victorious Cuban workers state would strive to internationalize the revolution in Latin America and beyond.

18. The success of the socialist revolution requires the timely formation of a revolutionary party as part of the Fifth Workers International. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) will do its best to support the formation of a revolutionary nucleus in Cuba. ■



New Books from the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South

Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

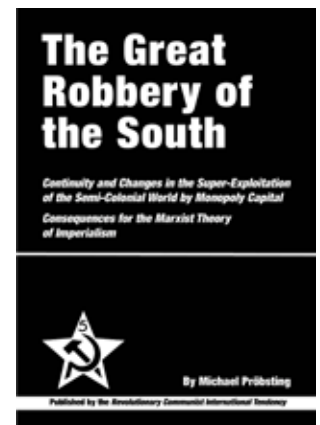
In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He shows that the relationship between the small minority of rich capitalist countries and the huge majority of mankind living in the semi-colonial world forms one of the most important elements of the imperialist world system we are living in. The Great Robbery of the South shows that the past decades have been a complete confirmation of the validity of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its programmatic conclusions.

The Great Robbery of the South demonstrates the important changes in the relationship between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Using comprehensive material (including 139 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that never before has

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

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

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Michael Pröbsting: Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?

The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new book. It's called *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?*. The book's subtitle is: *The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism*. The book is in English-language. It has 5 chapters plus an appendix, 108 pages and includes 19 Tables and Figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who is the *International Secretary* of the RCIT. In *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* Michael Pröbsting analyses the character of the Cuban Revolution 1959-61, its bureaucratic degeneration, and the recent march of the Castro leadership towards capitalism.

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

Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? describes in detail how a number of relatively recent political, economic, and social measures were purposely taken by the Cuban government to open the road back

to capitalism. Pröbsting elaborates the key role of the world's new great imperialist power, China, in Cuba's state policy as exemplified in the June 2011 Sino-Cuban agreement for a first Five-Year Plan of cooperation between these two states.

Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? examines these developments from the viewpoint of Marxist theory, the nature of the ruling bureaucracy in Stalinist states, and the process of restoration of capitalism under such regimes. In conclusion, the book proposes a socialist program for political and social revolution in Cuba to halt the advance of capitalism and to eradicate the country's bureaucratic dictatorship.

Price: 8 Euro / 12 US-Dollars / 7 British Pound (plus delivery charges) ■



The Author: Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 30 years. He is the author of many articles and pamphlets in German and English language. He published books or contributed to books on *Rosa Luxemburg* (1999), on the *World Economy* (2008), on *Migration* (2010) and the *Arab Revolution* (2011). His latest book, *The Great Robbery of the South* (published in 2013), analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He is the *International Secretary* of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*.

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! ■*



