

# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

**English-Language Journal of the RWO (Pakistan),  
ULWP (Sri Lanka), RKOB (Austria) and RWC (USA)**

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## **Crisis and Resistance in Pakistan General Strike in Greece**

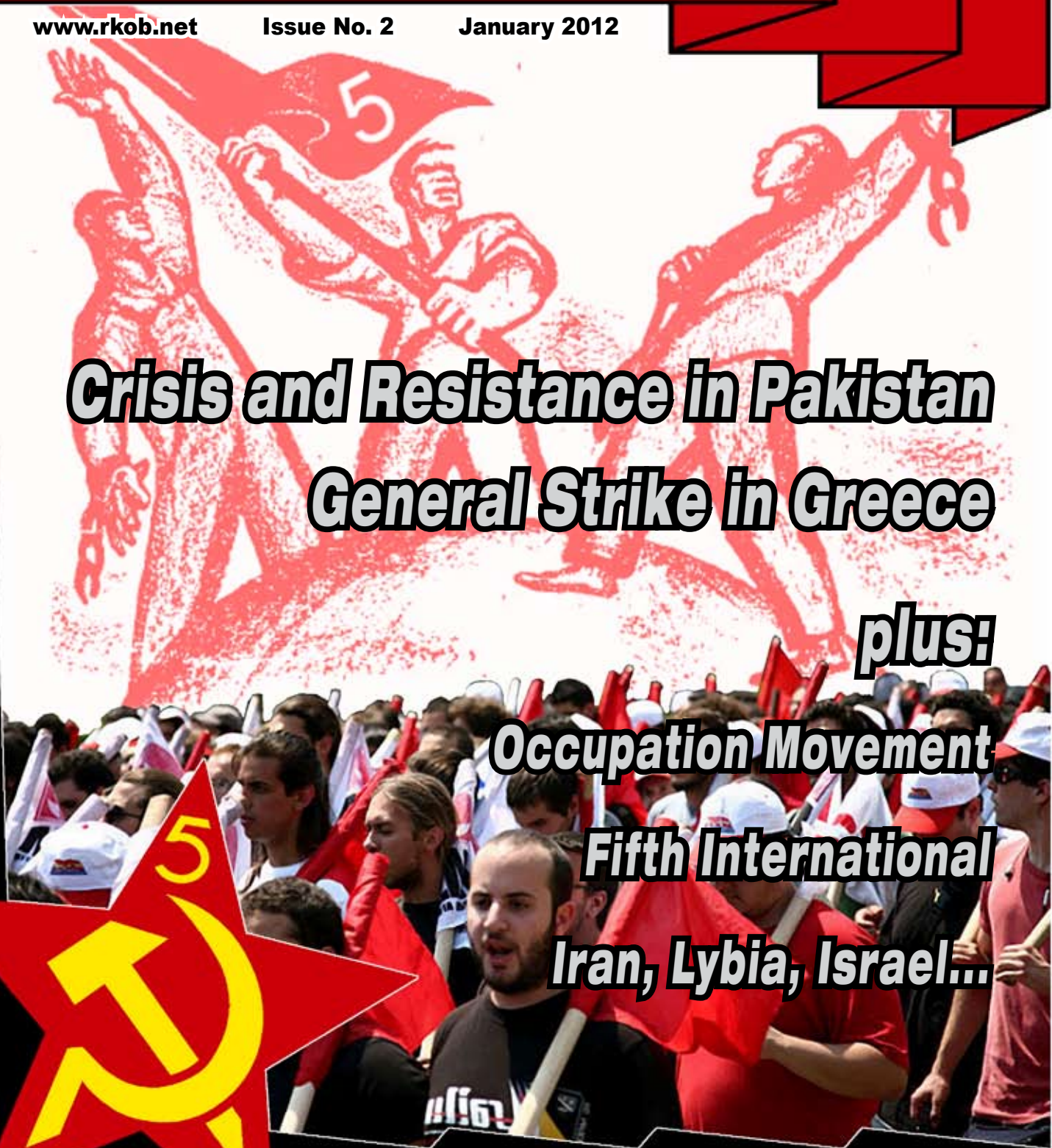
**plus!**

**Occupation Movement**

**Fifth International**

**Iran, Lybia, Israel...**

**WORKERS AND OPPRESSED UNITE!**



# Revolutionary Communism

## No. 2, January 2012

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## Editorial

This second issue of our English language journal *Revolutionary Communism* reflects important developments in the international class struggle in the last few months since our first issue appeared in September 2011. These events have proven again the assessment of the Bolshevik-Communists that the world has entered a new historic period characterised by the death agony of capitalism, a sharpening of the class contradictions and struggles and hence a period full of (pre) revolutionary developments and counterrevolutionary dangers. It is a period, which has the question, which class possesses power, at its centre and puts humanity before the alternative "Socialism or Barbarism". In short, it is a historic revolutionary period.

In this context one can't over-emphasise the central importance of the working class to create a leadership which is capable of meeting the challenges posed by the capitalist's attacks. Only a leadership which possess a program showing the road from the defensive struggles today to the struggle for power tomorrow can advance the working class cause. Only a leadership which speaks out uncompromisingly for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed and does not "forget" sectors of the oppressed in order not to offend (petty-)bourgeois leaderships; only a leadership which name names and openly denounce the false misleaders of the class and the oppressed; only a leadership which combines the words with the deeds – only such a leadership can lead the working class to a successful revolution.

Such a leadership can only be a revolutionary party – based on the model of the Bolshevik party, the only party in history which successfully led the proletariat to power.

The tragedy of the present political conjuncture is the enormous gap between the sharpness of the class contradictions and the complete lack of a sharp instrument for the working class to overcome these contradictions. In other words such a party for the liberation struggle does not exist at the moment. The working class, the peasantry, the oppressed nations have at their top various reformist, nationalist, liberal, religious forces. Understanding their dangerous role, combining open propaganda and agitation against them with an elastic united front tactic which is directed in the first line towards the rank and file workers and in this context put demands to the leaders which they still trust, fighting for a program around which Bolshevik fighting parties – respective pre-party organisations as a first step – this is the essential task for revolutionaries in the coming period. The fundamental principle of every Bolshevik organisation is and can only be what Rosa Luxemburg – this great women leader of our movement – once summarised in the sentence: „*And nothing is more revolutionary, than to recognize and speak out what is*“.

It is in the light of this burning task of building a new world party of socialist revolution – the Fifth Workers' International – we analyse and develop strategies and tactics for the most important events of the world class struggle.

Our comrades from the *Revolutionary Workers Organisation* (RWO) in Pakistan present in this journal their resolution "*Pakistan: For mass mobilization against US imperialism and its henchmen!*" in which they take a

revolutionary position on the latest political turmoil in their country. We also reprint their political platform which summarises their programmatic positions.

Greece is obviously the country where the class struggle in Europe reached its highest stage in the past 2 years. We therefore outline in the RKO resolution "*Perspectives in the Greek Revolution*" our analysis of Greek capitalism, the general strike movement, the failed strategy of the reformist and centrist forces and a revolutionary program.

Iran can become the next target of the Western imperialist military machinery. We are therefore publishing our resolution "*Defend Iran against the U.S., EU and Israel warmongers!*" on the threatening war, combining the fundamental class opposition to the bourgeois-theocratic regime in Iran with a principled anti-imperialist defence of the country against any imperialist attack.

Our US-American comrades analyse the Occupation movement in the resolution "*Solidarity with the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement! Expropriate Wall Street!*". In it they combine an enthusiastic appraisal of the emergence of this democratic protest movement with a critical analysis of the widely held petty-bourgeois illusions and outline a revolutionary answer to the challenges of the struggle.

The Arab Revolution was and is one of the most important questions of the present world situation and we therefore publish two resolutions on this. One deals with the Arab revolution and the necessary revolutionary struggle against the Zionist state Israel. Another resolution deals with the end of the Gaddafi regime in Libya. It is a joint resolution with organisation (CWG (Aotearoa/NZ), the HWRS (USA) and the RWG (Zimbabwe)) with which we are in a process of discussion and collaboration with the view of overcoming remaining differences.

Finally we publish a programmatic essay "*What sort of Fifth International do we need?*". It was written originally in 2010 by our comrade Michael Pröbsting as a background document on the strategy for the Fifth Workers' International. We publish it here with an actual preface.

The journal also reflects important developments in our efforts to build a revolutionary communist international tendency. Since the publication of the first issue our English language journal *Revolutionary Communism* two new organisations have joined the original *Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation* (RKO, Austria) and the *Revolutionary Workers Collective* (RWC, USA). It is the *Revolutionary Workers Organisation* (RWO, Pakistan) and the *United Lankan Workers Party* (ULWP, Sri Lanka). While the RWO stems from a recent split following a factions struggle inside the Pakistani LFI section, the ULWP is the product of the joint efforts of former leaders of the Sri Lanka LFI section and other revolutionary working class cadre mainly among the most oppressed Tamil plantation workers. Both have in common the determination to break with all forms of opportunism towards reformism and centrism and sectarianism towards the liberation struggles of oppressed nations.

We have decided to build together a revolutionary communist international tendency. If you share this desire, join us!

11th January 2012, Editorial Board

# Pakistan: For mass mobilization against US imperialism and its henchmen! No to a military coup! No support for the Zardari government!

*Statement of the Revolutionary Workers Organisation (Pakistan) on the political situation in Pakistan, 14.12.2011*

The country is boiling over with anti-American outrage. US imperialism is treating Pakistan like a colony where it shoots and kills at will. Let us name just the most outrageous recent incidents like the killing of hundreds of resistance fighters and civilians in the border region, the murder of Osama bin Laden on 1<sup>st</sup> May and now the killing of 24 soldiers on 26.11. (when only hours before Pakistan's army Chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani and U.S. top commander in Afghanistan General John Allen agreed to improve cooperation!). Now the people say: Enough is enough!

Indeed! Enough is enough! Under the pressure of public outcry Zardari's PPP government and the military were forced to announce the eviction of the Shamsi air base in southwest Baluchistan, where the US operates their murderous drones, to shut the border for NATO supplies to Afghanistan and to "review" all programs of cooperation with US, NATO and ISAF.

But let us have no illusion: They are doing this because of the enormous pressure of the popular masses including many lower and middle rank soldiers. For years and decades the political elite and army tops have collaborated with the imperialist powers. In the 1980s the regime supported the US cold war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. In the 2000s the Pakistani army waged a brutal war in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa areas in order to support the US occupation forces and also as part of the Punjabi-dominated ruling class desire to subjugate the oppressed national minorities in the country.

The result of the US and Pakistan armies "war of terror" is horrific: At least 1 million people are now displaced in the mainly Pashtun regions FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In addition, the Pakistani army has already scarified the lives of 4.000 soldiers just to suppress the tribes there.

Our people – the workers, peasants, the oppressed nationalities – are not only the military victim of the imperialists and their Pakistani henchmen in government and army. Economically we suffer more than ever too. Nearly half of Pakistan's population is food insecure. But while the government did only spend a combined total of Rs 31.3 billion (\$368 million) under the Public Sector Development Program (2010) it spent Rs 442 billion (\$5.2 billion) for the army and Rs 873 billion (\$10.27 billion) to the foreign and domestic financial capitalists to service old domestic and foreign loans. Imagine: What could we gain if we cancel all public debt and financing a huge military apparatus?!

Against the background of the deepening national crisis the rifts inside the ruling class are increasing. The "memogate" scandal, the rumours of a military coup and the "medical treatment" escape of Zardari to Dubai – all these are clear indicators that the political situation in the country is highly instable. Indeed we have a pre-revolutionary dynamic in the political situation where the ruling class

finds it more and more difficult to rule as did until now and the oppressed masses are more and more unwilling to continue living under these circumstances.

But while the different sector of the capitalist class condemn in words the American imperialists, vow to fight corruption and to improve the social situation, in fact they only try to utilize the political instability to increase their share of power.

The government and the military establishment wipe up official Pakistani chauvinism. They hope by this to distract the mass anger from the ruling class's unwillingness and incapability to confront imperialism. They want to utilize the Pakistan chauvinism to raise the people's loyalty to the state.

Sectors of the military apparatus, bourgeois opposition forces like Sharif's PML-N or Imran Khan's currently quiet popular Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) try to position themselves for future a government role or even to bring Zardari down already before the next election. They hope to gain some more room for maneuver from the US imperialists and may be to cooperate stronger with the new, emerging imperialist power China. At the same time they are prepared to oppress with authoritarian rule the workers, peasants and national minorities. Even a military intervention or even a coup is an option for them.

The *Revolutionary Workers Organisation* (RWO) opposes any form of military intervention into political life. In case of a military coup – as it happened several time in the past – we call for mass mobilizations, strikes up to a general strike and armed resistance and the formation of a broad united front of workers and popular forces to defeat it.

The bourgeois PPP government and their MQM and PML-Q allies on the other hand are prepared to continue their government as direct servants of the US and the IMF under the cover of some anti-american and liberal rhetoric. They might be highly discredited but they have the support of sectors of the bourgeoisie and of US imperialists (whom they approached for help to get rid of their rivals for power at the top of the army).

## Opportunist Left

The RWO says that the responsibility of socialist activists is to fight for complete class independence of the working class from these parties. Shamefully there are a number of left-liberal, reformists and centrists who consider the PPP government as a lesser evil (like the Communist Party or various left-wing intellectual). Some even support them "critically" (like the Awami Party). Other, pseudo-Trotskyist organizations, support the ruling PPP – the party of the Sind big landlords and capitalists – as office holder (like ex MP Manzoor Ahmad and leader of the PPP's Labour Bureau from the "Revolutionary Strug-

gle" tendency). Or they act as critically but loyal PPP inner-party opposition (like Lal Khan's "The Struggle"/IMT) which tries to foster relations with critical sectors of the bourgeois PPP by praising the party's past tradition of authoritarian ruler Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. But Bhutto was no socialist in any way! He just covered his bourgeois regime with phrases about the "socialist revolution" while at the same time he oppressed the working class and sent 1973-77 80,000 soldiers to slaughter the national liberation struggle of the Baluchi people.

### Mobilise around a Program for Action

The RWO calls the parties, trade unions and movements of the workers, peasants and oppressed nationalities not to remain passive in face of the national crisis and to wait others to solve it. Only we ourselves – the toiling masses – can take the country out of its misery and abolish oppression and exploitation.

The imperialist "War on Terror" has to be stopped – for the sake of the peoples of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the whole world. This war was and is a pretext for the NATO attempt to increase subjugation and exploitation Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and many other countries around the world.

We need an anti-imperialist mass movement to expel the NATO imperialists from our country. No hopes in the empty promises of the Sharif's, Khan's etc. And no hopes in imperialist China!

*\* For mass mobilizations, strikes and general strikes and direct action to close down all NATO military basis in Pakistan!*

*\* Immediately close down the air space for US military operations!*

*\* Expel all NATO soldiers from Pakistan!*

*\* Close down the US embassy like the Egyptians closed down the Israeli embassy in September!*

We must force the Pakistani army to immediately cease all operations as part of the imperialist "War on terror".

*\* Mass mobilisation for the withdrawal of the Pakistan army from FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also from other territories where it serves as an oppressor army like Baluchistan! Support the resistance of the oppressed tribes and people against the army!*

Let us not stop the struggles of the workers for their rights!

*\* All out support for the fighting health sector workers and teachers!*

*\* Cancel all public debt!*

*\* For a massive public works program to abolish unemployment and rebuild the country – financed by putting the wealth of the super-rich in the service of society!*

The country must not be the playing ground for small elites of corrupt politicians, army generals and judges!

*\* For a revolutionary Constitutional Assembly – not convened by the ruling elite but by the workers, poor peasants and urban poor fighting for power!*

These democratic struggles must be combined with the struggle for socialist revolution and working class power.

*\* For a workers government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor! Expropriate the bourgeoisie, nationalize the central sectors of the economy, expropriate the big landlords and liberate the peasants, self-determination for all oppressed nationalities! For a socialist federation of the people of South Asia!*

*Build with us a revolutionary Workers Party and the Fifth Workers International! Join the RWO!*





## Political Platform of the Revolutionary Workers Organisation (Pakistan)

**T**he *Revolutionary Workers Organisation (RWO)* is a combat organisation for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. 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 *RWO* 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, the misery of the peasants, the national oppression of migrants and nations, the oppression of women, young people and homosexuals – all this are part of everyday life under capitalism. Therefore, we want to eliminate capitalism.

The liberation of the working class, the peasants and all oppressed is possible only in a classless society without exploitation and oppression. Such a society can only be established internationally.

Therefore, the *RWO* 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. Under the leadership of the working class the poor peasants can play an important role in the liberation struggle.

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 insurrection and civil war against the capitalists.

The *RWO* is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasants' republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in rank and file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods and schools – in councils. These councils elect



and control the government and all other authorities and can always replace them.

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 *RWO* supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of workers, the peasants and the oppressed. We combine this with a perspective of the overthrow of capitalism.

A small minority of capitalists and land owners control the economy and therefore the basis for our life. They have the power to sack workers, raise prices, close factories and expel peasants from their land. We fight for:

*\* High taxation of the rich!*

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

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

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

*\* Expropriation of the capitalists and land owners and nationalisation of their property under control of the producers, i.e. the workers and peasants!*

We work inside the trade unions and advocate class struggle, socialism and workers' democracy. We fight against the divisions of the union movement in many small unions. For broad, mass unions which organise the workers in the whole industrial branch. Unfortunately the trade unions 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. The struggle for the liberation of the working class must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their upper strata. For a mass campaign to win the broad masses for the unions (including the overwhelmingly female domestic workers).

The *RWO* strives for unity in action with other organizations. However, we are aware that the policy of progressive liberals, nationalists, populists, reformists and the pseudo-revolutionary groups is dangerous and they ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class. This is also true for the PPP which is not a people's party but a bourgeois-populist party in the service of a sector of the capitalists and big land owners.

Like most countries in the world Pakistan is a semi-colonial country. It is formally independent but in fact exploited and oppressed by imperialist power like the USA, EU or nowadays also the new imperialist power China. The ruling class and bourgeois parties like the PPP sometimes make speeches against imperialism. But in fact they collaborate with the great powers. While we critically support any practical steps of petty-bourgeois or bourgeois forces against imperialism we also say: Only the working class and the peasants can consistently fight against imperialist oppression and achieve national independence.

The Pakistani ruling class has a long history of fostering hatred against other people and states. Three times it was

involved in wars with India. The **RWO** fights for international brotherhood of the people of South Asia. We oppose the nationalist war-mongering of the governments in Pakistan and India. In the three wars revolutionaries took a revolutionary defeatist position – they stood for the defeat of their own government in both countries. Our goal is a socialist federation of South Asia!

The **RWO** supports the struggle of the Kashmir people for independence. For a united, independent socialist Kashmir!

The Middle East is plagued by the imperialist war drive. Afghanistan, Iraq etc. everywhere the imperialists try to oppress and exploit poor countries. They even wage a reactionary war against local tribes with the help of the government in Pakistan in the North-West Territories. While we are strongly opposed to Islamism we support the resistance of the people against the reactionary war of the US-occupiers and the Pakistan army.

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 Pakistan a number of different nations and nationalities are living but many are discriminated and oppressed. The **RWO** fights for the right of self-determination including the right to secede of people like the Balochis. We fight for full equality of all national groups and migrants. Equal wages for migrant and national minority workers! Against the state language - for full equality of the languages of all nations in court, in the media, in the education system! For local self-government and autonomy for all areas where discriminated national and ethnic groups live. Our goal is revolutionary integration – the unity of the workers and peasants from all different nations to fight together against the ruling class and for the socialist liberation.

We stand for the separation of state and religion. For massive building of public education institutions with free food so that the poor don't have to send their children to the religious madrasses. We oppose the justification of oppression – particularly of women and youth – in daily life (education, clothes, sexual orientation etc) in the name of religion. Everyone must have the right to choose voluntarily if and which religion and religious practice he/she wants to follow. We defend atheists and religious minorities (like the Shiites, Hindus, Christians) against discrimination and physical attacks.

For women's liberation! Women must have the possibility to get a full job outside of their home. For massive increase of public child care facilities, communal kitchens for eating and laundrettes for cleaning clothes so that women are free to work outside of their home! Women should have equal wages as men for doing the same work. Abolition of all laws that discriminate against women! We are for the right of women to control their own childbearing ability, i.e. for the right to contraception and abortion if they so wish. Against forced marriages!

Freedom for the youth! Abolish child labour so that all children can access public education. Full democratic rights for young people: Those who can work must have the right to vote too – for the right to at the age of 15. For self governed youth centres free of charge where young people can spend their time beside the patriarchal family

control.

The struggle against national oppression, for full democratic rights, for the expropriation of the big land owners and for land for the peasants can never succeed as long as capitalism exists. This is why the struggle for democratic rights cannot and must not be separated from the struggle for working class power. Similarly the victorious socialist revolution must degenerate in the long run if it remains isolated in one country. The Stalinist theory of separating the revolutionary class struggle into schematically separated stages has proven wrong by historical experience. Therefore the **RWO** fights for a permanent revolution – the democratic revolution must be combined with the socialist revolution and the revolution on the national terrain must be combined with the international revolution.

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 were demonstrated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia are a model for the revolutionary parties and revolutions also in the 21 Century.

For a new, revolutionary workers' party! For a 5<sup>th</sup> Workers International on a revolutionary basis!

This is what we in the **RWO** are fighting for together with our comrades in the ULWP (Sri Lanka), the RWC (USA) and the RKOB (Austria). If you agree with us – join us!

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



## Perspectives on the Greek Revolution

### The Greek tragedy is the tragedy of the lack of a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement For Workers' Councils, Workers' Militias and a Workers' Government!

*Resolution of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation (RKOB), 10.11.2011*

1. Greece is currently the mirror image of the future of many countries in Europe and beyond in two senses. First, Greece has shown with what brutality and what devastating consequences monopoly capital in the stage of decaying capitalism tries to shift its economic and debt crisis onto the backs of the masses of the working class and peasantry. Second, we see that the existing reformist bureaucracies that control the labor movement lead our class to disaster. Either they execute the orders of the capitalist class as stooges, or they help these stooges indirectly by leading the workers with a strategy that cannot possibly win. Centrism in Greece demonstrates again its adaptation to bourgeois ideology and to the reformist bureaucracy. One must say outright: Greece proves again that without a revolutionary workers party based on a Bolshevik program the proletariat is helpless to defeat the blows of the ruling class.

#### Capitalist crisis and Politics of plunder

2. The crisis of capitalism pushes Greece to ruin. Already in 2010 the Greek gross domestic product shrank by 4.5% and by the end of the second third of 2011 a further 7.5%. In 2011 it is expected that there will be not enough tax revenue to service the current debt repayment. By March 2011 the debt of the country was over 340 billion Euros. This is against this background of a dramatic rise in unemployment and poverty. At the end of 2009 there were approximately 9.6% unemployed; today the official figure is 16.3%. According to the trade unions there are one million unemployed, i.e. 22% of the workforce! Among 15 - to 29-year-olds, nearly one third are without a job. Moreover, up to 30,000 wage earners in the state sector are threatened with dismissal till the end of the year. Public sector workers wages shall be cut on an average of 30-40%, and pensioners face a reduction of their pension by a fifth. The employers can now legally take advantage of high unemployment to undermine the industry collective agreements: the absolute lower limit of about € 740 gross wage for a full time job no longer applies for newly hired young adults under 25 years. You have to make do with just under €600 gross per month. At the same time the rich get their money out safely: according to the German news magazine Spiegel Greek millionaires in Switzerland alone, have deposited € 600 billion.

3. The attacks on the Greek working class are justified by the bourgeois governments, the EU bodies (including the Social-Democratic parties) and the media, by blaming allegedly high wages and government spending in Greece. This is of course one of the many lies the bourgeois ideological apparatuses uses to justify their austerity attacks. According to the French bank Natixis, the annual

working time in Germany is on average 1390 hours yet in Greece it is 2119 hours. The gross wages in Greece are 30% less than in Germany. The share of government employment to total employment is in Greece (8%) below that of Germany (just under 10%) and is just over half the average of industrialized countries (15%). Similarly, the share of social spending of GDP is 36% and well below that of Germany (45%). The argument that Greece has taken too much debt and lives "beyond its means" is nonsense. It is in fact a prisoner of imperialist finance capital: in just the last 20 years the country has paid more than €600 billion in interest to the banks - twice as much as its national debt.

4. The actual cause of the devastating economic crisis and the massive austerity attack is not that of wrong neo-liberal policies as the leaders the left Social Democrats and Stalinists insist. For about 40 years global capitalism has been in a period of weak economic growth and crises, the result of the inevitable over-accumulation of capital and the tendency of the falling rate of profit. The neo-liberal policies were not the cause of this crisis because they arrived a long time after it began. There are and have been in the capitalist countries all imaginable forms of government – from a bourgeois government with the participation of radical right-wing forces (e.g., Italy with the National Alliance, in Austria, the FPÖ / BZÖ); Social Democratic governments ruling alone; governments with the participation of "communist" parties (the Jospin government in France, the PCF or twice the Prodi government in Italy with the Rifondazione Comunista); and the dictatorship by a Stalinist party (China, under the leadership of the CPC, where in the early 1990s there was a transition first from a degenerate workers' state to a capitalist state, and in the late 2000s to an imperialist power). But despite the differences in these forms of regime, they all reacted in the same way to the crisis of capitalism with the intensified exploitation of the working class and a massive redistribution of wealth in favor of the bourgeoisie.

#### Greece put on starvation rations

5. The crisis of the capitalist world system that erupted in 2008 with the worst recession for a long time has gone to a new level. The system has passed the stage of a crisis on its death bed and now approaches its grave where the only alternative is socialism or barbarism. During this period characterised by monopoly capital – the survival of the banks and corporations that dominate the state and economy depends on drastically cutting the value of labor power, screwing up the interest rate and looting the raw material reserves etc. to increase their profits. Weaker capitalist countries – like Greece – are the first victims



of the relentless politics of this imperialist plunder. But ultimately it makes the working class and oppressed peoples of all countries pay for its crisis.

6. The aim of the imperialist EU in Greece is to put the workers and oppressed on starvation rations and to privatize the remaining state assets (and sell them mainly to large foreign corporations). So the Greek State offers for sale 39 airports, 850 ports, railways, highways, two energy companies, banks, thousands of hectares of land which the state lottery, etc. with a total value of US\$71 billion. Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of the Greek economy is transferred into the ownership of imperialist capital (so far around 90% of bank capital is still in local hands) and the rights and organizations of the working class are weakened to create a much cheaper labor force for the capitalists to exploit – not only by Western European capitalists but also Greek employers. Therefore, the Greek capitalists essentially support the EU's brutal austerity policies even if they ask for, of course, better terms for them from Brussels.

7. The political crisis in Greece and the events in the EU underline once more the thesis of Marxists that bourgeois democracy is not democracy for the workers class and the broad masses, but in reality a disguised dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The "socialist" government in Athens can be commanded by the stock exchanges and the Greek capitalists in parliament to adopt the austerity package of the EU Commission, when it is obvious that the people are against it. Nor will the peoples of Europe have the slightest say in the austerity measures. So the government in Athens has just ruled against the so-called democratic or sovereign will of the people. The leaders of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) and ND (New Democracy – the conservative party) vote to change the government, set the date for new elections, and decide the future of the people. How hypocritical were the "democrats" of Western governments (including the Social Democrats) and the monopoly capitalists, when in early November the then Greek President Papandreou dared to announce a referendum on the austerity package. An outcry over the "irresponsibility" of the government arose in the EU and the stock market tumbled down. Democracy for the capitalists is only viable as long as it does not affect their profits. Petty-bourgeois democrats like ATTAC or the ideologues in the "Democracy Now" movement think that within capitalism a true democracy is possible. This is a childish illusion. In a society in which classes exist and one class exploits the other, there can be no true democracy. The state apparatus, the parliament, the government – they are all in a 'bourgeois democracy' controlled by the numerically small class of capitalists. Lenin's statement that "even the most democratic [of] democratic republic[s] is nothing but a machine for the oppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, the masses of working people by a handful of capitalists" ([Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#), 1919), is valid today than ever.

#### **The class character of Greece**

8. All this shows the hopelessness of bourgeois nationalism. It is a reactionary dead end, and chains the working class politically to the bourgeoisie. Bolshevik-Communists therefore reject the "patriotic" orientation of the Stalinists of the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) and

many other left-wing reformists, towards the formation of an anti-EU "national bloc" in common with bourgeois forces, as completely reactionary and utopian.

9. In the Greek population there is a widespread mood that sees the EU as dictating a foreign austerity policy (not least Berlin-controlled) onto the country. This is reflected in numerous patriotic expressions at demonstrations and also at the celebrations marking the anniversary of the famous "NO" against Mussolini's dictatorship on 28 October 1940. Without doubt an element of national oppression exists in the current crisis, insofar as there are not equal relations between states, as the major powers in the EU – especially Germany and France, but also smaller imperialist powers such as Austria or the Netherlands – treat Greece unashamedly as a developed semi-colony whose government policy it can dictate.

10. At the same time the patriotic Stalinists of the KKE and other leftists, "forget" that Greek capitalism has also striven to take its place as an internationally active exploiter class. The Greek capitalists have traditionally been among the largest owners of ships (with a share of almost 16% of world shipping tonnage in 2010). Also since the early 1990s, Greek capital has established itself as a leading foreign investor in South Eastern European and Balkan countries and in Serbia, Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria it even takes the first place among foreign investors. Greece's leading four banks – National Bank of Greece, EFG Euro Bank, Alpha Bank and Piraeus – now control about 20% of the financial sector in Southeast Europe. In short, Greek capital is exploiting the proletariat not only domestically, but also through the super-exploitation of workers in poorer semi-colonial countries. It is however noted that part of the officially recognized "foreign investment" (referred to as capital exports) is in reality more capital flight in the face of severe economic crisis in Greece and represents less a sign of strength but of weakness of Greek capital. This shows incidentally, that the patriotism of the ruling class serves only as an ideological veil to fool the oppressed classes, but if it is conducive to their profits, they will – without batting an eyelid – readily submit to foreign masters.

11. Greek capitalism therefore has a contradictory character. While it has historically been oppressed by European and U.S. imperialism it has also made efforts to make parts of the Balkans its own semi-colonial hinterland. An overall picture of Greek capitalism is that – given the relatively low importance of the role of capital exports and repatriation of super-profits in proportion to the overall economy and the overall relatively underdeveloped nature of capitalist development in the country – Greece has no imperialist character. We reject the use of categories such as "sub-imperialism" (as used by the centrist IS/SWP tradition of Tony Cliff) as un-Marxist, because in the modern era of imperialism they blur and render indecisive the characteristic contradiction between oppressor and oppressed countries. Rather, Greece is an advanced semi-colony in subordination to the imperialist powers – especially the EU and the USA, and increasingly China. The current crisis in Greece and its open submission to the dictates of the big powers show that the efforts of the Greek capital in the past 20 years to become a small regional imperialist power were not crowned with success. The last years have confirmed the semi-colonial status of Greece.

12. The example of Greece also confirms the thesis of

Bolshevik-Communists that China has now become a new imperialist superpower. The dramatic increase in its capital exports – China is now the world's fifth-largest foreign investor – shows that the country is neither a semi-colony nor a degenerated workers' state, and certainly not a socialist state. In the recent past, China has won through massive investments an influential role in Greece and thus gained a springboard into the EU. The state capitalist Chinese company Cosco controls with a US\$5 billion investment the largest port in the country. China plans a number of other major investments in Greece and has already signed contracts for projects totaling more than US\$5 billion for the purchase of larger sectors of the major trading fleet, telecommunications, railways, etc. For the Greek working class Chinese investment brings heavy attacks. For example, Cosco prohibits in "its" Piraeus harbor any union activity or even collective bargaining agreements. What a bizarre nonsense that many Stalinists and Chavez supporters admire China as a socialist, or at least still a progressive country!

13. The reactionary character of Greek chauvinism is also reflected in its history of oppression and partial expulsion of national minorities (Turks, Albanians, Macedonians, etc.). Founded in 1991, even the independent Republic of Macedonia was not recognized by Greece for many years. At the same time Greek chauvinism is also used to justify the exploitation of the many migrants and thus to deepen the split in the working class. This is even more serious given the fact that the migrants number officially a million (2 / 3 are Albanians) and amount to 20% of the total labor force.

#### **Patriotism - the dead end of reformism**

14. Shamefully, a large part of the reformist Left (left wing of PASOK, KKE, Synaspismos, etc.) subscribes to Greek patriotism. The KKE, for example, refers to itself in its program as a "patriotic party" and is committed to "defending the territorial integrity of the country against the new imperialist world order." The only "dangers" of the "territorial integrity" of Greece in the past few decades were the conflict with Turkey and some demands by the Macedonian minority in Greece to secede. In fact, the KKE on the Macedonian question supports "the safeguard of inviolability of borders; the avoidance of every irredentist propaganda and of actions that hinder the approach and cooperation of the two countries." (KKE Resolution 19.2.2008). In general, the KKE denies the existence of any national minority in Greece (Interview with the longtime KKE Secretary General Aleka Pappariga, 02/26/2011). The commitment of the KKE to patriotism and the defense of the capitalist state against other states and against the self-determination of national minorities is nothing more than social-chauvinism and subordination to the capitalist fatherland.

15. Today the KKE calls for the withdrawal of Greece from the EU and the euro currency and the restoration of "independence" for Greece and the drachma currency. But in reality, the solution of the Greek crisis can only be international in character. A capitalist Greece outside the EU will face at least as tough austerity measures as those imposed by the present government. The reformist bureaucracy of the KKE preaches the illusion that Greece could be an independent nation because the country "has

conditions to create a self-supporting developing national economy." (Aleka Pappariga, 5.7.2010) Such a nation existing in isolation is not possible.

16. The struggle against the imperialist dictates of the EU must be fought internationally. The West European workers' movement must fight on the streets and in parliament against all austerity policies to "rescue" Greece and against anti-Greek chauvinism. Revolutionaries in Greece must reject the bourgeois-nationalist perspective sharply and the demand for withdrawal from the EU7 or the Euro zone and the reintroduction of the drachma. The slogan for Greece's withdrawal from the EU and euro should be made only in connection with the slogan of a workers' government and as part of the process of socialist revolution.

17. We are opposed to ultra-left positions, which – because of the presence of Greek national flags in demonstrations and site occupations or the organized right – conclude that these mobilisations have a reactionary character. Of course, in a real popular movement, which is directed against the brutal subjugation of the country under the dictates of the imperialist EU, patriotism is understandable, in particular given the fact that the workers vanguard still does not have a revolutionary consciousness and therefore cannot decisively influence these mobilization with an internationalist perspective. Bolsheviks-communists argue against patriotism as such not with abstract teachings about the myth of the homeland and the moral superiority of internationalism. Rather, we point out that Greece can be saved only a) if it is free of rule by Greek and international capital, b) if the fight is on the basis of complete equality with the non-Greek parts of the working class in the country (immigrants, national minorities) and c) if it takes place as part of a common international struggle of the working class in the Balkans, in Europe and the Mediterranean, for a socialist federation.

18. It is particularly important, therefore, to underline the reactionary role of Greek capital in the Balkans and in the over-exploitation and national oppression of the migrants in their own country. To combat Greek chauvinism consistently, we make our program for the national self-determination (including the right of secession) for the minorities in Greece; for the full equality of migrants (full citizenship rights, equal pay, recognition of their language as equal at work and education, abolition of the official State language, etc.); for a socialist perspective for a Balkan Federation and the United Socialist States of Europe, a priority. Equally urgent is the unity of the Greek Revolution and the Arab revolution.

19. The importance of the revolutionary struggle for complete equality and integration of migrants is reflected especially in Greece. They are an important part, especially of the most oppressed sections of the working class. The struggle of the union of cleaners and domestic helpers in Athens (PEKOP) shows that migrants can play an important role in the class struggle. Its most famous representative, the Bulgarian migrant Kostantina Kuneva, was attacked in late 2008 during a labor dispute by paid assassins of the company concerned who threw sulfuric acid all over her face. She survived despite severe injuries and PEKOP – supported by a large wave of solidarity from other parts of the working class and the youth – was able to win the strike. The organization and mobilization of the

lower sections of the working class – among which the migrants play a key role – is a crucial precondition for the victory of the Greek revolution.

### Widespread pre-revolutionary crisis

20. The central question is: Why has the government been able to stay in power even after a string of very brutal austerity policies forced on the people against their will? Is it the lack of combat readiness of the masses? Certainly not! The massive attacks of the capitalist class were answered by the working class with a series of general strikes, demonstrations and site occupations. The statistical average in 2010 was two demonstrations per day in Athens!

21. Is Greek capitalism in such a strong position? No. Not only are the workers and the oppressed no longer willing to accept the series of savage packages. The ruling class cannot continue its existing politics unchanged. Greece is facing national bankruptcy. The political system is totally discredited in the eyes of the people. Each government crisis is followed by the next. No wonder that there is speculation among the political elite of Greece and the EU already about the need for a civil war, a military coup and a Bonapartist regime.

22. Greece is definitely facing a pre-revolutionary crisis. If we disregard the rebellion in Albania in 1997, we find in Greece the most advanced revolutionary development in Europe since Portugal 1974-75. Lenin's classic definition of a revolutionary situation clearly applies to Greece: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes", a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "the lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that "the upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in "peace time", but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the "upper classes" themselves into independent historical action." (VI Lenin, ['The Collapse of the Second International'](#), 1915). From the Greek revolution to the Arab revolution since January 2011, the August uprising of the poor in Britain a few months ago, and the worldwide Occupation movement, there is further evidence for the Bolshevik-Communists assessment that the historical crisis of capitalism has opened a revolutionary period.

23. So the ruling class holds on to power not because of their strength and not because of the lack of combat readiness of the working class. The cause lies rather in the fact that the proletariat and the oppressed have no revolutionary leadership. Instead, at the head of the labor movement stand the reformist bureaucracies, with their policies to betray and sell out the struggle of the masses. Either they execute the orders of the capitalist class as direct agents (PASOK), or they help these lackeys indirectly by misleading the proletariat with a reformist strategy which must inevitably end in defeat (KKE, Synapismos). Centrism

(which vacillates between reformism and revolution) is incapable of a raising a truly revolutionary program as a political alternative to the bureaucracy, such as the pseudo-Trotskyist forces (Marxistiki Foni / IMT, DEA) and Maoist organizations (such as KOE), with Synapismos/SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical reform left) or Antarsya (a coalition of SEK/IST, OKDE-Spartakos/Fourth International) and others. (Xekinima / CWI belonged to SYRIZA until a few months ago).

24. The pre-revolutionary crisis threatens to degenerate. A pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation cannot last forever. The masses are weakened by loss of momentum and lose faith in the possibility of victory. At the same time, the ruling class can prepare for a decisive counterattack and for the establishment of a Bonapartist regime with wide-ranging executive powers. Against the backdrop of a deep economic and social crisis, the continued inability of the labor movement to take the initiative inevitably leaves space for the growth of a rabid nationalism and fascism. (e.g. LAOS and Chrysi Avyi). Only the timely construction of a revolutionary workers party based on a Bolshevik program can ensure that the resolute struggle of the masses leads to the proletarian seizure of power and not to a heavy defeat.

### The Crisis of Leadership – treachery of PASOK, KKE and SYRIZA

25. The working class in Greece is bound on several sides. The ruling party PASOK in this crisis proves once more to be the direct agent of domestic and foreign monopoly capital. It plays a leading role within the big trade union federations - the Federation GSEE and the public sector union ADEDY. At the last congress of the Greek General Confederation of Labor (GSEE) in March 2010, PASKE – the trade union group close to PASOK – 48.2% of the delegates voted to unite behind PASOK's social-democratic program to weaken and limit the struggle against austerity. The PASOK government does not shy away from using military repression to discipline the workers. It used the civilian mobilization orders to break the 17-day strike of the garbage workers by force out of fear of a solidarity strike by millions of workers against their policy. This law dates from the Second World War and allows the forced provision of government services. The striking workers were effectively subjected to military discipline. If they refuse, they can be thrown in jail for up to five years.

26. However, at the same time the internal contradictions intensify in the face of growing anger among the masses. A number of leading trade union officials now sees itself forced to break with PASOK. In different unions (teachers, municipal employees, railway workers) PASKE even splits from PASOK.

27. It is significant that PASOK is part of the Socialist International. It is a counterrevolutionary instrument like the other European social democratic parties that support the imperialist policy of robbing Greece through its various EU "aid packages".

28. The Communist Party (KKE) is a classic Stalinist party i.e. it is a bourgeois workers party, which is ruled by a bureaucracy that serves the maintenance of capitalism by promising reforms to its working class social base. Its union faction PAME won 20.9% of the delegates' votes at



the last congress of the GSEE. It has important bastions of support in the traditional core layers of the proletariat like the port and construction workers - and exerts an important influence on the class-conscious workers. However, PAME does not have the strength of the GSEE and the ADEDY (Civil Servants Unions) to organize general strikes. The KKE played a central role in the anti-fascist struggle for liberation during the Second World War. In 1944 it formed a coalition government with the bourgeois and monarchist forces to disarm the partisans and install a capitalist regime during the revolutionary crisis of 1944-45. Also in 1990-91, the KKE participated in a coalition government with PASOK and ND. It now pursues the Stalinist strategy of establishing a "social popular front" - also called the "anti-imperialist, anti-monopolistic, democratic front of the people". To this end the KKE organizes not only workers and peasants, but also the petty bourgeoisie (it has created the PASEVE -the Anti-monopolist Protest Movement of All Greeks to organise "the Self-employed and the small Tradesman").

29. The KKE bourgeois role was also evident during the uprising of the youth in December 2008 (a week-long mass revolt - not unlike the August uprising of the poor in Britain - after the murder of 15-year-old student Alexandros Grigoropoulos by two police officers). While tens of thousands of youths were fighting in the streets against the police, the KKE Secretary General Papariga slandered the militants as "hooligans" and "hoodies" led by "foreign intelligence." (Interview 17.12.2008)

30. The reformist policy of the KKE is based primarily on strengthening its position in Parliament. The class struggle in the streets and in the factories is subordinated to its parliamentary position. Papariga said in the 2010 "Proposal for Resolving the Crisis" that the party only puts its emphasis on the extra-parliamentary struggle if it sees no possibilities for parliamentary coalitions and maneuver; "...if the political balance of power allows us no effective intervention in favor of the people, then we focus on the extra-parliamentary movement." The KKE is often radical and likes to talk of socialism and the power of the working class. But instead of taking advantage of the present revolutionary crisis to orient the wave of strikes and general strikes and occupation movements to organize an uprising and the revolutionary seizure of power, it demands - along with the other reformist and centrist forces (e.g. SYRIZA) - the formation of a "transitional government" and new elections.

31. Bolshevik-Communists reject the slogan for new elections as it means in the present phase of the heightened class struggle and mass mobilizations nothing but a diversion from the revolutionary struggle on the streets and in the factories back onto the parliamentary road. It reflects an orientation of the reformist bureaucracy that solve the political crisis and the mass mobilizations of popular protests by electing a new civil government to parliament, rather than by an uprising and the overthrow of the ruling class.

32. Against this background we can assess the clashes during the two-day general strike on 19./20 October. The KKE used their forces to form a barrier of people to protect the Parliament and allow the deputies access so they could vote for the recent brutal austerity package. The radical forces of "The Plirono" (We do not pay) movement, the

militant Union of Municipal Employees POE-OTA, the radical Left, and the autonomous/anarchists were trapped in Syntagma Square. In response to the bureaucratic and sometimes violent actions of the KKE security forces there were violent clashes between the KKE-stewards and radical parts of the demonstrators. This was the result of the role that the KKE on 20 October played: that of a middle-class auxiliary police who guarded the Parliament against the masses, while the new austerity package was agreed. (That is why the KKE/PAME security forces are often called "KNAT" - a combination of the terms KKE youth organization KNE and the special police MAT)

33. The KKE denounced the radical forces as "anarcho-fascists." Many centrists condemned both the KKE and the radical forces. Doubtless the autonomous/anarchist forces repeatedly caused a counterproductive escalation with the police. But this should not detract from the overall political context. Against the background of many general strikes and the widespread hatred of the people for parliament and the government, the repeated attacks by protesters against the parliament building in the past, it is absurd to justify the KKE/PAME behavior against the workers' demonstration on the pretext of stopping some 'crazed anarchists'. No, the Stalinist bureaucracy wanted to prove to the ruling class its loyalty in the face of the government crisis and possible new elections. "We are a reputable, state-supporting force, protecting the Parliament in times of crisis and we can control the movement". The policy of the KKE is clearly reminiscent of the role of the Stalinists in the Spanish Civil war 1936-39, where they defended the bourgeois republic against the radical forces of the time. But if the KKE has played out its role, the reactionary forces will sweep it away as it happened in Spain also.

34. The "Coalition of the Radical Left" - SYRIZA - is dominated by the left-reformist party Synaspismos, a Euro-communist split from the KKE in 1991. The founding leaders of Synaspismos were at the forefront of the government coalition with New Democracy and PASOK of 1990-91. Synaspismos is now part of the European Left Party and follows a left-social democratic politics, which sees neoliberal policies as the cause of the crisis and advocates a reform program and government participation in the management of capitalism. Significantly, in the 1990s Synaspismos supported extremely chauvinistic propaganda towards Macedonia and mobilized with the Conservatives, PASOK and the church, for joint demonstrations under the slogan "Macedonia is Greek".

35. In 2010 there was a separation of the right wing of Synaspismos under the former Minister of Justice Fotis Kouvelis (in the coalition government of 1990-91), which formed the reformist Democratic Left party (DIMAR). DIMAR follows the logic of social democracy more consistently than KKE and SYRIZA. Kouvelis calls for new elections so that "the political crisis does not turn into a crisis of democracy". In early November the DIMAR deputy Grigoris Psarianos along with PASOK and ND called for the formation of a transitional government to restore "normal democracy" and to keep the country "on European course". Here speaks a party appealing to the bourgeoisie as a serious coalition partner to administer the capitalist state business.

36. Even if SYRIZA today is sometimes radical and may resonate with some layers of the militant workers and

youth, it is basically a left-reformist force. Significantly SYRIZA in recent months did not demand the resignation of the government, but called for a referendum on the debt and the establishment of a committee to review how much of the debt should be paid and how much should be canceled. Similar to the KKE calls for new elections, it has a reformist-parliamentary strategy in response to the crisis. Its goal is to find a place in a bourgeois government ("a new coalition of power", SYRIZA president Alexis Tsipras 04/11/2011) is. That is why Tsipras appealed to President Karolos Papoulias to hold elections to defend the Constitution. Everyone had an obligation under the Constitution to undertake initiatives to preserve social cohesion and national integrity." One should take initiatives "avoid finding ourselves faced with unpleasant events that some times wrong people, institutions and our democracy." (31.10.2011) Such statements of the supposedly "radical left" in times of severe crisis of capitalist democracy tells us much more about the thoroughly bourgeois-reformist character of SYRIZA than hundreds of rhetorical speeches about anti-capitalism and socialism. Those who think that SYRIZA is more left-wing than the KKE' make a big mistake. Equally significant is the fact that for years several centrist organizations like Marxistiki Foni / IMT, DEA and KOE have been part of the left-reformist SYRIZA, afraid to break with the reformist Synaspismos and thus carry responsibility for its betrayal.

37. In Greece, anarchism is traditionally relatively strong. Its strength is a consequence of the bureaucratization of the labor movement and the treachery of its leaders in the past. Given the weakness of the revolutionary forces, it is no surprise that many young people and probably some workers turn to anarchism. What they see as 'communism' is nothing but the Stalinism of the KKE "Leninism" and the "working class discipline" of KKE stewards calling the rebellious youth "hooligans" as a pretext for protecting parliament. At the same time we must also see that many young activists are misguided in their involvement in the ranks of anarchism. For without a revolutionary (not Stalinist!) party no revolutionary overthrow of capitalism is possible. Without turning to the working class in the factories, without tactics against the organizations of the labor movement, the working class cannot be won to the revolution. Without a disciplined approach to demonstrations and street fighting the ranks can be misled into police provocations and other counter-productive actions. In short, we are appealing to the anarchist activists to join the ranks of the working class party in the revolutionary struggle for the abolition of classes and the state.

### **Return of spontaneous movements**

38. The massive upsurge of class struggle in recent months has brought very important and promising developments among the masses. Out of the dissatisfaction with the unsuccessful protests organized by the bureaucracy of the unions and the KKE, there arose the spontaneous mass movement Kinima Aganaktisménon Politón (KAP -Indignant Citizens' Movement) starting with the demonstration on 25 May 2011. The movement reached its climax in the summer when tens of thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands attending their

meetings and demonstrations. It calls for the cancellation of debts and the expulsion of the Government, the EU Troika, the IMF, the banks "and all who exploit us." Like so many spontaneous mass movements it is also politically contradictory. On the one hand it embodies a desire for "true democracy", a frontal rejection of government, EU, IMF and "exploiters" and its use of bourgeois legality to square occupations has an enormously progressive potential. On the other hand, it lacks roots in the factories and refuses to allow the formal participation in the meetings of political organizations, which is a petty-bourgeois element in this movement.

39. Because of the radical-democratic nature of the KAP and thus their lack of control by the bureaucracy, the KKE leadership sees this movement as a threat. Shamefully, they condemn it as "apolitical" and reject any involvement in, and support for the movement.

40. The attitude of Bolshevik-Communists to such spontaneous bourgeois-democratic protest movements is characterized by the combination of a) an active participation in, and support for the movement, b) a politically clear and educational criticism of its petty-bourgeois orientation, anti-party sentiment, etc., c) the open advocacy of an orientation to the working class and the establishment of action committees in the factories, neighborhoods and schools, and d) a clear perspective on the necessity of socialist revolution and the building of a revolutionary combat party of the working class.

41. Another very important phenomenon is the spread of rank and file assemblies and the formation of actions in many enterprises and neighborhoods. These committees are spontaneous and are barely linked together. Related actions are also the numerous occupations of public buildings.

### **Program of the Revolution**

42. In the past year and a half Greece has gone through a pre-revolutionary development; numerous 'general strikes' (12 until now), occupations and demonstrations have proven beyond doubt the fighting spirit of the masses. But so far these heroic struggles have had no success: the PASOK government has been able to push through the brutal austerity packages in parliament.

43. The reason for this failure lies in the fact that at the head of the mobilization there is no revolutionary combat party of the working class, but rather, reformist bureaucracies with centrist appendages. They pursue a strategy of impotent dead-end mobilisations which are directed at winning lucrative power and privileges via new elections.

44. The key condition to overcome the current crisis is the building of a revolutionary party. Only with such a party at its head can the working class be won to a program for the socialist seizure of power and the road to liberation opened. The first step in this direction is the creation of a revolutionary party-building organization to develop such a program and to unite activists on the basis of this program.

45. The central tragedy of Greece to date lies precisely in the huge gap between the struggle and determination of the working class on the one side and the terrible political backwardness of the leadership of the workers'

movement on the other side. There is no revolutionary party capable of leading the proletariat to take power. Today many militant workers and young activists support either reformist or centrist forces (e.g. trade unions close to PASOK, KKE/PAME, SYRIZA, DIMAR, Antarsya), the Autonomists/Anarchists, or they are unorganized. From this fact follows the centrality of the united front tactic. The battle for winning over first the vanguard and then the entire proletariat requires that the revolutionary forces do more than strike together with the workers. They must also direct their demands to the existing organizations and that includes also their leaderships. To direct demands to the leaderships does not imply we have any illusions in their reformist and centrist programs. On the contrary, revolutionaries explain openly to the working class why these leaders are not able to lead the liberation struggle to victory, why they are an obstacle to the revolution and why they must therefore be replaced by a revolutionary party. In a revolutionary crisis the working class can learn ten times as fast as in normal times of relative class peace. But the working class cannot be won over to the revolutionary program solely by means of propaganda - they must go through their own experiences with their leaders' betrayals. Therefore it is necessary to direct the calls for the establishment of action committees, workers' militias, etc., up and including the workers' government also to the current leaders of the Greek labor movement such as the pro-PASOK unions, KKE/PAME, SYRIZA, DIMAR and Antarsya.

46. A revolutionary program for the crisis in Greece must first of all explain the character of the current crisis and draw the correct conclusions. This crisis cannot be overcome by reforms and governmental coalitions within the framework of capitalism. The working class and the popular masses will experience a social massacre, a social and historical defeat, if the ruling capitalist class - regardless of whether ND, PASOK, KKE or SYRIZA administer their businesses - is not overthrown in time. The most important element of the current situation is therefore the question of power. Which class rules - the working class or the capitalist class?

47. This is understood by the parties and felt by the masses who want to get rid of the politicians and the government. Therefore the reformists and centrists put forward their answer to the question of power. They demand new elections and a "left" or "anti-monopoly popular government". Several centrists (e.g. CWI, IMT) do not share this orientation towards new elections. They propose a prolonged or even indefinite general strike to overthrow the government and the formation of a workers' government. Their rejection of the reformist electoral orientation is correct but their concept of the struggle for a workers' government is wrong and naive. It is a characteristic of centrism that it presents the seizure of power in a (pre-) revolutionary situation as a relatively peaceful transition, without rupture, in other words, in an opportunistic, non-revolutionary way. The indefinite general strike is seen as a weeks-long strike which forces the government to resign and then a workers government based on trade unions, leftist parties, action committee etc. delegates, emerges. In a (pre-) revolutionary situation this is a completely unrealistic view of the proletarian seizure of power. Moreover, it is a dangerous opportunistic illusion

which is spread by centrism in the ranks of workers vanguard.

48. Not coincidentally, several centrist groups such as the CWI or the IMT share the revisionist theory of a peaceful transition to socialism. The scenario of civil war and the appropriate political and military preparation is outside of their horizon. But the ruling class will not voluntarily give up their power and a few street fights are not sufficient to win. Already the CIA speaks openly of the possibility of a military coup and the U.S. business magazine Forbes is acknowledging their sympathy for a coup in an article with the headline: "The Real Greek Solution: A Military Coup" (26/10/2011). We warn that the Greek proletariat is threatened by that terrible prospect like that of Chile in 1973. Whoever does not consistently promote the revolution is punished by a counterrevolution. Bolshevik-Communists do not conceal their views of the necessary steps to resolve the question of power. They openly say that power can only won by means of a socialist revolution. Revolution means the armed revolutionary uprising and civil war of the organized working class, led by a revolutionary party. Revolution means the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only under such a regime can the masses of the people be freed from the yoke of capitalist domination, can industry be planned according to the interests of society, and can the class enemies of the revolution be suppressed and the revolution spread internationally. To propagate a workers' government in a (pre) revolutionary situation as a concrete objective, without preparing the working class for the inevitability of civil war and armed rebellion won by a workers' militia, is to spread reformist illusions of a step-by-step, peaceful transition towards socialism. Bolshevik-Communists reject decisively such a policy of centrism.

49. The question of power is the central axis of the Programme of Action at the present stage of Greek politics. From this several consequences follow. The working class can take power only when it is organized accordingly, and learns to fight for power. The revolutionary action program must take up the most urgent questions of the immediate struggle for survival and demonstrate that they can be answered only by the seizure of power.

50. In order to take control of the defensive struggle themselves, the working class and the oppressed must form Action Committees in the factories, neighbourhoods and schools. At regular assemblies of employees, residents, school students, university students, etc., the most important local and national issues shall be discussed. The decisions will then be implemented by elected delegates who are held accountable to these assemblies and can be voted out by them at any time.

51. Such Action Committees are the first step to Councils (or Soviets as they were called in Russia in 1917). Councils/Soviets are the instrument of the working class by means of which they build their counter-power and lead the fight for workers' control in the enterprises and the education system. Such Action Committees/Councils will then elect delegates and join together locally, regionally and nationally. Demand a national conference of delegates from all the action committees/councils! Demand that the KKE, SYRIZA, DIMAR etc mobilise for the establishment of such councils!

52. Especially in the current phase of economic collapse, where many enterprises dismiss workers or close down,



the slogan of workers' control is of crucial importance. All companies that want to cut wages, lay workers off, or threaten to close down, must open the books. We advocate immediate nationalization of these enterprises under workers' control. Equally important are the slogans of factory occupations and the continuation of production under workers' management. The already existing initiatives to refuse payment of higher duties, taxes, rents, etc. are a very important step. They must be coordinated through Action Committees/Councils and expanded to an effective mass campaign.

53. Hardly a demonstration passes without the attacks of heavily armed police. We know the ruling class is already publicly talking about the possibility of a military coup. All this underscores the urgent necessity of arming the organized working class and youth. Immediately, of course, the construction of powerful self-defense units is needed to protect demonstrations, strikes, immigrant communities, etc. against police raids, fascists and provocateurs. But in the current situation where the question of power is clearly posed, it is necessary to go beyond the centrist slogan of self-defense committees. State power can only be conquered when the working class creates its own armed forces – i.e. workers' militias. Instead of protecting parliament against militant demonstrators, the KKE/PAME should put their forces in the service of the workers' militia! At the same time revolutionaries must organise subversive activity in the armed forces (army, police), to prevent them being used as a decisive blow against the people.

54. *No demand for new elections, but for the overthrow of the government by an indefinite general strike and an armed uprising! For the formation of a workers government based on Workers' Councils and militias! As a first step: demand that the dominant labour organizations today – GSEE, ADEDY, PAME, KKE, SYRIZA, DIMAR and Antarsya – form a workers' government based on the mobilization of the masses! Down with the PASOK/ND-conspiracy against the people! The power lies not in parliament, but on the street! A real workers' government is based on the organs of workers' power (Councils, Militias, etc.), and must expropriate the bourgeoisie and smash the state apparatus.* Of course the creation and maintenance of a workers' government that implements such a revolutionary policy will face the determined and violent opposition of the ruling class. Therefore, a workers' government without armed organs is an impotent caricature that would fall immediately to a military coup as it happened in Greece in 1967 or in Chile in 1973. Although the sequence and pace of development cannot be predicted, it is obvious that the questions of the indefinite general strike, the armed struggle for power and the workers' government are inextricably linked.

55. *Against the vice of the debt trap we raise the slogan of the cancellation of all debts.* No halving of the debt, no moratorium (postponement of repayment), no committee to review the debt - but simply cancel all debt! Not only the public debt, but also the debt of private households, small traders and self-employed should be deleted immediately.

56. *The economy must no longer be the victim of a small group of corporate masters and financial jugglers! For the expropriation of the super rich - this elite group of monopoly capitalists! For the nationalization of the domestic and foreign banks, large industrial and service companies as well as the large*

*landowners (including the church property!) under the control of the workers! The labor movement must develop an economic emergency plan to secure the survival of the population and the country against the extortions of monopoly capital.*

57. *35% of the workforce in Greece is self-employed. Many of them are non-exploitative peasants or small traders, who can be won as allies for the socialist revolution. This requires, however, that the working class takes the path of socialist seizure of power. A workers' government needs a program for the peasants and the lower middle classes: For the nationalization of the land! No small farmer and small trader will be expropriated against his/her will. For the cancellation of the debts of farmers and small traders - instead interest-free loans! Promotion of voluntary associations with the longer-term goal of voluntary collectivization!*

58. *International solidarity! The international workers' movement – first of all in Europe and the Balkans - must rush to their brothers and sisters in Greece to help. The unions and workers' parties of Europe and the Balkans have to organize an immediate campaign for total cancellation of all debts of Greece. Fight the governments and the EU Commission which openly tries to blackmail Greece! For a campaign within the labour movement against anti-Greek chauvinism in the media and Social Democracy! The international trade union of bank employees must initiate independent investigations and make public both the flight of capital of the Greek capitalists and the speculation and profit rip-off of international banks at the expense of Greece.*

59. *No to Greek chauvinism! For the recognition of full equal rights of national minorities and migrants! For the right of self-determination of national minorities up to and including the right to secede! For full citizenship rights for immigrants, equal pay, equal recognition of their language as in offices and schools, for the abolition of the state language! For the massive organization of migrants in the unions! Equal representation of migrants at all levels of management!*

60. *Fight the oppression of women! Equal pay for equal work! Instead of cuts in public services, we demand a massive expansion of public child care facilities and public and inexpensive restaurants and laundries as a step toward the socialization of housework!*

61. *A workers' government would immediately break with the imperialist EU and the euro-zone and instead promote the building of socialism in Greece and the international spread of revolution to the Balkans and throughout Europe. For a socialist federation of the Balkans! For the United Socialist States of Europe!*

62. *Let us repeat: the Greek revolution will end in a serious defeat if a revolutionary combat party of the working class based on a Bolshevik program is not built in time. Time is short! The Bolshevik-Communists of the RKOB seek discussion and unity with all serious revolutionaries in Greece. Forward to the Fifth Workers International, the international revolutionary workers party!*

\* \* \*

*The Resolution is endorsed by Communist Workers Group (CWG-Aotearoa/New Zealand)*

*[Note by the CWG: CWG endorses the RKOB statement on Greece in all its fundamental points. At the same time we acknowledge programmatic disagreements over the question of Stalinism, capitalist restoration and centrism which we are continuing to discuss with a view to resolving]*

# Solidarity with the "Occupy Wall Street" movement! Expropriate Wall Street!

*Resolution of the Revolutionary Workers Collective (USA), 7.10.2011*

1. For weeks Wall Street has been occupied by hundreds, sometimes thousands of activists. Tens of thousands have participated in the recent demonstrations. Their slogan is "We are the 99%" i.e. the 99% of the population that have as much assets as the richest 1% alone. Almost every day there are meetings, lectures, demonstrations and other actions. What initially was a movement dominated by students has become a mass movement as the activists have sympathy and support from large segments of the populations. Workers, the unemployed, and the salaried middle class have all joined the movement.

2. We, the *Revolutionary Workers Collective*, stand in full solidarity with the "Occupy Wall Street" movement. We reject all forms of police repression against the activists and demonstrators. We urge the unions and all other labor organizations to follow suit and show solidarity-not just in words, but in actions!

3. The "Occupy Wall Street" movement is a spontaneous mass movement. It is currently experiencing a massive upswing which is expressed not only in an increase of demonstrators. Every day there are new expressions of solidarity in both the US and globally. The support of various trade unions, such as the United Steel Workers union and the Teamsters, is particularly impressive. There have even been declarations of solidarity from China and preparations for a mass protest on October 15th. An occupation movement in Toronto has also developed. The activists in the US were inspired by the Arab spring and are now inspiring others around the world.

4. It has also made reference to the occupation movement in Spain and other protests that have occurred in Europe this year. "Occupy Wall Street" is also no longer limited locally. There are now solidarity actions occurring in Chicago, San Francisco, Denver and around 60 other cities in nearly 30 states. In various statements that have come out of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement global solidarity is called for and the common interests of the global 99% are stressed. This is a mass movement that presents itself in an international context. The international demands are a key achievement of the movement. The ruling class of the US has maintained its worldwide supremacy through massive military oppression and through economic exploitation of large parts of the world. The working class and the youth of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement show the world their internationalist attitude of brotherhood of all workers and oppressed through their actions. They impressively demonstrate that it is not the arrogance of the workers, but rather the policy of the capitalists that has provoked the hatred of the oppressed against the United States as an imperialist superpower for decades.

5. The grass roots character of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement is emphasized by its spontaneity. Large sections of the movement reject any participation of political parties and organizations, like the occupation movement in Spain, on principle. Especially politicians of the Democratic Party have often tried to use it for mass

movements themselves. Barack Obama's slogan "Yes we can!" is the same which the mass movement of immigrants used for years in the U.S. on May Day, ("Si, se puede!"). The rejection by the activists is therefore understandable. The danger really exists that real bourgeois parties utilize this movement. However the answer to this problem must not be rejecting of any political organization but rather the construction of a new party, a party of workers and young people which arises from the ranks of the current mass movement and learns from its experiences. We as revolutionary communists are working to ensure that the program and the whole policy of such a party is consistently proletarian and revolutionary communist. A new workers' party based on a revolutionary program would be able to lead the masses in their struggle and to fight for the right tactics at the right time. Such a party would be address one of the central problems of the U.S. labor movement: the struggle within the unions against the slavish dependence on the bureaucracy of the Democratic Party and to win the unions for building a new workers' party.

6. Because of the spontaneous and still limited nature of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement a central task must be to build structures for self-organization. We now need action committees, which form not only spontaneously on the occupied places to plan democratically and carry out of actions. Such committees should also be formed in the work places, in schools and universities to expand the struggle to the enterprises and the education sector. Such structures must be used to organize themselves democratically and also to elect representatives to regional meetings and conferences. They should be chosen from their own ranks and under the direct control of the masses - being recallable at any time. Such action committees can provide the basis for choosing higher forms of protest to realize the demands. Even to repulse the attacks on social and health services strikes, mass strikes up to a general strike are necessary. Because in the long run a occupation of a central place, even if it is very large, in combination with mass demonstrations will not be sufficient to implement the movement's demands.

7. The demands of "Occupy Wall Street" correctly go far beyond various economic reforms. It denounces the US ruling class as being corrupt, leading imperialist wars, putting profits before people, carry on a monopolization at the expense of the farmers, discriminating workers on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin and sexuality, selling out the education system, and reducing the working and living conditions for our class, the working class. It takes more than an occupation of space to change all of this. It takes a massive blow against the heart of the ruling class, against their state and economy.

8. The central task for the movement in the coming days and weeks is to discuss and decide on an action program. Such a program on one hand must include concrete and immediate demands to fight for the most urgent needs of the people. These include demands against any

cuts in pensions and the social and health sectors, against layoffs and pay cuts, against the undermining of trade union rights, against the omnipotence of high-handed police and other organs of the state apparatus, etc. On the other hand, the movement also must have central slogans which focus on the key challenges of the capitalist crisis. These include the nationalization of the banks and financial institutions under the control of the workers, the cancellation of all debts and the abolition of the stock market and the nationalization of assets traded there with full compensation for all small shareholders. The fight for a public employment program to eliminate unemployment and to improve the infrastructure is equally important.

9. The slogan for the *expropriation of the rich* is particularly important because Wall Street and the rich elite cannot be controlled by reforms and regulations. This is an illusion that many activists in the movement believe. But those who have the money also have the power. Big capital corrupts the state apparatus and politicians in many ways. Can we seriously think that the government officials and congressmen – who are corrupted by lobbying, campaign contributions, benefits and career prospects in the private sector – would control Wall Street and the corporations? Nor is it possible to create a fundamental reorientation of the economy and society with a tax on the rich. Such a tax does not procure the necessary means and it lets the rich use their ability to find loopholes or transfer capital abroad. Only by expropriating the capitalist class can the economy be brought under the control of the working masses. Such an expropriation is ultimately only possible through a socialist revolution – i.e. through the violent overthrow of the ruling class by the working class and the oppressed – and the establishment of council based democratic, socialist society. In such a socialist society the political decisions would not be made by detached parliaments but by councils whose delegates can always be controlled by the masses.

10. The ruling class will do everything in their power to prevent such a development. They will mobilize their full repressive apparatus including police and the military and mount a massive agitation against the activists. It is therefore important that the pacifist illusions that currently exist inside the movement are given up. In a sense the “Occupy Wall Street” movement is reminiscent of the anti-globalization movement of the 2000’s though it is more developed at a political level. But if the movement does not overcome the pacifist policy, which makes it impossible to achieve higher forms of resistance like strikes and general strikes, it is doomed to failure. The ruling class and the media still propagate the US as the “leader of the world” and the president as “the most powerful man in the world.” In contrast to the ruling class of the US which is hated around the world, the working class and youth can now become a model for the world proletariat. It can take the path that will ultimately lead to the overthrow of the ruling class: from occupations and strikes, to an indefinite general strike, to an armed uprising. By this the movement might realize what they desire for: *“This will be a great step towards reclaiming power for the working class. Those who profit off the suffering of others will held accountable. We are the 99%, and we are too big to fail.”* But it is also a road for which the ruling class will demand a massive death toll.

11. Even during the movement’s peaceful protests

on October 1st at the Brooklyn Bridge there was a major police operation including batons, pepper spray, and the arrest of 700 activists! How will the ruling class respond when the movement takes actions which really hurt it? It must therefore build self-defense units in order to defend themselves against the police. Maybe the movement succeeds in bringing one or the other officers to the side of the protests. But the police force as such is there for the suppression of the activists. Ultimately it must be smashed and replaced by higher forms of self-defense units, namely by armed militias of the workers and the oppressed. Otherwise the cops in their absolute majority will do what is their task: to break our resistance with violence.

12. The US labor movement, unions, etc. do not have such a rich tradition of class struggle as the workers’ movement in Europe does. The weaknesses of the labor movement also means that also the bureaucracy is weaker, but not less dangerous. The reformist approach of the bureaucracy, their appeasement policy and their sellout of the interests of the workers for their personal gain make them enemies in the ranks of the labor movement. To build a really strong, vibrant and militant labor movement in the US we need to organize at the grassroots. Inside the labor movement we need mass meetings, direct election of representatives who are accountable and can be replaced if necessary at any time. Ultimately it needs a strong labor movement and a revolutionary workers party with roots in the masses in order to accomplish the overthrow of the ruling class through a revolution. In this way it is possible to set up a society as the “Occupy Wall Street” movement wishes for: a society of justice for the masses and the extinction of racial, sexist and any other form of oppression – a society in the interests of the working class, a socialist society. For such a society we the *Revolutionary Workers Collective* fight together with our sister organizations – the *Revolutionary Communist Organization for the Liberation (Austria)*, the *United Lankan Workers Party (Sri Lanka)* and the *Revolutionary Workers Organization (Pakistan)*. To conduct this struggle internationally, we strive for the building of a revolutionary workers’ 5th International.





## Defend Iran against the U.S., EU and Israel warmongers!

*Resolution of the Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation (RKOB), 9. 11. 2011*

For several weeks now the European and U.S. imperialists and their Israeli henchmen have been threatening Iran with war. They call on Iran to abandon its program to develop nuclear power plants and threaten it with economic sanctions and, increasingly, with military aggression. The justification - that Iran will build secret nuclear weapons - is simply a lie that is used as a justification for a bloody imperialist war of aggression. Remember the claim of George W. Bush in 2003 before the imperialist invasion that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (which, according to the U.S. government, it could use within 45 minutes)! Today, Iran has neither nuclear weapons nor is it close to their completion.

In every criminal case the judge asks: "*cui bono?*" (Who benefits from the crime?) since that person is often guilty. Similarly we have to ask today: "*Who benefits if Iran is not allowed to build nuclear power plants? Who benefits if - under the pretext of a 'threatened peace' - preventive strikes against Iran are prepared? Who benefits by waging war against Iran? Who benefits if the economic development of Iran is inhibited by international sanctions and restrictions on the peaceful use of nuclear energy?*" It is pretty obvious that the beneficiaries and the culprits are the U.S., the EU and Israel!

But let us accept for a moment the scenario which the imperialists and their UN agencies are painting and assume that Iran is producing nuclear weapons. How can the U.S. (which possesses 9.400 nuclear warheads), France (300), Britain (200) and Israel (100) claim any legitimacy by accusing Iran of building nuclear weapons themselves?! In the history of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was dictated by the U.S. - several countries have broken it - Israel, India, Pakistan and South Africa. None of these countries were threatened by war at that time. This is hardly surprising since all of the them were allies of the United States. Only stupid bureaucrats and people who can benefit from the imperialist policy can argue that the EU, the U.S., Israel or the United Nations has any right to blame Iran for its production of nuclear weapons.

But as in the preparation of any imperialist, unjust war, the issue is the economic interests of major powers - in particular Iran's oil. Iran has, after Saudi Arabia, the world's second largest oil reserves (approximately 11.6% of global reserves). Iran also has an important geo-strategic position by which it controls the shipping and oil transport via the *Strait of Hormuz*. Likewise, the Western powers would, have through a compliant regime in Tehran, better access for oil pipelines from Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the border with Russia.

Israel is currently the most aggressive warmonger against Iran. The strategic position of Israel in the last year has been significantly weakened by the Arab revolution. Its greatest ally in the region, Egypt and Turkey, turn more and more against this racist apartheid state and the U.S. also withdraws more and more economic and political support (due to its own massive economic problems and military defeats in Iraq and Afghanistan). Israel is trying

to regain its lost political position by an aggressive war.

A war against Iran would very likely not end with its occupation. The current military and economic situation of the U.S. and the EU is in a too bad shape and Israel is already having difficulties keeping its own borders under control. What a challenge Iran would be with more than 75 million inhabitants and an area of 1.65 sq km! A bombardment by the air force against the economic lifelines of the country and on various military targets is more likely. The Iranian people are particularly in danger as Israel has threatened several times to use so-called *mini-nukes* (i.e. smaller nuclear bombs with an explosive force of less than 5 kilotons) against Iran.

If Israel and its supporters in Washington, London, Paris or Berlin really decide to start a war against Iran, then we Bolshevik-communists clearly stand for defense of Iran against imperialist aggression. We have no sympathy for the regime in Tehran. It is a bourgeois-Islamic dictatorship that must be overthrown by a revolution of the workers and peasants. But a victory of imperialism against Iran would strengthen the biggest exploiter of the world and worsen the conditions of the liberation struggle. That is why we fight against every form of interference and oppression of the major imperialist powers against Iran - whether by economic sanctions or by war.

We will explain to the masses: "*Despite the fact that the Islamic regime in Tehran is suppressing the workers, peasants and national minorities, they are fighting a just war against those who want to oppress you even more. Every military air craft which is shot down by the Iranian armed forces, is an air craft which cannot be used any more against the people of Tehran, Beirut or the Gaza.*" We call on the oppressed Arab masses and the workers movement of the West: "*Help your Iranian class brothers and sisters, organize "Red Aid" for those who have suffered from these attacks!*" If possible, they must also arrange to send weapons for the Iranian Resistance.

In the case of a war mass demonstrations and solidarity strikes in all parts of the world must be organized. We call for the port workers to refuse loading the deadly cargo on NATO supply ships, to prevent these ships from refueling and replenishing their supplies. The Iranian nation needs our international solidarity! If the imperialists dare to attack Iran with ground troops, we propose to set up International Brigades to support the Iranian Resistance.

In short, everything must be done to ensure that NATO loses such a possible war.

*\* Hands off Iran! Long live international solidarity with the Iranian people!*

*\* No sanctions against Iran!*

*\* In the event of war: For the defeat of the U.S., EU and Israel! For the military victory of Iran!*

# After the storming of the Israeli embassy in Cairo: The struggle against the Israeli Apartheid State is an integral part of the Arab Revolution!

*Resolution of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation (RKOB), 15.9.2011*

1. On 9<sup>th</sup> September thousands of Egyptian demonstrators, protesting against the Israeli embassy in Cairo, tore down the wall established by the army and finally stormed the embassy. The Israeli ambassador fled the country under protection of the Egyptian army. Despite the great sacrifices that the Egyptian protesters had to pay in their anti-imperialist action - the repressive Egyptian apparatus killed at least three people and injured more than 1,000 - the storming of the Israeli embassy was an extraordinarily important and successful action.

2. The RKOB wholeheartedly welcomes the heroic action of the Egyptian democracy movement. It rightly received the overwhelming support in the Arab world and from all progressive, internationalist forces worldwide. The embassy is the symbol of the hated racist apartheid state of Israel.

3. This state can only exist because, with the help of the big imperialist powers during the 20th century, Jewish settlers were systematically settled on its territory (at the beginning of the 20th century only some ten thousand Jews lived in Palestine). Israel can exist only because it expelled at its foundation the indigenous Palestinian population - more than 750,000! - from their homes into refugee camps. Its existence is interlinked with wars of conquest, occupation and daily terror against the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank. Finally, Israel can exist only because it is a regional watchdog for the major imperialist powers, and as such it receives exceptionally large economic and military aid from them. (e.g. Israel is the No. 1 among the recipients of U.S. foreign aid)

4. The protesters showed the whole world: the Arab masses reject the reactionary Arab despots' policy since 1978 of collaboration with the racist oppressor state of Israel. The RKOB shares the demands of many advanced workers and youth in Egypt for termination of all relations with Israel. This includes not only the expulsion of the ambassador, but also the termination of Egypt's ongoing gas deliveries to Israel (since 2004) and the full opening of the border with Gaza.

5. The RKOB also supports the worldwide boycott campaign against Israel, initiated by numerous Palestinian organizations and supported by many progressive organizations and trade unions - including progressive Jewish organizations such as the "*European Jews for a Just Peace*". The State of Israel must receive no weapons and no further financial support! The unions have to organize a boycott against Israel and simultaneously raise support for the Palestinians. The racist trade union in Israel - Histadrut - has to be expelled from the "*International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*". The progressive academic organizations should break off contact with Zionist institutions in Israel. At the same time they should expand cooperation with Palestinian and Jewish anti-Zionist forces. Not only in Cairo but in all countries must the diplomatic missions of

Israel become the target of broad, militant protests!

## **For the destruction of the Apartheid state Israel!**

6. The RKOB supports the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. That is why in the struggle between the Palestinians and the Israeli state we are on the side of the former - despite our absolute rejection of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces at the forefront of these struggles (like Hamas). All Palestinians must have the right to return to their homeland. Likewise, the land grab must be reversed and the Palestinians must get their land returned. The return of the displaced people of course means that the Palestinians will constitute the majority of the population.

7. This shows that Israel is not a "normal" capitalist class state. Its existence as a capitalist state is historically and indelibly intertwined with its existence as a colonial settler state, which can only maintain the expulsions and repression of the original Palestinian population by the means of apartheid and of direct terror. Israel is a capitalist state, whose essence is an indelible merger of class exploitation and national oppression. The abolition of class exploitation, therefore, can only go hand in hand with the abolition of national oppression, and vice versa, and this is possible only through the destruction of the State of Israel as a separate Jewish state. Although Israel is not an imperialist power, it is undoubtedly an exceptionally privileged semi-colonial capitalist state, which combines its role as a watchdog of the imperialist interests in the Middle East with the advancement of its own power interests.

8. We therefore reject the existence of a Jewish state in Palestine because it can only exist as long as the expulsion of the Palestinians continues to exist. We therefore reject a "two-state solution". This would deny the Palestinians the right of return. Likewise, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would be reduced to a Bantustan, a dependent de-facto colony of the much richer and more powerful Israel. The State of Israel must be destroyed and be replaced by a secular, Arab-Jewish workers' republic in the whole of Palestine. In this state, the Palestinians and the Jews, who accept the elimination of the privileges of the apartheid state of Israel, can live together equally and peacefully.

## **Social protest movement in Israel**

9. The RKOB supports the "tent city" movement in Israel against the price hikes, the housing shortage and the increasing social injustice. This is another example of the international significance of the Arab revolution. At the same time however, it is indicative of the reactionary Zionist character of the leaders in this movement that they

deliberately ignore the special poverty and oppression of the Palestinians and do not put forward demands to help the Palestinians. The movement is in jeopardy of being open for a social-chauvinist trend. Because the Netanyahu government might reduce the housing shortage – by expanding the settlements in the West Bank and thus at the expense of the Palestinians!

10. This shows once more the necessity to understand correctly the Marxist approach to the problem of aristocratism. The Arab proletariat, the youth and the urban poor have put the revolutionary process in the Middle East in motion – building on the heroic resistance struggle of the Palestinian working class and youth in several intifadas and the successful Lebanese resistance against the Zionist occupiers. The Israeli proletariat, as a compared to its Arab brothers and sister very privileged part, could not play such a vanguard role. But it could be affected by the “Arab Spring” and set in motion. But in order to achieve the important goal of a real unity of Arab and Jewish workers and youth, a conscious break of the Jewish proletariat with the defense of the privileged apartheid state of Israel is essential and the support for the national liberation of the Arab people is necessary. In this context, the struggle to build a new, joint Arab-Jewish union is important, which – in contrast to Histadrut - organizes the Arab workers in Israel and advocates their interests. Likewise, a real workers trade union – in contrast to Histadrut – would not be one of the biggest capitalists of the country and would have no involvement with the Zionist state. However as long as such a real worker’s trade union does not exist, revolutionaries must – where necessary – work within Histadrut and put demands to their leadership.

11. The Arab revolution must have an anti-Zionist thrust, but at the same time it must also be directed against any form of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is the poison of reactionary Islamist and other civil forces that would thereby blur the class divide that exists between the interests of the Arab bourgeoisie and those of the working class and all toilers.

### **Crisis of leadership**

12. The RKOB welcomes the commitment of organizations in Israel such as the *International Socialist League*, which combine support for the tent city movement with a clear rejection of Zionism, solidarity with the Palestinians and the perspective of destroying the State of Israel. We note also that the social-chauvinist policy of centrist organizations, like the CWI, express themselves not only in their support for the reactionary “*British Jobs for British Workers*” strike (2009) or the condemnation of the Uprising of the poor, blacks and migrants in August 2011 in Britain, but also in their refusal to support the national liberation struggle of the Palestinians. Instead, they favor a two-state solution and thus the continuation of the expulsion of the Palestinians. This is nothing more than a capitulation to the logic of Zionism.

13. The same applies even more for the Communist Party of Israel and its front organizations. This Stalinist party bears the mark of Cain of the historic support for the war of expulsion of the Palestinian people in 1948. The Soviet Union under Stalin not only immediately

recognized the apartheid state of Israel, but delivered - through Czechoslovakia - masses of weapons to Israel so that it could effectively slaughter and expel the Palestinian people.

### **Perspectives of the Arab Revolution**

14. The Arab revolution is at a crossroads. The victory of the uprising against the Qaddafi dictatorship in Libya, the partial transition of the Syrian revolution into the civil war, the strikes and the storming of the Israeli embassy in Egypt, the revival of the protests in Bahrain, etc. are unmistakable signs that the Arab Revolution – despite the allegations of petty-bourgeois “Marxist” intellectuals a la Slavoj Zizek - is by no means over.

15. On the other hand, big dangers exist for the working class and the oppressed in North Africa and the Middle East too. The lack of leadership which is fighting for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment a workers ‘and peasants’ republic is increasingly evident. Similarly, the attempts of the imperialist powers to contain and control the revolution under the pretext of “democracy” and “human rights” increase.

16. To advance the class struggle and evolve the revolution, the struggle for wage increases and against price increases will be as important as the struggle for the expropriation of the rich, corrupt families and for the nationalization of key industries, service industries and the banks under workers’ control. Moreover, the struggle for democratic rights - including for national self-determination, elimination of the supremacy of the military and the police and the convening of a revolutionary constituent assembly – will be central. Likewise, any form of intervention by the imperialist powers or powers in their service (like Turkey) must be firmly opposed. NATO - hands off Libya, Syria and Iran!

17. It will be crucial to whether the working class and the oppressed can extend their strikes and demonstrations and organize themselves in action committees in the factories and neighborhoods - - as a step towards workers ‘and peasants’ councils. Equally important - especially in Syria today - is the creation of armed self-defense units and finally workers ‘and peasants’ militias. The means of the general strike combined with the perspective of an armed uprising and the establishment of a workers ‘and peasants’ government is of crucial importance.

18. The Arab revolution is by its very nature international. An important component on the one hand must be the struggle for the opening of borders and the mutual support of the liberation struggle. In particular, the Arab revolutionaries have to rush with their arms to help their brothers and sisters in Palestine and to tear down the apartheid wall – especially the one that has turned Gaza into an open-air prison. The Arab revolution must be a signal that the Palestinian workers, peasants and youth organize themselves in action committees/Soviets and popular militias and start the third intifada. Such a wave of armed struggles of the Arab masses in North Africa and the Middle East, the Palestinian workers and peasants and those Jewish brothers and sisters who break with the privileges of the apartheid state, could strike a mortal blow to Israel and open the door to a socialist federation of



all peoples in the region.

### Socialism – Revolution – Revolutionary Party

19. National liberation and social revolution in the Middle East go hand in hand. One cannot be realized without the other. The return of the Palestinian population and the elimination of the conditions of poverty are only possible if the economic wealth of the region is wrested from the hands of the small minority of capitalists and used, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, by means of a socialist planned economy for the benefit for all. "Socialism", on the other hand, which does not write the national liberation of the Palestinians on its banner, is not socialism, but social chauvinism. Such a permanent revolution cannot be limited to Palestine, but must cover the entire region of North Africa and the Middle East.

20. The realization of the perspective of permanent revolution requires the timely construction of a revolutionary

party as part of a Fifth workers International. Only such a party - made up of dedicated fighters for the socialist revolution and on the basis of a revolutionary program - can lead the masses to victory against the imperialists, the national ruling class and its petty bourgeois stooges. The RKOB fights for these goals.

*\* Down with imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction! Victory of the Arab revolution! For the permanent revolution!*

*\* For the dismantling of the apartheid state of Israel! For a secular, Arab-Jewish workers' republic in whole Palestine!*

*\* For a socialist federation of the Middle East and North Africa!*

*As a background for the RKOB's analysis of the Arab Revolution we refer readers to excerpts of our recently published book on the Arab Revolution. They can be found in the first issue of our English-language journal "Revolutionary Communism" and on our website <http://www.rkob.net/new-english-language-site/>*



# Advance the Libyan Revolution: Program for Permanent Revolution

*Joint Resolution by the Humanist Workers For Revolutionary Socialism (USA), Communist Workers Group (Aotearoa/NZ), Revolutionary Workers Group (Zimbabwe) and the Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation (Austria), 12.9.2011*

## End of Gaddafi Regime

The Libyan revolution is the re-opening of a national, democratic, anti-imperialist revolution, notwithstanding NATO military intervention. This is proved by the defeat of the 42-year-long pro-imperialist Gaddafi semi-fascist dictatorship at the hands of the popular militias. While NATO softened up Gaddafi's forces and co-opted the TNC to impose a 'democratic transition', it has yet to show it can contain the popular armed militias and hold on to Libya as an imperialist oil colony. NATO will brag about its success in Libya in defeating Gaddafi but we give the ranks of the revolutionaries the major credit for this victory, and unlike most of the Western liberal 'left' recognise their historic revolutionary agency.

The revolutionary communists never equated the base of the rebellion with the pro-imperialist TNC nor said that the intervention of NATO would be the deciding factor in this war. We always saw the rebellion as the reopening of the national revolution that to succeed would have to become permanent revolution. But against this revolutionary perspective much of the Western 'left' operates with a schematic view of the national question which separates it from the class question. This schema has its material base in the social imperialism of the labour aristocracy. The reformists have illusions in 'democratic' imperialism while the 'third worldists' have illusions in progressive national leaders. Both are the 'left' version of the imperialist (Eurocentric, Orientalist) 'civilising mission'.

Western liberal reformists are tied by their class interests to 'democratic' imperialism. The idea that imperialism could, especially in its UN guise, be 'humanitarian' and intervene to prevent a massacre in Benghazi is to argue that in some situations imperialism can be 'progressive' in offering a helping hand to sponsor 'democracy'. But since imperialism came on the scene in the 19th century it has been the enemy of bourgeois democracy. It has fought thousands of wars to stop the bourgeois national-democratic revolutions from coming to fruition. It is doing so today notably in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The intervention of NATO at the invitation of the TNC was no different. It took sides with one faction of the Libyan national bourgeoisie against Gaddafi, for the purpose of containing and limiting the national-democratic revolution and to impose a new neo-colonial regime. The fact that it doesn't in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia or Syria simply means that imperialism is not yet ready for regime change in those countries.

More dangerous than the openly pro-imperialist liberal reformists is the deceptive reverse side of social imperialism - 'third worldism' - the view that a section of the national bourgeoisie can lead a popular front or an anti-imperialist

united front to a victorious revolution. This explains why the most fake Trotskyists lined up with black nationalists and the '21st century socialists', Castro and Chavez, to back Gaddafi against imperialism and the insurrection. It also explains why the left reformist SWP thinks that NATO in backing the TNC faction of the national bourgeoisie has usurped the revolutionary agency of the 'rebels' and that the counter-revolution has won. For these Mensheviks if there is no progressive bourgeois faction in place, then there is no leadership of the national revolution. Social imperialism in both guises denies revolutionary agency to the semi-colonial masses and misplaces it in the petty bourgeois intelligentsia of the imperialist countries.

History will consign these social imperialists to the dustbin. The Libyan revolutionaries who had taken a strong anti-imperialist position in the early days of the rebellion had little choice but to enter into a military bloc with NATO against the semi-fascist Gaddafi. At this point the semi-fascist Gaddafi regime has been defeated by the insurrection. It remains to be seen the extent to which the revolutionaries have illusions in 'democratic' imperialism or how far their opposition to imperialism takes on the form of Islamic radicalism. To defeat the TNC and its imperialist backers the revolutionary forces must continue the armed struggle at this point directly against imperialism, and all the pro-imperialist factions of the national bourgeoisie squabbling for the imperialist franchise, to finally win national independence and set the example for the other Arab states in their ongoing national, anti-imperialist revolutions. The only road to liberation is forward from the Arab national revolution to permanent revolution and the Socialist United States of North Africa and the Middle East!

## From national democratic revolution to permanent revolution

The Libyan revolution is the reopening of a national democratic revolution during a global capitalist crisis in which there are no national solutions to the national question. It is a national revolution against Gaddafi who has run for 42 years a national bourgeois crony capitalist regime negotiating terms for sale of oil with imperialism and pocketing the profits for his family, tribe and cronies. Gaddafi froze the national revolution by acting as imperialism's bourgeois agent in Libya. He masked the brutal nature of his regime behind the fiction of 'socialism'. His response to the protests in Benghazi in February exploded the myth that the regime was popular, progressive or anti-imperialist. A Bonapartist caught between the Arab Revolution and imperialism, he opted for imperialism in the hope that he could negotiate a new deal around the 'war on terror' against al Qaeda. It was

his decision to annihilate the opposition that caused the armed insurrection that within 6 months was able to defeat Gaddafi's forces on the ground.

Those who wanted to subordinate this armed rebellion against Gaddafi to a military bloc with him against NATO ignored the reality that NATO was taken by surprise by the Arab Spring and forced to act to suppress an armed revolution from spreading to the whole of North Africa and Middle East. By helping to take out Gaddafi as their 'rogue dictator' they hoped to wipe their hands of him, regain control of the revolution, and impose a more suitable pro-imperialist regime with 'democratic' credentials. However, this plan by imperialism to divert the reopened national revolution to a 'democratic' transition is far from certain. It will have to subordinate the armed democrat insurgents to keep Libya as an oil colony of the EU and in doing so prove that the way forward is a complete break with imperialism and its bourgeois agents in Libya.

It's obvious that the outcome in Libya is far from settled. The TNC (or its successor) is balanced between imperialism(s) and the hostility of the popular uprising to imperialism(s) on the ground. It will have to negotiate between the different imperialisms, notably the US which needs more bases in its contest with China for Africa, China's multi-billion investments in Libyan oil, and the desperation of declining France, Italy and Britain to sign and enforce preferential agreements, on the one hand, and an armed populace that is now carrying the hopes of advancing the Arab revolution, which has the power to demand a radical redistribution of the oil profits, on the other. In other words the TNC (or its bourgeois successor) will be a Bonapartist regime trying to do the impossible in a global capitalist crisis with rising inter-imperialist rivalry over oil etc namely, reconciling the two sides of the basic contradiction, revolution and counter-revolution, that is now becoming activated regionally, continentally and globally.

### **The global imperialist crisis**

The global crisis facing imperialism is in direct contradiction to bourgeois democracy. The crisis of falling profits means that the price of oil becomes critical in capitalism's return to profitability. The imperialist demand for oil at a time of global crisis will allow no room for substantial democratic reforms, especially with the damage to oil production during the war. This is an important point, because the social imperialists think that even in the midst of the crisis the TNC can free up frozen Libyan funds so that goods can be paid for to meet the immediate needs of the Libyan masses and 'buy' legitimacy for the new regime overseeing the 'democratic transition'. The TNC blames imperialism for not releasing these funds and risking the failure of the 'democratic transition'. They have illusions in imperialism to deliver democracy in Libya and do not see that imperialism cannot deliver democracy when it is driven to restore the rate of profit. In the wider global economy this fits with the liberal bourgeois view that 'austerity' is a policy option not a precondition for capitalist survival.

Thus the TNC regime installed in place of Gaddafi has no room for manoeuvre. The NATO powers, particularly France and Italy, are scrambling among themselves for

new oil contracts that freeze out a surgent China. They have already signed deals with the TNC which has in turn said it will honour all of Gaddafi's contracts. Italy and France are declining imperialism's and will quickly resort to military invasion to enforce their contracts. Britain is a major financial centre that is now faced with the beginnings of popular opposition to its austerity measures and will also deploy its troops to protect its interests in Africa and support the US in its rivalry with China. They will also demand that the TNC regime stops the flood of refugees to the EU.

China in Africa is pursuing an imperialist policy and is now the most influential great power in that continent. It has billions invested in Libya to develop oil production and infrastructure and has belatedly along with Russia recognised the TNC in an attempt to protect its assets. If the TNC turns its back on China we can expect it to look for support in other sections of the Libyan bourgeoisie. It won't back Gaddafi's crony capitalism directly as he is a spent force with the African Union coming out against him. But some of Gaddafi's faction could easily re-emerge to promote preferential deals with China in the same way that it has done deals with other fake left bourgeois factions in Africa like ZANU-PF to swap scarce and valuable minerals for rapid infrastructure development.

China then, is in a good position to strike a deal to swap oil in exchange for rebuilding the now war ravaged infrastructure of Libya. Thus the global capital crisis means that weak declining imperialist powers such as France and Italy will put strict terms on the TNC regime which will not allow economic independence of Libya and impose austerity and state repression on the people at the same time that China will offer much more preferential investment to develop the economy. This is likely to create rivalry between factions of the Libyan bourgeoisie jockeying to serve competing imperialisms. No doubt France and Italy have their champions in the TNC, but who will champion China and Russia and win the admiration of Castro and Chavez?

### **The insurgent masses**

The other side of the contradiction is the Arab Revolution, not limited to the popular militia in Libya. The armed people's militia has shown that it is has only recently come under a unified command, with Misrata and the Western mountain insurgents remaining largely outside the Benghazi command. Much has been made in the capitalist media of the dependence of the popular militia on NATO, and the gutter press has engaged in jingoistic tales of 'special ops' leading the fight. This is rubbish. Imperialism intervened in Libya to prevent the insurrection from turning into a rebellion. For this reason it did not arm the rebellion to allow it military superiority. Its objective was to take away Gaddafi's military advantage and force him and the TNC to negotiate a solution. Gaddafi did not oblige, and nor did the revolutionary fighters submit.

While NATO helped to bring about the defeat of Gaddafi as necessary to contain the revolution, it and the TNC its new agent, has not gained control of the revolutionaries. In particular the Misrata fighters and those of the Western Mountains made up of both Arabs and Berber are refusing



to take orders from TNC appointees. The ongoing battle to destroy the Gaddafi forces will favour these independent forces and limit the ability of NATO and the TNC to determine the outcome in imperialism's favour. For the first time in the Arab revolution we now have an armed people's militia that has removed a dictator and created the conditions for the national revolution to become permanent!

We must honour the revolutionary spirit of the revolutionary fighters especially its youth ranks who have born the brunt of battle and paid the price in human life of the campaign to defeat Gaddafi. One battle has been won, but two battles remain. These battles are conjoined. The first is to stop imperialism imposing a new neo-colonial regime through the TNC. The second is to fight to create a workers and peasants republic that will complete the anti-imperialist revolution as a socialist revolution. We need to continue to call on the people's militia that actually exists on the ground to refuse to disarm, to form their own organs of self-government, to form a national workers and soldiers assembly with the tasks of controlling and planning the national economy, and to carry the revolution forward to a complete break with imperialism and all of its local bourgeois agents of all colors and creeds. So we offer a program for the revolutionaries and support those among them who are prepared to fight to retain their arms and form a popular militia to defend their February victory and open the road to their October.

### **The Libyan revolution cannot succeed without the victory of the Arab Revolution**

All the big questions are ahead of us not behind. NATO did not turn the Arab revolution into a counter-revolution. It has yet to put a lid on this revolution. The questions are:

- Can imperialism facing deepening crisis concede reforms sufficient to meet the expectations of the revolution? We say no. The global crisis of capitalism in its extremity cannot fulfil the demands of the democratic revolution, it will be forced to resort to 'boots on the ground' to disarm the democratic revolution.

- Will the revolutionaries agree to subordinate themselves to a new regime that does not renegotiate all the oil contracts and meet the demands for a democratic constitution? No! The first test will be to reject the constitution drafted by the unelected TNC in collusion with imperialism! If this imposed we say it will be necessary to counter-pose a revolutionary Constituent Assembly which allows for every citizen, male and female, above the age of 16 years to participate.

- How will the victory of the Libyan revolution affect the Arab revolution in Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine, Syria? We say that it will strengthen those who are prepared for armed resistance against those who hope that pacifism will lead to a UN intervention.

- Whither the Zionist regime? Already the Zionist regime is in crisis as its borders on all sides are less secure. It is lashing out in the West Bank and Gaza because it knows no other way to survive but fears outright attacks will push the Arab revolution further. The large middle class demonstrations against price rises have tiny minorities in them that are pro-Palestine, so it remains the Arab

revolution, not left Zionism that will bring down Israel.

- Will the Arab revolution fuel uprisings in Sub Saharan Africa? The anger of the impoverished youth masses is ready to explode. Mass demonstrations in Swaziland and Malawi have been put down by brutal police force. In Zimbabwe socialists are on trial for watching videos of the Arab Spring and the regime is holding down food prices in fear of an uprising. In South Africa the popular front ANC regime is under attack from its opportunist Youth League under the pressure of the millions of black youth raging against the imperialist recolonising of Africa behind the 'humanitarian' UN resolution 1973.

- Will there arise in time a revolutionary Marxist organisation in all of these countries that is capable of leading permanent revolution? The onset of the many mass movements rising up to oppose the austerity measures of capitalism in crisis are met everywhere by autocratic regimes or popular fronts that prepare the masses for defeats. To open the road to revolution we revolutionaries must devote our utmost energy and commitment to urgently rebuilding a revolutionary international.

### **Why we need a revolutionary party**

Revolutionary party and program are essential conditions for permanent revolution. A revolutionary program only exists because of the fusion of theory and practice in a party organisation. Such a party based on democratic centralism can test the program in struggle and keep it alive. Our program comes from the experience of the Bolsheviks and was continued by Trotsky and the 4th International up to his assassination in 1940. That program contains the lessons of revolutions, both successes and failures. We say that in the epoch of imperialism oppressor countries continue to oppress other countries such as Libya. Therefore so long as imperialism prevents the fulfilment of the national tasks of economic independence, land reform, bourgeois democracy etc then the national question is still on the agenda.

The national democratic revolution to realise its objectives must pass over to a socialist revolution. We call this process permanent revolution. It is the class question as national liberation can only mean proletarian liberation. Only the working class leading the poor peasants and all oppressed people can break with imperialism and its national bourgeois agents. What passes for Bolshevism today is insufficient to keep that program alive because it is not part of the working class and does not recognise its historic agency as we have seen in the case of the Arab revolution. Most of the remnants of self-proclaimed Leninism or Trotskyism have retreated from the proletarian dictatorship and opt for postmodern brands of bourgeois and petty bourgeois socialism. It is no wonder this new batch of Mensheviks is heavily infused with social imperialism in attributing to imperialism (NATO/UN) or its agents (Gaddafi) an historic progressive role rather than the popular masses leading the national revolution.

Therefore the urgent task in this current global capitalist crisis is to rebuild a new international Bolshevik party based on democratic centralism and the program of the Fourth International of 1938 that is able to intervene decisively in all struggles and test its program as capable of being the guide to socialist revolution today.

### A program for permanent revolution in Libya

- Refuse to disarm; disband the Gaddafi army, form a popular national militia!
- For the formation of local, regional and national councils of action to implement the immediate needs of the masses for food, health and housing; for equal participation of women and youth; for a Workers and Soldiers Assembly! For a Workers' and Farmers' Government!
- UN and NATO out of the country; all imperialist trade ties revoked and all contracts cancelled; return Libya's assets; seize non-compliant imperialist assets; socialisation of all privatised assets!
- Down with the TNC/Imperialist draft Constitution! This Constitution is imposed by imperialism not the revolutionary masses! Boycott the ratification of this Constitution! For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!
- The crimes of Gaddafi and his cronies, and the alleged crimes of the revolutionary forces, to be judged by Libyan peoples' courts, not the imperialist International Criminal Court!
- For opening of the borders between all the Arab states from Tunisia to Syria!
- For the national, ethnic and cultural rights of historic peoples such as the Berber; for full democratic rights to all migrant and displaced peoples! For equal rights of women and youth!

- For socialisation of oil and banks as part of a national plan to develop the economy as part of the wider economy of the whole region.
- For a Socialist Federation of Workers Republics of North Africa and the Middle East!

*Joint Resolution by the Humanist Workers For Revolutionary Socialism (USA), Communist Workers Group (Aotearoa/NZ), Revolutionary Workers Group (Zimbabwe) and the Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation (Austria), 12.9.2011*

**Note from the RKOB:** While we fully support the resolution's line and programme for the Libyan Revolution we want to point out that we do not share some formulations in the resolution (e.g. we consider the Gaddafi-regime not as semi-fascist but as bourgeois-bonapartist; we characterise the British SWP as centrist, not left-reformist). We also believe that the sentence – "The Libyan revolutionaries (...) had little choice but to enter into a military bloc with NATO against the semi-fascist Gaddafi." – is misleading. In fact it was a weakness of the Rebels that they did not look for an alternative strategy and did not issue a strong appeal to the mass movements in the Arab countries and the international workers movement for volunteers and material and military aid.



# What sort of Fifth International do we need?

## Preface (January 2012)

by Michael Pröbsting

The following essay was written in early 2010. It served as a background document for the program which I drafted for the *League for the Fifth International* (LFI) and which was discussed, amended and adopted at the LFI congress in June 2010. This background document was published in German language in the theoretical journal of the Austrian section in autumn 2010.

At that time I was a member of the International Secretariat which is the executive body of the International Executive Committee of the LFI (its broader leadership body). In April 2011 a group of comrades – the two IEC members Nina Gunić and myself and three leaders from the youth organisation REVOLUTIO in Austria (Johannes Wiener, Marc Hangler and Lisa Pichler) – were bureaucratically expelled by the LFI leadership majority. Formally this expulsion was justified by claiming the comrades “violated the discipline” (in fact we just dared not to withdraw our sharp criticism of the majority). In reality this was only a pretext for their desire to silence our political opposition against the labour-aristocratic, opportunist policy of the leadership majority.

As readers of our publications know this group of comrades who were from the Austrian section went ahead to continue a policy based on the revolutionary program and founded the *Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation* (RKOB). Other leading members from the Sri Lankan, Pakistani and US sections also left the LFI and founded – together with previously unorganised comrades or former members from other organisations – new revolutionary organisations. Together we have decided to build a new revolutionary communist international tendency.

There are several reasons why we publish this document now. First it explains the revolutionary approach to the question of the necessity for a new International. It shows how Bolshevik-Communists combine a principled approach fighting for a proletarian, revolutionary world party with a united front tactic on the question of a mass party in a period where the revolutionary forces are extremely weak.

### Chavez turns to Chinese imperialism

As the document elaborates it was written shortly after the call of the Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez for a “new, socialist Fifth International” and before a planned meeting on this issue on this subject. As the subsequent development showed Chavez dropped this project. While revolutionaries would have been sectarian to stand aside from this potential development which could have drawn hundreds of thousands militant workers, peasants, poor and youth into a politicization process, it would have also been criminal if revolutionaries would not have warned of the potential betrayal by the Chavez leadership. While

various centrist currents like the IMT of Alan Woods or the Fourth International opportunistically adapted to *Chavezismo*, we – as the document which we publish here shows – were not surprised by this since and we already alerted people to the non-revolutionary, reformist, bourgeois character of Chavez and the PSUV leadership.

What were the main reasons for Chavez dropping of the project of the Fifth International? We think that the main reason has to be sought in the development of the international class forces since 2009. In particular one has to emphasize the importance of the emerging imperialist power China. Today China is not only the home of 10% of the world’s industrial production but also a major capital exporter – it has become the fifth-largest foreign investor with important investments in all continents.

For bourgeois-populist forces like the Chavez leadership this created the basis for a “realistic” alternative to the anti-US/NATO-alliance. Much more “realistic” and in particular less dangerous than a mass Fifth International full of socialist rhetoric and militant politics! Such a Fifth International – even if it would have been led by Bolivarian forces – would have had a potentially radical dynamic which could have created enormous pressure on the Chavez leadership itself. Therefore Chavez was quiet happy to drop the Fifth International project in change of a closer alliance with anti-US imperialist powers.

In other words what we have seen in the last 2 years is a *process of bourgeoisification of the Bolivarian movement*. Its leadership becomes more and more a *pro-social-imperialist leadership* of forces who lean towards Chinese imperialism as an alternative pole against US/Western imperialism.

This of course must lead neither to any sectarianism towards mass movements led by Bolivarian forces nor a retreat of the defence of Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia etc. against any attacks by US imperialism. But at the same time we must warn of the reformist betrayal of these leaderships.

### The Neo-LFI leadership drops the Marxist method

Finally the essay also shows the difference between the LFI two years ago, when at least in words such documents had to be approved, and their centrist degeneration since then. Today the Neo-LFI follows an opportunist policy of uncritically “uniting the left” and creating illusions into left-reformist top trade union bureaucrats.

In this document from early 2010 which expressed the position of the – at time still revolutionary – LFI we outlined our approach of intransigent opposition against reformist forces unambiguously: “We are fighting for a revolutionary working class Fifth International from the beginning. We therefore argue for a revolutionary programme from the outset. (...) At the same time, it is clear that the *Chavista Fifth International will be dominated by left-populist*



and reformist forces. (...) Because of the contradictory class character of a Chávista Fifth International, we will act as a revolutionary opposition faction from the beginning. We must have no illusions and, equally importantly, must not create any illusions; this would be an International whose leaders would be on the other side of the barricades against the workers on various occasions (strikes in Venezuela and Bolivia, support for Ahmedinejad against the youth of Iran, for Mugabe and Zanu-PF against the workers of Zimbabwe, etc.). We have to wage a revolutionary class struggle inside the Fifth International against any Chavista/Castroite/ELP leadership."

The Neo-LFI leadership today does the opposite. They claim the main problem of the centrist and left-reformist left is not their rotten program and politics but the fact that they are not united. For the LFI leadership the solution is "unity of the left": *"The left is too divided – now more than ever we need unity."* (WP November 2011, Editorial: Anticapitalism hits the streets, <http://www.workerspower.co.uk/2011/11/editorial-anticapitalism-hits-the-streets>)

*"There are a growing number of us who think that we need a realignment on the left, we need a new perspective and a new organisation. We believe that an organisation like the NPA in France, the NAL in the Czech Republic or Antarsya in Greece is needed, one that unites people from different traditions and backgrounds in a common struggle against the government."* (WPB: Building a new Anticapitalist organisation, 23.11.2011, <http://www.workerspower.co.uk/a-new-anticapitalist-organisation>)

This liquidationist policy of the LFI is combined with an increasing self-criticism of their past Bolshevik tradition. The comrades believe that they followed until recently a too centralist, hard-core Bolshevik policy: *"...we need to look to revive the democratic spirit of the Bolshevik tradition."* (WPB Anticapitalism 2011 discusses future of the left, 28.10.2011, <http://www.workerspower.co.uk/2011/10/anticapitalism-discusses-future-of-the-left>)

*"Importantly, we need to have some humility about our own tradition, modest about the forces that we can bring and determined that a new political project is genuinely the property of a new generation of activists. It has to be thoroughly democratic and avoid the bureaucratism that has undermined previous left initiatives. (...) We are not therefore saying, like many on the left still are, simply 'join us'. (...) We can learn lessons from the international left too. In recent years the foundation of organisations like P-Sol in Brazil, the NPA in France or Antarsya in Greece show that it can be done. But in this day and age, with everything that is at stake, we have to work towards unity that can deliver victory. That means left groups should put aside narrow, organisational interests and look to the growth of the wider movement."* (WPB: We need an anticapitalist alternative, 08.11.2011, <http://www.workerspower.co.uk/2011/11/we-need-an-anticapitalist-alternative>)

The complete failure of the NPA caused by the centrist character of its leading forces is totally ignored by the LFI leaders. Exactly because the centrist leaders from the Fourth International and their policy could not be removed from the NPA leadership the NPA could not realize their progressive potential which it initially had and consequently failed. To call *now* – after all this experiences! – for a repetition of a failure, to call for new political formations looking to the NPA as a model, without explaining that a political formation like the NAP must

overcome its centrist character, must change its program, strategy and tactics to avoid bankruptcy – all this reflects that the LFI leaders are infected by the syndrome which was said about the French royal house of the Bourbons: they have nothing learned and nothing forgotten. In other words they have drawn the wrong conclusions from the experiences of the last years.

We Bolshevik-Communists say: While supporting and joining initiatives like the NAP is absolutely justified if it corresponds to a real development in the class struggle amongst the working class vanguard, it has to be combined with a principled open stand for a revolutionary program and criticism of the centrist and reformist left. The LFI leaders today draw the opposite conclusion: Reduce the criticism, avoid class characterization of the political opponents and "unite the left". This is called by us Marxists the program of opportunist centrism. Trotsky mocked about such centrists that they are *"... creating the genial theory of unprincipled combinations and propaganda through silence."* (Leon Trotsky: Tasks of the ICL (1934); in: Leon Trotsky, Writings Supplement 1934-40, p. 508)

This LFI's opportunism towards centrism is related to their ignorance of the (petty-)bourgeois character of the established leadership of the labour movement. They ignore their class character and therefore believe that their wrong policy flows from the bureaucrats wrong political understanding. So when faced with the recent huge betrayal of the left trade union bureaucrats in Britain in the struggle against the pension reform the LFI leadership unbelievably explained this betrayal with their wrong policy and lack of activists support instead of pointing out the material interests as bureaucrats which hinder them to follow a consistent militant policy:

So the LFI says about the bureaucrats' betrayal of the recent struggle against the pension reform in Britain: *"This is hopelessly inadequate and flows from these left bureaucrats' refusal to think outside the box: i.e. their refusal to break with their more conservative counterparts in Unison, the ATL, etc. Serwotka and Courtney are reformists; they argue that unity with the centre-right unions is necessary because they have no concept of mobilising the rank and file of these unions against their misleaders around a strategy that could win."* (WPB: What's wrong with the union lefts today? <http://www.workerspower.co.uk/2011/12/what%E2%80%99s-wrong-with-the-union-lefts-today>)

*"The problem is that these leaders do not have an active base of rank and file militants, who can educate, agitate and organise the members to up the ante and take the fight to the government. Therefore they are reliant on the centre-right not breaking ranks. So, despite the PCS and NUT executives both agreeing, apparently unanimously, for further strike action in January, now their leaders are talking of the same industrial strategy as Prentis and Cartmail. Both unions "have not ruled out" so-called "smart" strikes as a supplement to all-out national action, but they have not even named a date yet."* (WPB, Now we can stop the pensions robbery, <http://www.workerspower.co.uk/2011/12/now-we-can-stop-the-pensions-robbery>)

Hence the LFI leadership hopes with some propaganda and pressure from below – may be with a "united reformist, centrist, 'revolutionary' left" which creates an *"active base of rank and file militants"* for these leaders – they can be won to a consistent militant class policy. And indeed this is what the LFI leadership today is hoping and preparing

for today. A sad, idealist, illusion which will soon cause them a lot of problems and can only confuse revolutionary militants.

The LFI leaders make the grave mistake that they wish to overcome the crisis of leadership by opportunistically adapting towards left-reformist union bureaucrats and striving for unprincipled unity with small centrist groups in the name of "unity of the left". They don't care if their chosen partners – like the Permanent Revolution (PR) group – supported the chauvinistic "*British jobs for British workers*" strike at Lindsey in 2009 or that half of it which recently renounced Bolshevism under Lenin and claims that the early Soviet Union became a bureaucratic workers state not only under Stalin but already under Lenin. (The PR group seem to be a model for the LFI/WPB leadership for a "humble" approach to the tradition of Bolshevism!) Or if another hopeful partner – like the "Committee for Marxist Revival" (CMR) – openly refuses to defend Iran against a threatening imperialist attack by US/UK/Israel. Opportunist "Unity of the Left" unfortunately stand higher for the LFI leaders than the fundamental principles of authentic Marxism!

Such a unity with small centrists groups will not be a step forward because if they face any serious challenge from the class struggle they must show their true colour. If British imperialism makes sanctions against Iran or even participate in a military attack, will the new "left unity" take the only principled Marxist position and stand for the military defeat of Britain respective the military victory of Iran or will it take an ambiguous, i.e. opportunist position? If there is another uprising of the black, migrants and poor will they collectively decide not to support and join the uprising as they did in August 2011?! We have reason to fear that it is not the PR or the CMR groups which are moving to the left but rather the WPB/LFI leadership which is moving to the right.

It is about such opportunist degeneration on which the comrades should be "humble", not the revolutionary past of the LFI! In fact the recent collapse of the LFI into opportunism makes one remind to the characterisation which Leo Jogiches, the leader of the revolutionary Social Democracy before the WWI, said about the Mensheviks – that they don't stand, but rather lie on the view point of Marxism.

For revolutionary policy – particularly in historic periods like the present one where all class contradictions sharpen enormously – the principle of Bolshevism "*state what is*" is more important than ever. We call on all revolutionary comrades in the LFI to break with their organisations political degeneration and join us to build a new, authentic revolutionary international tendency!

### The struggle for the Fifth Workers' International

The fact that Chavez sabotaged the initiative for the formation of Fifth International could lead sceptics to the viewpoint that the whole perspective of the Fifth International might be wrong. Such a conclusion is absolutely baseless. The neoliberal or semi-neoliberal betrayal of the of the social democratic parties of the Second International, the bankruptcy of the Stalinist parties of the former Third International and the political death of the Fourth International already more than 60

years ago and the complete failure of its various centrist successors – all this demonstrates the need for a new, the next in the history of the working class movement, alias the Fifth International.

We cannot foresee how exactly the Fifth International will emerge. Naturally there is not only one road which leads to Rome. We Bolshevik-Communists will take the concrete conditions of the class struggle and the political formations process of the workers vanguard as they are. Any dogmatism would be nonsense. Inspired by his studies of materialist dialectic Lenin stressed the importance of *Gibkost*, what can be translated by words like elasticity, flexibility or manoeuvrability. And indeed such elasticity will be particularly necessary in the coming period for revolutionaries to intersect with authentic mass movements, to participate in the formation process of new vanguard layers.

Combined with this *Gibkost* another quality of the Bolsheviks will be equally important – their *kamendtoverdost* (intransigence, hardness, solid like a rock). Only with a full and open demarcation of the revolutionary line from the vacillating and deviating forces will it be possible for the militant workers and youth to discover the correct way forward in the liberation struggle. Nearly all centrists denounce this direct and clear approach as "sectarian". But – as Trotsky pointed out – programmatic clarity is particularly important if the revolutionary forces are small:

*„The philistines will sneer over the fact that we, a tiny minority, are constantly occupied with internal demarcations. But that will not disturb us. Precisely because we are a tiny minority whose entire strength lies in ideological clarity, we must be especially implacable towards dubious friends on the right and on the left.“* (Leon Trotsky: The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition (1929); in: Writings 1929, p. 298)

We therefore continue the way outlined in the following essay: combination of active intervention and participation in the real political formations processes of the vanguard with political clarity and open propaganda and agitation for revolutionary Marxism. We don't make agreement on our principles as a precondition for joining any real initiatives for a Fifth International but at the same time we constantly fight that it becomes a working class world party based on an authentic revolutionary program.

Our critics will remind us that our forces are very small. This is true and we are fully aware of it. But while demoralised elements of the left draw from this the conclusion that it is time to withdraw from the battle field of class struggle we draw the opposite conclusion: we must double our efforts, build roots amongst the working class and the oppressed, intervene in the struggle as it is, collaborate with all honest fighters of the class and look for unity with those who are seriously joining the camp of authentic Marxism.

So while it is true that the forces committed to build a new revolutionary International are very small it is equally true that such an International is desperately needed – particularly in a period like the present one.

Leon Trotsky, the leader of the October Revolution 1917 and founder of the III. and IV. International, answered similar centrist sceptics' already long time ago:

*„However, wherein does the "profound problem" involved*

in this question lie? Observe, *objectively* the new International is necessary, but *subjectively* it is impossible. In simpler terms, without the new International the proletariat will be crushed, but the masses do not understand this as yet. And what else is the task of the Marxists if not to raise the subjective factor to the level of the objective and to bring the consciousness of the masses closer to the understanding of the historical necessity – in simpler terms, to explain to the masses their own interests, which they do not yet understand? The “profound problem” of the centrists is profound cowardice in the face of a great and undeferrable task. The leaders of the SAP do not understand the

importance of *class-conscious revolutionary activity in history.*” (Leon Trotsky: *Centrist Alchemy Or Marxism?* (1935); in: *Writings 1934/35*, p. 262f.)

Similarly today “*class-conscious revolutionary activity in history*” is of central importance and this is and can only be the organised, collective activity in a Bolshevik international organisation. This is what our organisations are going to do. We call all revolutionary activists to read and study our positions, engage in discussion and practical collaboration with us and build with us together the revolutionary communist international tendency!

## What sort of Fifth International do we need?

by Michael Pröbsting, January 2010

When Venezuela’s President Hugo Chávez called for the formation of the “Fifth Socialist International”, the League for the Fifth International (LFI) immediately responded positively to this call. The LFI is an international organisation of revolutionary socialists - pledged from its foundation to the building of a new revolutionary International as a successor to the previous four Internationals.

From 1999 onwards, the LFI and the youth movement Revolution were active in the summit sieges, international days of actions and the world and continental social forums, what came to be known as the anticapitalist movement.

From the beginning we argued that the amorphous, mass “civil society” movement had to become, firstly, a movement with the working class as its leading force. Secondly, it had to become openly and unashamedly political. Thirdly, it had to give birth to a worldwide organisation of Parties, an International. Thus, as early as April 2003, we issued a call for the Fifth International.

We made this call to the hundreds of thousands who assembled in the European and World Social Forums (Paris 2003, Mumbai 2004, London 2004, Porto Alegre 2005, and Athens 2006). We issued this call to the trade unions and anti-capitalist initiatives, to the working class parties that actually took to the streets against neo-liberalism, capital and war. We argued for forming the new International not in some far distant future but in the months and years immediately ahead, when it was needed to coordinate the fightback against neoliberalism and imperialist war.

In Porto Alegre, in 2005, and in Caracas in 2007, Hugo Chávez correctly pointed out that the anticapitalist movement had to drop its opposition to politics and its naïve belief that it was possible to “*change the world without taking power.*” He called on the movement to transform itself into one actively striving to take power.

On this he was right, even if we disagree over what the power of the working masses is and how to achieve it.

Once again, Hugo Chávez is right: it is high time to found a Fifth International.

Humanity stands at a crossroads. Capitalism is a system in decline that offers no future to billions. Its blind drive

for profit leads inevitably to deep recessions, spreading poverty, famine, increasing rivalry between Great Powers and wars. If it continues as the basis of production then catastrophic climate change will endanger the survival of a large part of humanity.

Thus Hugo Chávez’s statement that we will either build socialism in the 21st century or there will be no 22nd century is the plain truth.

Hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, have heard Chávez’ calls and we hope will send representatives to Caracas to discuss them and decide on a course of action and then take that action.

If socialism, anticapitalism and revolution are to be more than militant slogans they have to become objectives within an overall strategy. How will we achieve socialism? It will not drop from the skies. The capitalist ruling classes will not passively accept their loss of power because of defeat in an election. The great powers like the United States, the European Union, Japan, Russia or China, will resist this by all the means at their disposal. So too will the ruling classes in the so-called Third World.

We can therefore only build a socialist world if we first destroy the state power of the capitalist class in every country by the workers and all the oppressed and exploited people taking this power into their own hands. This revolution is not simply the passing of state power, unchanged in its form, from one president or one party of professional politicians to another. Only if the workers and the poor govern themselves through a state of democratic workers’, peasants’ and popular councils, without bosses or bureaucrats, can we build socialism.

Overcoming capitalism and building socialism around the world is not something that will happen spontaneously without a plan. To achieve this historic transformation we need a programme, a strategy and a worldwide party to lead this struggle. All attempts over the past century and a half to take power and build a socialist society have failed or foundered because we did not have such a programme and world party. Twice in the nineteenth century, and twice again in the twentieth, such parties and programmes were founded; the four proletarian Internationals, and the programmes that were developed for them by Marx and



Engels, by Lenin and Trotsky. But, for over half a century, there has been no effective revolutionary international party - no International worthy of the name.

This is why the League for the Fifth International, as our name suggests, has argued for seven years that the building of a Fifth International is a burning necessity. The time is ripe to lay the foundations of the Fifth International NOW!

### The existing leaderships of the working class

The working class is the class of those who do not possess any of the means of production as their private property and consequently are forced to sell their labour power to earn their living. Thus, the working class consists not only of factory workers or miners but also those in the so-called service sector, office workers, shop workers, nurses, teachers, call centre workers, etc. With more than one billion members worldwide, the working class is, together with the small farm-owning or renting peasantry who earn their living by selling the produce of their land, by far the majority of the world's population

In capitalist society, the bourgeoisie, the owners of the banks and enterprises, live from the profits based on the surplus they extract from the workers by not paying them the full equivalent of their labour. They also oppress and exploit other classes and layers like the urban poor, the peasants and sectors of the middle classes. This is why we can and we shall mobilise all those oppressed to fight together against the capitalist class and for a socialist revolution.

But socialism can only be achieved if the working class leads such an alliance. Only the working class has the power to halt all the wheels of capitalist profit making. It is the class whose liberation from exploitation requires the abolition of capitalist private ownership. As a class it is engaged in the collective labour within the modern means of production, exchange, communication that is essential to create a world of abundance and equality. This is why socialists see the working class as the central, revolutionary class.

Of course, the working class can only win, and socialism can only be built, if the working class succeeds in building an alliance with the other oppressed popular classes and layers. That is why the Fifth International must fight for a mass popular movement for socialism under the leadership of the working class.

This leadership is necessary because, without it, a mass popular movement for socialism would fall, directly or indirectly, under the hegemony of sectors of the bourgeoisie. In capitalist society the only classes strong enough to direct society and determine its future are the proletariat or the capitalists. What we have seen in the past and present is that workers and popular movements which are not led by revolutionary socialist forces, and left-wing governments that do not base their rule on working class and popular councils and break with capitalism, will be forced in the end to surrender to the capitalists.

The most important reason for the failure of socialist revolutions since 1917 has been the terrible crisis of leadership amongst the workers and their allies. They have leaderships of their mass organisations that are incapable of advancing their class interests because they lack a revolution-

ary programme and strategy and in most cases are headed by a bureaucratic caste for whom the rank and file are mere cannon fodder for their manoeuvres within the capitalist power structures.

In the rich, imperialist countries, Social Democratic parties have served the capitalists, in or out of government, for nearly a century. They became what Lenin and Trotsky called bourgeois workers' parties, that is, parties that have organised links with sectors of the working class as their main social base but are dominated by a bureaucratic caste that serves the bosses and is deeply embedded with the capitalist state via numerous material privileges. Added to this, in recent years, is the fact that they have adopted neo-liberal policies and, as a result, their working class links and support have been substantially weakened and they have become increasingly discredited amongst their previous supporters.

The European Left Party (which is the Linkspartei in Germany, the French Communist Party, Rifondazione Comunista – the Party of Fausto Bertinotti in Italy etc.) and parties like the two Communist Parties of India are also reformist, bourgeois workers' parties. They, too, have proven in practice that they are determined to act as parties of the bosses. In India, the CPI(M) has ruled West-Bengal for decades, it has dispossessed peasants to hand land over to multi-national corporations and unleashed the police force and its own party thugs against those who fight for their land.

In France, the PCF was part of the imperialist government of Lionel Jospin, 1997-2002, which privatised many enterprises and joined the NATO wars against Serbia in 1999 and against Afghanistan 2001. Similarly, Bertinotti's party joined Romano Prodi's neo-liberal government (2006-2008) and implemented pension reforms and other social cuts. In Germany, the Linkspartei is part of regional governments (Berlin, Brandenburg etc.) which oversee neo-liberal social cuts and privatisation plans.

Old-style Stalinist parties, like the Greek KKE, still try to cover their reformism by "Marxist-Leninist" rhetoric. But their true nature has been shown during the rebellion of the youth and poor in winter 2008/09 when they denounced the militant youth as "hooligans" and obstructed any move for an all-out general strike that could have transformed rebellion into a revolution.

Another example of a party that serves capitalism in the name of Communism is the Chinese Communist Party. Whilst still using the cover of the red flag and occasional Mao-quotes it has restored capitalism in China. These "communists" have overseen huge privatisation programmes, the return of the Chinese bourgeoisie and the opening of the economy to imperialist capital, social cuts and mass lay-offs in state-enterprises. In name alone is the CCP a party of the working class and peasantry: in its deeds it is a party serving the Chinese capitalists and state bureaucrats.

Finally, the policy of the bourgeois populist and left-bonapartist governments in Latin America (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua etc.) show the impossibility of a middle way between authentic socialism and capitalism. Hugo Chávez and his government have, on one hand, issued important social programmes for the poor and nationalised the oil industry and some other enterprises whilst, on the other, they have failed to expropri-

ate the decisive sectors of the Venezuelan big bourgeoisie and foreign capital. They have, at best, given only half-hearted support to various workers' strikes and occupations, despite being in power since 1998. What Chávez and the PSUV leadership have really built in Venezuela is a capitalist system with a strong state capitalist sector and important social programmes. As Chávez said himself in mid-2009 "we don't deny the market, but the free market." But a fusion between socialism and capitalism is not possible. They are irreconcilable opposites.

Similarly, in Venezuelan foreign policy we can see zig-zags, not a consistent socialist policy. While Chávez correctly denounces sharply the state terrorist policy of US imperialism and opposed Israel's war against Lebanon and the Palestinians, at the same time he praises the reactionary Islamist regime in Iran. How can the proposed Fifth International really be a socialist International if it dares not denounce the dictatorship in Teheran and actively support the rights of workers there to form independent unions, support the democratic rights of women and the national minorities like the Kurds to self-determination including separation if they so wish it. Chávez invokes Lenin and Trotsky. Let him look at what their clear and unequivocal position was on such issues.

In some countries, political Islamist forces have a radical anti-imperialist rhetoric and indeed take a lead in national liberation struggles against occupations (like Hamas, Hezbollah or the Taliban). While socialists certainly support these struggles and defend the Islamists against imperialism they also point out the socially reactionary character of their policy. Hostility to women's rights and to all democratic and secular freedoms makes them an enemy of the liberation of the poor, the exploited and the oppressed. The Fifth International shall therefore fight for the politi-

cal independence of the working class and popular masses from Islamism.

The Fifth International should reject all forms of reformism, Stalinism and populism. It must never participate in a capitalist government, that is, a government which is not based on working class and popular councils and which is not breaking with capitalism. The Fifth International shall demand from the leaders of reformist and populist parties, movements and governments that they break with capitalism, that is that they do not collaborate with sectors of the bourgeoisie and imperialism but expropriate the whole capitalist class, that they support the formation of workers' and popular councils and militias and create workers' and popular governments resting on such councils and militias. If Hugo Chávez has sincerely come to accept the views of Trotsky and Lenin, of Permanent Revolution and State and Revolution, if the PSUV too adopts such positions, then there is only one conclusion:

*Break with the Venezuelan Bourgeoisie!*

*Give a lead to the masses to create a workers' and peasants' government!*

*Help arm the workers and win over the army to their side!*

*Transform the revolutionary situation into a victorious socialist revolution!*

At the same time, we call on the rank and file supporters of those parties and the whole working class and popular masses and urge them not to wait for any leader's initiative. Under the impact of economic crisis, inflation and bourgeois sabotage, the situation can turn into a counter-revolutionary one. A coup or an assassination could put all the gains of the poor into jeopardy. If the leaders will not take the lead, and the whole experience of the past decade indicates that they are unwilling to break with capitalism, the workers, the peasants and the urban poor must fight



for their demands, build their own organs of struggle that are completely independent of the "Bolivarian bourgeoisie". For this they need their own parties and this is why we call on militant unions, social movements and all workers and oppressed looking for an alternative to reformism to build new workers' parties. The Fifth International will be a vanguard force to help the masses in this process and to lead them forward to the socialist revolution.

### **What we shall adopt from the experience of the past four Internationals**

The Fifth International must rest on the shoulders of the four working class Internationals our predecessors built. It must take the best elements of each of them, learning the lessons of their early achievements and ultimate failures, adapting them to the needs of fighting for the world revolution and socialism in the 21st century.

### **The First International**

In 1864, English, French and Belgian workers' representatives meeting in London formed the International Working Men's Association. Also present were English followers of Robert Owen, former Chartists, Christian Socialists, Irish, Italian and Polish nationalists and a small group of German communists. The latter were refugees, resident in London, amongst them Karl Marx. Rapidly he became key figure in its coordinating body, the General Council.

The International, as it came to be known, consisted of workers organised in unions, co-operatives or in small socialist and anarchist circles. The French were largely followers of Pierre Joseph Proudhon, the founder of anarchism, and a few followers of Auguste Blanqui, a heroic figure who placed great emphasis on armed insurrection directed by secret societies. Later, the followers of the Russian Mikhail Bakunin, the second founder of anarchism, joined it.

Marx set out to win them to understanding the need for an international political organisation. He explained to the English trade unionists that it is not sufficient to fight only for economic gains against their own particular bosses but to fight the whole capitalist system of wage slavery. To guide the work of the International, he drafted *The Inaugural Address* and the *Provisional Rules*.

This short and concise political manifesto already stated the basic principle of working class political independence, and the need to take state power in order to abolish all class rules and, indeed, all classes: "*To conquer political power has, therefore, become the great duty of the working classes.*" It further stated:

*"That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves, that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule."*

The *Inaugural Address* and the *Provisional Rules* were to form the basis of the first programmes of the new workers' parties that were founded right around the world over the next three decades.

From Marx's intervention we must learn that circumstances may oblige revolutionaries to initiate the founding of an International with leaders who are not in their judge-

ment revolutionary communists, if they stand at the head of mass militant working class forces.

However, creating a non-revolutionary International was not Marx's aim, as some people claim today, and it cannot be ours. Nevertheless, Marx did realise that the fully developed expression of revolutionary communism, which he and Engels had embodied in the Communist Manifesto sixteen years previously, could not simply be repeated when trying to draw together mass workers' organisations. He commented in a letter to Engels: "*It was very difficult to keep the thing (the Address and the Rules) in a form which made our views acceptable at the present stage of the labour movement. Time is needed before the movement, now revived, will permit the old vigour of language.*"

Yet, even in the nineteenth century, during the growth of capitalism into a worldwide system, the decisive movements of the class struggle, 1848-49 and 1870-71, posed the seizure of power point blank. Indeed, the latter saw the first seizure of power by the working class, though in a single city; the Paris Commune of 1871. Under Marx's leadership the General Council supported the Commune and drew the correct lessons from it; namely the need to smash the old capitalist state machinery and replace it with a council of recallable delegates and the universal arming of the people. However, the heterogeneous character of the International's mass base made this a Pyrrhic victory for Marx. The British trade unionists withdrew their support in horror at such revolutionary lessons, evolving into Liberals. The anarchists, too, though for the opposite reason – they rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat – split the International.

Thus the First International collapsed as a victim of English bourgeois reformist trade unionism and "European" petty bourgeois, decentralising anarchism. As a result of the historic regression caused by Stalinism and the collapse of the degenerated workers' states, thanks to its betrayal, similar forces can be seen at work in the movement of today. They must be fought in the arenas where they influence the working masses not just by literary exposure alone, or in small discussion forums of self-selected "Trotskyists."

### **The Second International**

The Second International focussed on the necessity of building well-organised political parties, of utilising elections and mass trade unionism to achieve working class identity. Under the leadership of German Social Democracy, it pledged itself to political independence from all other classes, refusal to share government with bourgeois parties, and saw this intransigence as a necessary preparation for the inevitable and approaching social revolution. The Second International also saw the triumph of Marxism over all the petit bourgeois "socialisms" of the nineteenth century. Through its left wing (Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Lenin and Trotsky) it also gave birth to its successor, an International tasked with actually leading the proletarian revolution. Learning from historic defects and the fate of the Second International (the betrayal of 1914) we must break from all those for whom elections and trade unionism become ends in themselves, those prepared to assume office within the straightjacket of the bourgeois state and to rule on behalf of the capitalist class,



those who support the imperialist fatherland in time of war, those who reject the party as a combat organisation of the proletarian vanguard.

Within the Second International, from 1903-1912, Lenin actually created a different type of party from that of the SPD, Bolshevism, even though he was not, at first, clearly aware of its generalised applicability. After the great betrayal of 1914, through participation in the amorphous anti-war Zimmerwald-Kienthal movement as a communist left wing, but above all because of the victory of Bolshevism in 1917, this party proved able to create a Third International (1919-23), to spread the lessons of Bolshevism to the whole world. The Fifth International's parties, too, must be democratic centralist combat organisations, not election machines dominated by parliamentarians and municipal councillors and their allies in the trade union bureaucracy.

### The Third International

The Communist International, founded by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919, drew the lessons of the failure of the Second International when it was faced with war and chauvinism at the beginning of the First World War in 1914. It insisted on building fighting parties that did not tolerate any gap between words and deeds. It generalised the experience of the class struggles where workers, peasants and soldiers organised themselves in workers' councils (soviets) to debate and decide their demands and tactics to win their struggles and to elect and control their leaders.

The Third International, added to the lessons of the Paris Commune those of the October Revolution, that socialism can only be built if the working class, in alliance with all exploited and oppressed, smashes the old capitalist state, its bureaucracy and machinery of repression and creates its own new type of state, only a "semi-state" in Lenin's words, because the masses will be armed and their network of councils will run society. Such a state will be the fullest kind of democracy for the working classes but will at the same time be a dictatorship for the exploiting minority since it will crush their revolts and take away their ownership of the factories, the banks and the land and turn them into social property. This is what the proletarian dictatorship means. On the basis of a democratically planned economy, inequality between developed and underdeveloped nations, between the rich and the poor, will all wither away. Eventually there will be a world and a society without states or classes.

The Third International also understood that capitalism had led to a world divided between a small number of dominating, imperialist states and the vast majority of people living in colonial or semi-colonial countries (that is, countries which whilst formally independent are economically and politically subjected to the imperialist ones). It concluded that revolutionary socialists must support the struggles of oppressed nations against imperialism. And it concluded that socialism could only be successfully built if, after each national revolution, a workers' state is not left isolated in one country but spreads internationally. Finally, the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky gave us the understanding that the working class must always support the struggles of the peasants against the big landowners, of indigenous peoples and of those resisting

racism, of women, youth, lesbian and gays, fighting for their liberation. Only by this can a strong alliance of the working class and all oppressed be created.

The Third International saw itself not as a confederation of national parties, each pursuing its own strategy, but as single world party of social revolution. Whilst it proclaimed itself communist and proletarian, it also saw itself as the "tribune" of all the exploited and oppressed people of the world, drawing in the fighters against all oppressions, national, racial, gender etc. Thus, it was not a narrowly "workerist", that is, in the end, an economic International. Hence its slogan: *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!*

But the fate of this International after Lenin's departure from its leadership and death, under first Zinoviev's leadership (1923-5) and then Bukharin's (1925-28) and finally under Stalin's dictatorship over the Comintern (1928-1943) is also a warning to all of us, that bureaucratism and collaboration with supposed "anti-imperialist" or "antifascist" bourgeois regimes will weaken the independence of the workers and lead only to historic defeats, as it did in the 1920s and 30s.

The International must never be subordinated to the interest of any state, not even a healthy workers' state. How much less can it agree to be the instrument of a bourgeois state and its foreign policy and alliances?! Venezuela under Chávez, a bourgeois state preserving private ownership of the means of production, is allied to other such states and seeks as its allies any states with common antagonism to the USA. This has led Chávez to praise China, Iran, and Zimbabwe despite their repression of oppressed nationalities and workers and youth struggling for democratic rights. It has led to a block with Cuba, which does not allow free trade unions or alternative working class political parties. This lesson of the Third International, the need for class independence from any state, the right and duty to criticise the actions of any government, is essential to an International acting as the world leadership of a revolutionary class.

### The Fourth International

The Fourth International was founded in 1938 after a 15-year long struggle by Leon Trotsky and his supporters against the degeneration of the USSR into a Stalinist dictatorship and against the mis-leadership of the workers' movement by the social democratic, "Communist" and centrist parties. The Fourth International gave us the lessons that socialism not only cannot be built in one country but also that it must inevitably degenerate into a bureaucratic dictatorship if the revolution is not spread internationally, both to the industrially developed and to the semi-colonial countries.

It deepened the communist understanding of the united front tactic that criticism of the treacherous role played by the reformist and union leaders must be combined with a systematic campaign to organise the rank and file by calling their leaders to fight against the class enemies. It also learned from the experience in China and other countries in the 1920s and 1930s that, while it might be necessary to fight together with sectors of the national bourgeoisie against imperialism, it is equally important that the working class does not submit to other classes but takes

a leading role in this struggle and hence turns against the national bourgeoisie once it betrays the struggle. Finally, it deepened the understanding of the revolutionary programme of the Communist International in relation to the day-to-day demands for higher wages, democratic reforms etc. by arguing for the mobilisation and organising of the working class and the oppressed for transitional demands. Such transitional demands, like workers' control in enterprises or workers' and popular militias, are characterised by their challenge to the economic, political and military power of the ruling class that opens the way to socialist revolution.

The Fourth International was built and founded in a period of deep political reaction and had to swim against the adverse tide of repression and defeats for the working class – in Germany (1933), in Austria (1934), in Spain (1939), and the Great Purges in the USSR (1936-38) which were aimed directly at wiping out the thousands of Left Oppositionists. Its historically specific task was to fight against the bureaucratic degeneration of the world's first workers' state by means of political revolution, and the replacement of the Third Communist International as a worldwide revolutionary party.

The Fourth International's militants heroically participated in, and even led, mass movements and revolutionary struggles before, during and after the Second World War but the Fourth never became a mass International. It underwent centrist degeneration and collapse between 1948 and 1953 with its Third Congress (1951) embodying this new form of centrism. This degeneration/collapse was not because of any weakness inherent in its programme nor because its declaration had been "premature" or should have awaited a revolutionary upsurge. Before it could fuse its revolutionary cadres with the masses in new revolutionary parties, its leading cadres were disoriented by the survival and expansion of Social Democracy and Stalinism following the second imperialist War, an outcome not foreseen in Trotsky's pre-war perspectives.

After a short period of trying to justify pre-war prognoses and perspectives, the undeniable expansion of degenerate workers' states to Eastern Europe and to China, Vietnam and Korea, fatally disoriented it. Unable to analyse the new situation on a revolutionary basis and to re-elaborate its programme to deal with the radically changed circumstances, it degenerated into centrism.

The reorientation, led by the post-war leaders, Michael Pablo, Joseph Hansen and Ernest Mandel was in fact a capitulation to Stalinism, Left Social Democracy and Third World nationalism. It took the form of a processist, objectivist acceptance of the leadership of these forces as necessary for a whole historic period. Without any operative reason to exist as the strategist of world revolution (including the anti-bureaucratic political revolution) the FI then collapsed into centrist fragments. The development of an extended period of economic expansion for capitalism in the period 1950-70, itself unprecedented in the imperialist epoch, and the explosion of revolutionary struggles in this period in the "Third World" (including the formation/expansion of new degenerate workers' states in Cuba and Vietnam) gave further impetus to this degeneration.

However, despite falsifying or abandoning the revolutionary heritage of Trotskyism many of these fragments continued to preserve elements of its programme and les-

sons, to train cadres and to issue and translate the works of Trotsky and his co-thinkers. The main branch of the centrist Fourth International (the former United Secretariat) recognises the futility of its own existence and seeks to join a new International, should other forces establish one on a significant scale. Its main theoretician, François Sabado, has hailed, if cautiously, the call of Hugo Chávez.

Chávez himself has expressed a positive attitude to Trotsky and Trotskyism as he understands it. He explicitly recognised the Fourth International as part of the continuity of the Internationals by calling for a Fifth. This is certainly a unique position from a head of state, since it includes an expression of political sympathy, although in 1937 President Lazaro Cardenas gave Trotsky refuge in Mexico. It is of course no accident that Chávez, like Cardenas, is the head of a semi-colonial state which has asserted its independence of imperialism and supported the anti-war and anticapitalist movement. He has praised Trotsky's Permanent Revolution and Lenin's State and Revolution. But can he, as the president of a state machine that still defends capitalism, have understood it? The downfall of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism by the CCP also weaken the prestige of Stalinism as against this "Trotskyism." Whilst Chávez' misuse of Trotskyism is something we have to fight, even the fact that these issues are open to public debate, on the agenda of mass organisations, is an enormous step forward from the situation between 1945 - 2000 and we have to take advantage of this skilfully and in a principled manner.

### **The Fifth International - the fighting party for socialist revolution**

The Fifth International can and must liberate humanity from capitalism and all the horrors produced by it. It can and must be the solution for the terrible crisis of leadership by offering the working and popular masses a programme and an instrument for removing capitalism from history. For this, the Fifth International itself needs a programme of international socialist revolution. But a programme is not enough. The programme can only become reality if we build a world party that fights to put this programme into action. For this we need a party of action, a fighting party for socialist revolution.

The Fifth International must be the world party of all forms of working class organisation; parties, unions, cooperatives, women's associations, youth clubs, for example, and of all those who support the struggle for socialism. We call on the rank and file, and their leaders, of all those organisations to join the Fifth International.

The Fifth International certainly can and must be "*a space for socialist-oriented parties, movements and currents in which we can harmonise a common strategy for the struggle against imperialism, the overthrow of capitalism by socialism*", as the Caracas Commitment from November 21, 2009 declared. It needs the broadest possible democracy to discuss freely and without bureaucratic restrictions. At the same time, it must be an international party with unity in action, that is, a world party which acts for commonly agreed goals. This naturally means that, as far as action is concerned, the parts are subordinate to the whole and national parties are subordinate to the International.

### **Building mass organisations fighting for our future**

The struggle to overcome the crisis of leadership centres around building the Fifth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution. But we need more than this. The Fifth International must commit itself to the building or renewing of the trades unions and mass organisations of the peasants, the poor, the youth and women.

We need unions and mass organisations which do not accommodate to the dictates of the bosses but which defend the interests of the working and popular classes with militant methods of struggle (like mass strikes, occupations, up to the general strike).

We need unions and mass organisations which are not bureaucratically controlled from top down but which are democratic, in which differences can freely be debated and leaders can be controlled and, if necessary, recalled.

We certainly must not passively wait and expect the unions and mass organisations to be transformed and taken out of the hands of their present leaders as if by some process of evolution. Quite the opposite! We must demand from today's leaders that they fight for the urgent needs of the masses but, at the same time, we alert the rank and file not to trust them. We fight for the formation of rank and file movements in existing unions and mass organisations to fight against the control by the bureaucratic caste.

We need unions and mass organisations which are not dominated by white, male, and better-off layers but which can really unite the whole working class and the oppressed. We therefore need unions and mass organisations which give full rights and full representation in their leadership structures to the lower strata of the working class and the poor, to women, youth and migrants.

We can never achieve a society where all human beings are equal if we do not show our determination to overcome inequality in our own movements. Various means can help this process; the right to meet independently to discuss the specific problems of women, youth, migrants or lesbians and gays, the right of representation in leadership structures in proportion to their share amongst the rank and file and other measures.

In the end, this need for new (or renewed) mass organisations is related to the necessity of winning them to the programme of socialist revolution. The task of the Fifth International is therefore to win these mass organisations to its revolutionary programme.

### **We can only overthrow capitalism - not reform it!**

The Fifth International that we need should have a programme based on the historic and recent lessons of the struggles against capitalism and imperialism. It should state clearly that we defend each and every achievement against the capitalist bosses; against lowering of wages, lengthening of working hours, attacks on democratic rights or infringement of national sovereignty by imperialists. Moreover, we support all struggles to improve our living standards by reforms.

But we are not utopians. In the end the struggle for reforms is a labour of Sisyphus. Every gain we can force capitalists and their state to deliver with their left hands they will try to take back with their right. Capitalism cannot be reformed. It must be destroyed.

The capitalists and the oligarchs will never give up power peacefully. Where they feel endangered by popular movements, they will try to mobilise their state apparatus and/or foreign imperialist troops, as they did with coups, or coup attempts, in Chile 1973, in Venezuela 2002 or in Nepal and Honduras 2009. This is why the working class and the popular masses must organise themselves in councils of action and arm themselves in their own militia. Their aim must not be to take over the old state apparatus but to destroy it and replace it with a completely new state apparatus build from below on the basis of such councils of action.

Even when political forces that claim their goal is socialism, like Chávez's PSUV in Venezuela, the MAS of Evo Morales in Bolivia or the UCPN (Maoists) in Nepal, take governmental power, decisive obstacles to socialist transformation remain. As long as the capitalist class is not expropriated, that is, it continues to own and control the heart of the economy, and as long as the old state, that is, the whole strata of military and police officers, the judges, the state and municipal bureaucracy, continue to exist, so long the real power is not in the hands of the people but in the hands of the bourgeoisie. President Chávez himself said, in November 2009, that even 11 years after his election both the state apparatus and the economy have remained capitalist. So even a socialist-minded government remains limited in its power to abolish capitalism. If the working class and the popular masses do not take power themselves, such a socialist-minded government will either appease the capitalists or it will be overthrown as in Chile 1973 or in Honduras in 2009.

We therefore criticise the political strategy of leaderships like the PSUV, the MAS in Bolivia or the Nepalese Maoists, as utopian reformists. They might have honest intentions to build a socialist society but they believe that this is possible via gradual reforms. This is wrong! There are no rigidly separate stages in the revolution, each of which has to be completed before the next can begin; the revolution must be permanently, uninterruptedly driven forward until the complete political and economic expropriation of the capitalist class has been achieved. As long as this enemy is not expropriated, it will mobilise its military, political and economic means to destroy the people's power. Them or us, there are no other options!

Of course, under certain circumstances it is not excluded that such a socialist-minded government might be pushed by events to go further than they initially intended. When the Castro-leadership took power in Cuba in 1959 they had no strategy to introduce nationalise the whole economy and a planned economy. However given the aggression of US imperialism and the joining of the camp of the Stalinist Soviet Union the Castro-leadership created a "socialism" like in Eastern Europe. While the Cuban revolution certainly brought enormous gains for the workers and peasants and delivered a heavy blow to imperialism we don't think that such a strategy is a model for today's revolutions. Why? Because it created not a socialist society but a bureaucratic, one-party regime where power does not rest on councils of the workers and peasants but rather in the hands of a small strata of bureaucrats. Similarly the first attempts to spread the Revolution to other countries (by militants like Che Guevara) were aborted and under the pressure of Moscow a policy of peaceful co-existence with



the capitalist regimes in Latin America was implemented. While the Fifth International certainly will defend Cuba against any form of imperialist aggression and pressure it must also open the road to socialism via a political revolution against the Castroite bureaucratic regime.

### **The struggle for power - the strategy of permanent revolution**

A socialist revolution is not “conquering” the state via elections and it is not building “free spaces”, that is, “socialist” islands inside the capitalist societies. It begins by mobilising the working class and the oppressed for the permanent struggle against the bosses and imperialist rulers and organising them in independent organisations (militant unions, socialist women, youth etc. movements, revolutionary parties). To be strong enough to challenge the power of the ruling class the working class and the oppressed must create their own organs, councils of action, and arm themselves in popular militias. Based on such fighting organs the working class can take power via an armed insurrection against the capitalist state. Only such a socialist revolution, which destroys the state of the capitalists and abolishes their ownership in the economy, can open the road towards socialism.

But the socialist revolution is not a single act. It starts by preparing the insurrection and it continues after taking power. It has to break the resistance of the old ruling class and defend the country against any foreign capitalist invasion. It must build a new, workers’ state which also oversees the building of a planned economy. It must initiate a cultural revolution eradicating all forms of oppression and prejudices against national minorities, women, youth, lesbian and gays etc.

The strategy of permanent revolution also includes the internationalisation of the revolution. Because if the revolution succeeds in one country the ruling classes in other countries and particularly in the imperialist metropolises will try everything in their power to drive the revolution back. This is why US imperialism has blockaded and isolated Cuba for decades or why it builds military bases in Venezuela’s neighbour, Columbia. The struggle for socialist revolution will last until the working class takes power both in semi-colonies in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa and in the imperialist centres of power in North America, Europe and Asia.

### **The Socialism of the 21st century we are fighting for**

The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for is a socialism where the working class, the peasants, the urban poor (including both those still in education and those already in pension) rule the society via popular councils which are located in the enterprises, the schools and universities, the barrios and the villages. The *Socialism of the 21st century* goes from below to the top and not the other way round. All important issues are discussed in these councils and delegates are elected to represent the viewpoint of the rank and file in higher delegate bodies; local, regional, national and international. These delegates must be recallable if the rank and file do not feel represented by them anymore.

The *Socialism of the 21st century* must not be a social-

ism where a caste of bureaucrats rule the society as was, and is, the case in the Stalinist countries. It is an important lesson of the 20th century that socialism must never be a dictatorship of bureaucrats against the workers. Nor can the *Socialism of the 21st century* be a socialism where only one party exists. The working class and the popular masses will express their views in different parties which will compete democratically for a majority in the councils.

Nor must the *Socialism of the 21st century* be a socialism where a caudillo rules over the society in a mixture of a parliamentarian and bonapartist system (as in Venezuela).

The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for will be characterised by a global planned economy and a world federation of socialist republics. It will move towards the creation of general wealth for the whole of humanity and in this process state structures and classes will gradually die off. However, in the period of socialist revolution and in the transition period after it, when the old ruling class will try to hold on to, or to take back, power by any means, the working class must do everything necessary to win this long and bitter civil war. In such a transition period it is clear that only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the popular masses can smash and suppress the resistance of the old ruling class. Otherwise they will smash us.

### **Democratically planned economy**

The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for is a socialism where the economy is in the hands of the working class and is democratically planned. Immediately after the successful socialist revolution, the working class will socialise the banks, key financial institutions, transport and utility companies and major industries. Family enterprises and peasant economy will remain as private property and will be integrated in a plan for economic development.

In the end, however, the economy will never achieve its optimal development as long as significant parts of it remain in private hands. Of course, with regard to small scale production and property, such as peasant farms, socialisation should proceed cautiously and voluntarily, on the basis of agreement, and not by force as the Stalinist bureaucracy did.

The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for is therefore a socialism where people own the economy together and work together. We reject the vision of a Socialism based on autonomous cooperatives. Of course, for a transitional period after the revolution, there may well be cooperatives. But we have to be aware of their inherent dangers; competition between the cooperatives would inevitably lead towards the redevelopment of a market economy and, in the end, capital accumulation and concentration and the re-emergence of classes.

When there is no private ownership of the economy, “ownership” will be vested in those who produce, and those they produce for, at the appropriate level; local, regional, national, international. Anything that can be decided locally will be. Broader allocations of resources and exchanges of products will be done at a national, regional or world level. Since there will be no competitive struggle for profits, no hidden privileges for bureaucrats or experts, there will be no need for secrecy. Information about resources and decisions will be available to all.

We would not have a single, monstrous, bureaucratic central plan, such as existed under Stalinism, where everything was decided in one place by a caste of privileged bureaucrats. Under real socialism, what will exist will be an ascending series of plans at all appropriate levels, each decided on after debate in a workers' and consumers' democracy.

Such a democratically planned economy is not a dream as the bourgeois propagandists claim. Via modern technologies it is possible to communicate needs and necessities and to coordinate production and transport across the globe in seconds. Indeed, every modern multinational corporation works this way. But, in contrast to the capitalist corporations, we will utilise the achievements of modern technologies not for the profit of a few but for the wealth of humanity as a whole.

*Workers, peasants and youth: we have a World to Win with Socialism and to Loose with Capitalism! Let us march forward to Socialism to save humanity from the horrors of capitalism!*

### In summation

Hugo Chávez's call for a Fifth International in November 2009 offers an excellent opportunity to popularise the idea of a new world party of the working class. As many socialists as possible should intervene into the debates around the issue, fighting for a clear revolutionary perspective. In contrast to Chávez's 21st century socialism in Venezuela, which is in reality still a mixed economy of welfare state and big corporations, with all the inequality and exploitation that is inseparable from the market, socialists call for a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and its state, for workers' control of industry and a planned economy. Chávez conceives of the Fifth International as a support mechanism for his regime and its policies. He will find that the revolutionary impulses of the masses will outstrip his limited notions of socialism.

The fight for a Trotskyist transitional programme and a Leninist democratic centralist form of party organisation must take place amongst all those who actively respond to the idea of a working class, anti-imperialist, anticapital-

ist and socialist International. Those who formally declare themselves Trotskyists or Leninists but who, at the same time, regard the question of the International as a distant and far off project, entirely a product for the objective process, or simply the result of the expansion of their own propaganda society to other countries, are hopelessly nationally limited, passive propagandists (sectarians in the real sense of the word). They are internationalists only in a platonic sense.

This fact remains as true today as ten years ago or as in 2003 when we issued the call for a Fifth International but clearly formulated it as a slogan to fight for in the mass movement of resistance to globalisation and imperialist war. Today, because of the change of period from one of capitalist stagnation to one of the convulsions of a historic period of decline, refusal to address the issue of the International on a mass scale is even more criminal.

The Chávez project may, of course, be aborted at an early stage as a result of opposition to it from most of the Stalinist parties, from the anti-political NGOs and libertarians, or from anticommunist bourgeois populist forces, even before the conference in Caracas. Even if it does take place, it may very well be no more than a Cuban Stalinist-Populist mass rally presided over by Chávez, Morales or even Castro. However, Chávez' call to gather in Caracas in April, if he goes ahead with it, would probably attract many of the most militant forces on a global scale. This is true whatever populist objectives it is based on and whatever undemocratic structures he may embody in it. In any case, the very naming of the Fifth International supports the validity of the historic call the League made in 2003 and must be responded to with positive proposals.

Whilst it is likely that, at first, the call to build the Fifth International may attract a heterogeneous crowd of activists from all sorts of radical political backgrounds, in order for it to succeed as a revolutionary international, it would have to develop a clear programme, build combat parties in every country and create an international leadership. This will certainly mean a hard fight between the different political tendencies. That Chávez has recognised the validity of all four historic workers' Internationals is, in itself, a



blow to Stalinism and opens up a debate on the lessons to be drawn from each of them.

We are fighting for a revolutionary working class Fifth International from the beginning. We therefore argue for a revolutionary programme from the outset. In contrast to the IMT, the CWI or the USFI, we reject the stageist model of a new International built first on a left-reformist, then centrist and sometime far away in the future revolutionary basis. At the same time, it is clear that the Chavista Fifth International will be dominated by left-populist and reformist forces. We therefore favour having an extended period, perhaps a year, of intensive programme discussion inside such an International. This would be justified by the fact that many more forces will probably join it after the Caracas conference and should have a chance to participate in the discussions.

Because of the contradictory class character of a Chávista Fifth International, we will act as a revolutionary opposition faction from the beginning. We must have no illusions and, equally importantly, must not create any illusions; this would be an International whose leaders would be on the other side of the barricades against the workers on various occasions (strikes in Venezuela and Bolivia, support for Ahmedinejad against the youth of Iran, for Mugabe and Zanu-PF against the workers of Zimbabwe, etc.).

We have to wage a revolutionary class struggle inside the Fifth International against any Chavista/Castroite/ELP leadership. Of course, this must be done in a pedagogic way which takes into account the illusions of many work-

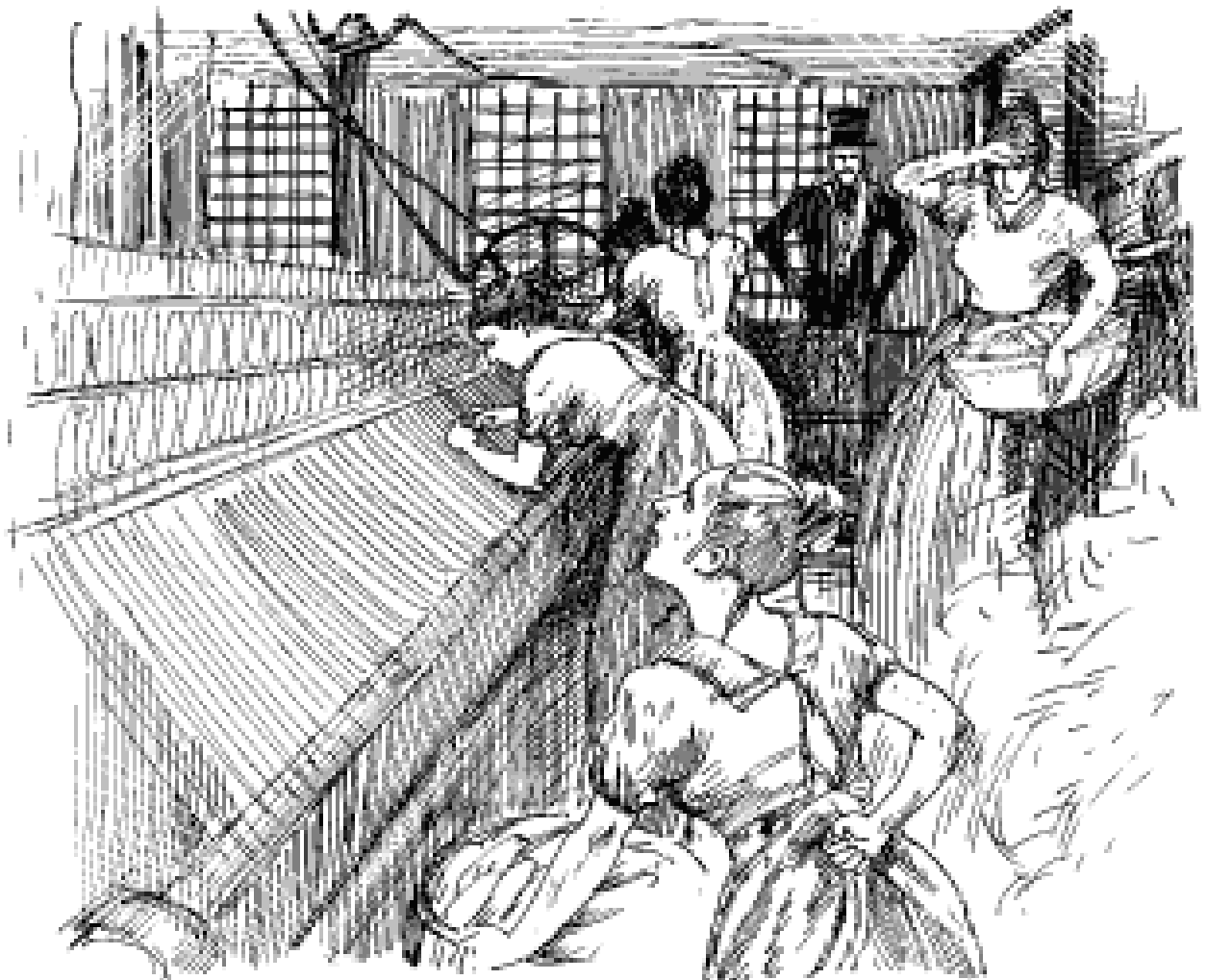
ers in order to avoid isolating ourselves unnecessarily from day one. Our goal must be to rally left-wing forces, newly radicalised workers and youth and lead them to the left and onto the revolutionary road. While keeping an independent profile as the League, with its full programme, we must attempt to draw wider forces into an opposition struggle against the Chavista.

The formation of a Fifth International, involving both revolutionaries and reformists and those who vacillate between these fundamental positions (centrists), could have tremendous progressive consequences:

- providing it was internally democratic and based on mass working class forces in struggle and political development, and
- providing revolutionaries openly and tenaciously fight for it to adopt a revolutionary programme and methods of party organisation.

Such a formation would enhance the possibility of the creation of new parties to the left of social democracy and Stalinism in which questions of strategy and tactics would not be already long settled questions but living issues of debate, intimately related to the demands of resistance to capitalist crisis and inter-imperialist rivalry and threatening war. While the question of new workers' parties, new anticapitalist parties, is already on the agenda in many countries, this tendency would be strengthened if such a Fifth International came into being.

It is time to seize the opportunity to begin the creation of a Fifth, working class and revolutionary, International.





# Revolutionary Communist Organisation for Liberation:

## What does the RKOB stand for?

The Revolutionary Communist Organization for Liberation – RKOB – is a combat organization for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. 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 RKOB 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 of 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 RKOB 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 cannot 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 RKOB is fighting for the establishment of workers' republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in rank and file meetings in factories, neighborhoods 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 RKOB 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 RKOB strives for unity in action with other organizations. But 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 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.

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 a new, revolutionary workers' party! For a 5th Workers International on a revolutionary basis! Join the RKOB!

**No future without socialism!**

**No socialism without a revolution!**

**No revolution without a revolutionary party!**



