



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE RCIT

ONE WORLD - ONE STRUGGLE - ONE REVOLUTION



www.thecommunists.net

Issue Nr.50

May 2016

UK: General Strike against the Cameron Government!

- * May Day Statement 2016
- * Panama Papers Scandal
- * UN-Rapists in Blue

- * Brazil: Defeat the Coup
- * Involuntary Self-Exposure of the WSWS
- * RCIT-Theses on the United Front Tactic

Price: €3 / \$3,5 / £2

English-Language Journal of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), No. 50, May 2016

| | |
|--|------|
| Revolutionary May Day Statement 2016 | p.3 |
| Stop Judicial Prosecution for Solidarity with Palestine! A Call to the Austrian State to Drop Its Charges against Michael Pröbsting! | p.6 |
| What Do the Panama Papers Reveal? | p.8 |
| Rapists in Blue – About the Vile Deeds of UN troops | p.9 |
| Brazil: The Only Way Forward: Defeat the Coup with Mass and Independent Mobilizations of the Working Class and Oppressed! | p.10 |
| UK: For a General Strike to Bring Down the Cameron Government! For a Workers' Government! For a Constituent Assembly! | p.12 |
| UK: Steel Crisis in Britain | p.14 |
| The Involuntary Self-Exposure of the WSWS A Reply to a Lengthy Attack by David North's WSWS Attack against the RCIT | p.16 |
| RCIT-Theses on the United Front Tactic Theses on the Principles of the United Front Tactic and Its Application to the Current Conditions of Class Struggle | p.18 |
| <i>I. The Nature and Principles of the United Front Tactic</i> | p.18 |
| <i>II. Various Applications of the United Front</i> | p.24 |
| RCIT: What do we stand for | p.30 |

Revolutionary Communism is the monthly English-language journal published by the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT). The RCIT has sections and activists in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel / Occupied Palestine, Brazil, Britain, Germany, USA, and Austria.

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Revolutionary May Day Statement 2016

May Day 2016 – In Mexico and around the Globe: For a new World Party of Socialist Revolution in Order to Advance the Struggle for Liberation of the Workers and Oppressed!

*Statement of the Liaison Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)
and the Agrupación de Lucha Socialista (ALS), April 2016*

The RCIT and the ALS send their May Day greetings to all fighters for the liberation of the working class and the oppressed people throughout the world. The current world situation is marked by an accelerated economic, social and political crisis of the capitalist world system. The capitalist system is in decline since the beginning of the world historic revolutionary period in 2008 with the outbreak of the Great Recession. The world economy never recovered from this recession and stands now before the imminent next, even worse, recession. We see an acceleration of the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers USA, EU, Japan, Russia and China (Ukraine, South and East China Sea, Africa, Latin America). Furthermore, the working class faces an intensifying wave of counter-revolutionary offensives of the ruling class – austerity programs, police state, imperialist wars in the Middle East etc.. However, the worker and oppressed are continuing their heroic resistance against these counterrevolutions.

But their struggles are seriously hampered by the devastating crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class movement. Currently the workers and oppressed struggles are controlled by various official leaderships – treacherous labor bureaucrats, leaders of the Social Demo-

cratic parties, heads of Stalinist parties, Castro-Chavismo, their centrist fellow travelers, parties representing petit-bourgeois nationalism, and parties based on Islamism. These current leaderships consciously or unconsciously mislead the workers and oppressed. In major class struggles they often support the open counterrevolution or take a cowardly neutral position (e.g. on Assad, General Sisi, the looming coup in Brazil, the Euromaidan regime in the Ukraine, the state of emergency in France, the imperialist wars in the Middle East, the ANC regime in South Africa, Russian and Chinese imperialism, etc.).

Hence, the most burning task of revolutionaries consists in joining forces in order to advance the struggle to build a new World Party of Socialist Revolution as a clear and unequivocal alternative to reformism, centrism and petty-bourgeois-populism. The RCIT and the ALS are dedicated to jointly work for this task.

To replace these non-revolutionary leaderships it is, first of all, incumbent to openly denounce them. However, at the same time, it is absolutely necessary for revolutionaries to fight *inside* existing mass movements and to apply the united front tactic towards their leaderships.

Hence, revolutionaries have to combine fighting for a



Activists of the Austrian section of the RCIT at the MayDay-Demonstration 2015 in Vienna

revolutionary program with concretizing this program to a series of strategies and tactics for the current major class struggles. Only those organizations which have a correct understanding of the Marxist program in the present period as well as of the current world situation and the corresponding tasks for the class struggle, can serve as instruments for the creation of new revolutionary parties and a new World Party of Socialist Revolution.

As revolutionaries, we take the following stands regarding current hotspots in the international realm:

* **Down with all Great Powers** – the US, EU, Japan, China, and Russia! No support for *any* imperialist camp! In the Ukraine, in East Asia, and in any other military conflict between these powers or their puppets, socialists must relentlessly remind the workers: *The main enemy is at home! Turn the imperialist war into a civil war against your own ruling class!*

* **Brazil:** No to the coup of impeachment and no to the calling for new elections! But no confidence in the Pro-Austerity PT-PMDB Government! Mobilize the masses to go into the streets and fight at one and the same time against the attacks of the Rousseff government on the workers and the poor AND against the coup movement! For the creation of action committees in the factories, trade unions, neighborhoods, slums and outlying regions in defence of our rights and against any coup movement!

* **Argentina:** Down with the right-wing Macri government! For a broad united front of struggle against the government! Free Milagro Sala and all political prisoners now! For an independent workers' party based on a revolutionary program! Drive the British out of the Malvinas!

* **Venezuela:** Defeat the right-wing coup attempts! Defend Venezuela against US imperialism! Down with the new "*Pacto de Punto Fijo*"! Mobilize the working class against the attacks of the Maduro government! Break the working class away from the Chavista leadership which defends the capitalist system and collaborates with imperialist China!

* **Mexico:** Bring back the 43 students of Ayotzinapa alive and punish those who are guilty! Solidarity with the prisoners of the self-defense militias – support the struggle of peoples and communities who fight with arms against the organized crime! For popular councils and militias! ¡Support the teachers' mobilization! ¡No to the Education Reform! ¡Down with the attacks on workers, down the Labor Reform! For a movement of the precarious and sacked workers! For an united national front of struggle of the teachers, students and workers to organize a general strike that will kick out President Peña Nieto and his allies of the pact (PRI-PAN-PRD)! For a party of the urban and rural workers! Support the struggle of the indigenous peoples of Mexico and those of all countries of the American hemisphere – for their rights to land, the preservation of their culture, and against discrimination in employment! We call for the immediate implementation of the *San Andrés Accords* of 1996 for the indigenous communities of Mexico! We support joint self-defense to thwart the occupation of lands belonging to the country's indigenous peoples and communities and their dispossession by the Mexican government and foreign and domestic corporations.

* Defend the **Syrian Revolution!** Defeat the Assad Regime! Drive the Russians, NATO, and all other Foreign Aggressors out of Syria! No to the Great Power-imposed

"Negotiations" Aimed at Liquidating the Syrian Revolution! No to Daesh/IS!

* **Egypt:** Down with the military dictatorship of General Sisi! Support the textile, public sector and other workers' strikes and mass protests against the dictatorship! Defend the Muslim Brotherhood against repression, but give no political support to their bourgeois leadership! Release all political prisoners in Egypt! For a socialist federation of the people of the Maghreb and Mashriq!

* **Libya:** Stop the US Bombing of Libya! Mobilize against the Great Powers' plans to intervene militarily in Libya and along its coast! Support the resistance against imperialist aggression! Defeat General Haftar's alliance of imperialist lackeys, without giving any political support to the Islamists! No to reactionary sectarianism! Down with the Salafi-Takfiri Daesh!

* **Iraq:** No to reactionary sectarianism! Down with the corrupt, pro-imperialist government in Bagdad! Drive the US troops out of Iraq!

* **Iran:** Down with the reactionary Mullah regime! Self-determination for all national minorities in Iran! No to any threats of the US and other Great Powers against Iran!

* Defend **Yemen** against the Saudi Aggression! Support the resistance led by the *Houthi* rebels while not giving any political support to their leadership! No return of the reactionary lackey "President" al-Hadi! For a non-sectarian mass movement which unites Sunni and Shia workers and fellahin!

* Defend the **Palestinian people** against Israel, the Zionist Apartheid state! In any conflict we stand for a military victory of the Palestinian resistance and the defeat of Israel! No political support for the Abbas/Fatah collaborationist leadership or for the reactionary Hamas leadership. For an international boycott campaign against Israel led by the mass organizations of the workers and oppressed! For a Free, Red Palestine from the River to the Sea!

* **Tunisia:** Down with the government of President Es-sebsi! For a program of public works under the control of the UGTT and other mass organizations, financed by the expropriation of the super-rich cronies of the Ben Ali clan!

* **Turkey:** Down with the reactionary-capitalist Erdoğan government, but also down with the reactionary Kemalists of the CHP and the fascists from the MHP! Stop the repression against the Kurds, the media and the opposition!

* Support the **Kurdish people's** right of national self-determination! No political support for the pro-imperialist PKK/YPG-leadership! For a free, red and united Kurdistan!

* **Mali:** Drive the imperialist French and EU occupation forces out of the country! Support the resistance!

* **Somalia:** Support the resistance against the pro-imperialist AMISOM occupation troops!

* **South Africa:** No support for the popular front ANC government! Call the NUMSA-led "United Front" to move forward and to create a new mass workers' party! Such a new party should be based on a revolutionary program and not on a remake of the reformist "*Freedom Charter*"!

* **China:** Fight against the dictatorship of the ruling Stalinist-Capitalist party! Support the workers struggles for higher wages and against sacking! For full democratic rights! No to Han chauvinism – full national self-determination for the Uyghurs and the Tibetans!

* **Pakistan:** No to PML(N) government behind which the

army command stand as the real ruling power! Support the workers struggle at PIA against privatization! Drive the army out of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA provinces! Support the national liberation struggles of the Baloch, Kashmir and other oppressed national minorities!

* **India:** Support the trade union struggles against the BJP governments' neoliberal plans! Defend women's rights in India! Mobilize against the reactionary rape culture! For armed self-defense units of women and progressive men to protect women! Support the struggle of the Adivasi for equal rights!

* **Sri Lanka:** No support for the bourgeois Sirisena government or for the opposition led by the reactionary long-time ruler Rajapaksa! Support the national liberation struggle of the Tamil people!

* **Thailand:** Down with the military dictatorship and the reactionary, pro-monarchist "Yellow Shirts" movement! Defend the "Red Shirts" movement against the repression without giving political support for the capitalist Thaksin leadership! For a new independent workers party!

* Down with imperialist aggression of the US and South Korea against **North Korea!** No support for the Stalinist dictatorship!

* Open **Europe's** Borders for all **Refugees!** Put an end to the racist and Islamophobic backlash in Europe! For a public works program with jobs for all refugees as well as all native workers! Native workers and migrants – fight together against your common enemy: the imperialist ruling class in the EU and Russia as well as against the dictatorships in the Middle East and Africa!

* **Greece:** Stop the imperialist EU-Memorandum austerity dictates! No to the sell-out of the SYRIZA government! For a mass united front against the fascist Golden Dawn party! Fight for equal rights for nationally oppressed migrants and the super-exploited layer of the Greek working class!

* **Spain:** Stop the neoliberal austerity offensive! Support the struggle of the people in Catalonia and Basque Country for national self-determination!

* **Portugal:** Force the reformist PS government to halt the austerity policy! For mass mobilizations of the workers and youth! But no political support for the government!

* **Ireland:** Stop the austerity offensive! For non-payment of water charges! Free all political prisoners in Ireland! For a United 32-County Irish Workers' Republic!

* **Britain:** Down with the Tory government! For a general strike to stop the austerity program and to bring down the government! No support for either of the two reactionary camps – pro-EU or Brexit – at the EU-referendum on 23 June: For Abstention! For a United Socialist States of Europe! British troops out of Northern Ireland!

* **Germany:** Defend migrants and refugees against the racist attacks!

* **France:** Down with the social-imperialist Hollande government supported by the "Communist" Party! For a general strike against the neoliberal labor-law reforms of Labour Minister Myriam El Khomri! Against any "State of Emergency" regime and mobilization of the army! Fight racism and repression directed towards Muslim migrants in Europe!

* **Ukraine:** Down with Ukraine's right-wing government which is merely a puppet of US and EU imperialism! But also no support for the Donbass republics leaderships which are lackeys of Russian imperialism! For joint resis-

tance against the IMF-dictated neoliberal programs! For the right of self-determination of the Russophile population in the eastern Ukraine!

* **Russia:** No to the Putin regime! Against the restriction of democratic rights! Support the struggle of the health-care personnel against cuts! Defend the heroic resistance of the Chechen people to drive out the Russian occupation forces and their lackey Kadyrov!

* **USA:** No support for any candidate (including Bernie Sanders) of the two imperialist parties – the Republicans and the Democrats! For a new Labor Party! Support the #BlackLiveMatters movement! For full equality of the Afro-American minority as well as Latino migrants!

Revolutionaries must intervene in the class struggle and combine all necessary tactics with propagandizing for a program of working class power which can only be achieved by a socialist revolution. Such a program must be built on the methods outlined by Trotsky's Transitional Program of 1938:

* Build action committees in work places and in workers living areas! Purge the trade unions of bureaucrats and collaborators with the capitalists! For democratic rank and file control over the trade unions! Build revolutionary communist fractions inside the trade unions! Transform the trade union in militant instruments for the socialist liberation struggle of the working class!

* For a sliding scale of working hours until everyone is employed without loss of pay!

* For the right of self determination for all oppressed national grouping deprived of the right to secede!

* For revolutionary movements of women, migrants, blacks, youth, unemployed, and national minorities! For the right of the oppressed to caucus in workers' mass organizations and their movements!

* Build committees and action councils of the workers, peasants, and poor to organize the struggle!

* For armed workers and oppressed militias!

* Expropriate the capitalist class! Nationalize the large enterprises and banks under workers' control!

* For a workers' government allied with the peasants and urban poor and based on local councils and militias!

* Fight for new workers' parties and for a new World Party of Socialist Revolution!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

Note: While the RCIT considers Russia and China as an imperialist power, the ALS is still in a discussion process on this issue.

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Stop Judicial Prosecution for Solidarity with Palestine!

A Call to the Austrian State to Drop Its Charges against Michael Pröbsting!

Introduction

The Austrian State is attempting to prosecute pro-Palestine activists for their Anti-Zionist views. On 20 April 2016, the *Federal Bureau for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism* (the political police in Austria) summoned Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, to answer charges of “sedition” and “inciting criminal action” (paragraph 282 of the Austrian Criminal Code). If convicted, Pröbsting can face up to one year in prison.

Michael Pröbsting is a long-time activist in solidarity with Palestine where he has visited two times. (1) For many years he has collaborated with Arab migrant communities in Austria and has frequently been invited to address their demonstrations and meetings.

The charges against Pröbsting are founded on a sentence of a speech he delivered half a year ago (!) at a rally outside of the Viennese headquarter of the United Nations. At the close of this speech, Pröbsting said the following: “I send my greetings to all courageous Palestinians who are fighting for their freedom and against the dictatorship of Israel. With all our hearts we will stand with the Third Intifada until the State of Israel is abolished and all people in Palestine can live together peacefully.” (2)

In his interrogation, Pröbsting repeated what he has stated repeatedly in public in speeches and writings for many years: He supports the one-state solution for Palestine, which means that all Palestine refugees will have the right to return to their homes and that the state of Israel should be replaced by a single state of Palestinian and Jewish people. When the police asked him if he supports terrorist

attacks, he replied that he opposes terrorist attacks against civilians, but that he does support the armed resistance of the Palestinian people against the Israel army.

The public prosecution department of Vienna will now have to decide whether to press charges against Pröbsting and conduct a trial.

We strongly protest any such judicial prosecution of Michael Pröbsting and unequivocally reject the supposedly illegal nature of his viewpoint on solidarity with the Palestinian people and against the State of Israel. It is obvious that these charges, brought up half a year after the incriminating speech, are part of a political offensive by pro-Israeli forces. Similarly, these same forces tried to create a scandal when another organization invited the Palestinian liberation fighter Leila Khaled to a public meeting in Austria. (3) In Britain Anti-Zionists are currently expelled from the Labour Party. (4) In the United States supporters of the BDS campaign are facing numerous pressures.

We reject the slanderous accusation of Anti-Zionism as a “new form of Anti-Semitism.” We are opposed to the State of Israel, not the Jewish people. Quite the contrary, we share our Antizionist convictions not only with millions of people around the world supporting the Palestinian liberation struggle, but also with many Jews who oppose Zionism either because of political or religious arguments – including the Israeli-Jewish members of the RCIT section in Israel / Occupied Palestine. (5)

Three years ago, Johannes Wiener, another comrade of the RCIT, was threatened with similar charges because of a speech he delivered at a rally in which he expressed views similar to those of Pröbsting. At that time we initi-



Michael Pröbsting addresses a rally of the Ahwazi Arab community on 16.10.2015 in Vienna in front of the local UN headquarter

ated a campaign of solidarity and, as a result, the charges, which were pressed by a pro-Israeli organization in Austria, were ultimately dropped. (6) We call upon all friends of the Palestinian Liberation Struggle, and all who defend democratic rights, to join our solidarity campaign, to sign the following statement and to send it to the ministry of justice in Austria.

Statement of Solidarity

Stop Judicial Prosecution for Solidarity with Palestine!
We Call upon the Austrian State to Drop the Charges against Michael Pröbsting!

We, the undersigned, are aware that Michael Pröbsting was summoned on 20 April 2016 to appear before the *Federal Bureau for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism* due to a speech he delivered at a rally half a year earlier. In his speech, Pröbsting said: *"With all our hearts we will stand with the Third Intifada until the State of Israel is abolished and all people in Palestine can live together peacefully."* Furthermore, we are aware that if the public prosecution department should open a trial against Mr. Pröbsting in which he is convicted, he can face up to one year in prison. Irrespective of our concrete perspectives about the future of the Palestinian people's struggle for liberation, we oppose any such judicial prosecution of Michael Pröbsting.

Please send this short letter by email to the Austrian ministry of justice: medienstelle.ressort@justiz.gv.at. Please forward this email also to us: rcit@thecommunists.net

Footnotes:

(1) The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) is an international organization with a presence in 10 countries. The URL of its website is www.thecommunists.net and it can be contacted at rcit@thecommunists.net.

(2) This speech was delivered at a rally held on 16 October 2015 organized by the Ahwazi Arabs, an oppressed national minority living in Iran. Michael Pröbsting was invited to address the rally. A brief report of that rally with links to pictures and a video of his speech (in German) can be viewed at <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/solidarity-with-ahwazi-arabs/>. The incriminating sentence starts at 4:00 minutes into the video clip.

(3) See on this e.g. OKAZ: Stellungnahme des Österreichisch-Arabischen Kulturzentrums (OKAZ) zur Hetzkampagne gegen die Diskussionsveranstaltung mit Frau Leila Khaled, <http://okaz.at/stellungnahme-des-oesterreichisch-arabischen-kulturzentrums-okaz-zur-hetzkampagne-gegen-die-diskussionsveranstaltung-mit-frau-leila-khaled/>

(4) See on this e.g. RED LIBERATION: Defeat Zionism in the Labour Party Statement, 30 March 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/zionism-labour-party/>

(5) See on this numerous articles in Hebrew, Arab and English language on the website of the *Internationalist Socialist League*, the RCIT-Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine: <http://the-isleague.com/>

(6) See e.g. RCIT: Victory! The Charge against RKOB Spokesperson and Palestine Solidarity Activist Johannes Wiener has been dropped! 10.1.2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/solidarity-with-wiener-won/>



Contingent of the Austrian Section of the RCIT at a pro-Gaza demonstration on 20.7.2014 in Vienna

What Do the Panama Papers Reveal?

Commentary by Michael Pröbsting, *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*, 4.4.2016

Germany's newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* have revealed a massive global web of capitalist corruption and tax evasion. The journalists investigated 11.5 million (!) leaked internal documents from Mossack Fonseca, a Panamanian law firm that sells anonymous offshore companies around the world, revealing its activities for the past four decades (hence the name *The Panama Papers*.) In short, this shady law firm is connected with 214,488 offshore entities which helped corporations, politicians, celebrities, etc. to hide their fortunes.

According to the journalists, the documents link at least 12 current and former heads of state and 143 other politicians to illicit financial transactions. Among them are British Prime Minister Cameron's father, closest friends of Russia's president Putin, Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko, relatives of the Spanish king, Iceland's Prime Minister Gunnlaugsson, Argentina's right-wing president Macri, Saudi Arabia's King Salman, Egypt's former president Hosni Mubarak, two cousins of Syria's dictator Bashar al-Assad, former Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, and many more. Among this global gang of capitalist politicians are also at least eight current or former members of China's Politburo Standing Committee, including the current President Xi whose family members own numerous offshore companies.

In addition, the leak has revealed that numerous banks dominating the global financial system like UBS and HSBC have been complicit in directing clients, who want keep their finances under wraps, to shell companies (the files list nearly 15,600 such shell companies!).

According to the expert Gabriel Zucman, approximately 6,600 billion US Dollars (that's 6.6 trillion dollars!) are parked in these phony offshore companies! Nearly a third of this astronomical sum is alleged to be in Switzerland, in the very heart of Europe!

In short, this leak proves once more that not only is capitalism thoroughly corrupt in *all* countries around the world, it cannot be otherwise. It demonstrates how hypocritical all Western statesmen are when they denounce corruption as the specific problem of poor countries, and how it is responsible for their backwardness. In reality, not only are the leaders and bankers in the rich imperialist countries at least *as* corrupt as their African colleagues, but it is precisely the former who are establishing and protecting the system of off-shore companies.

The Panama Papers also shows that, as long as banks are private property, they cannot be controlled. This can only be stopped when the working class nationalizes the banks under its control.

Similarly, we see that all states are ruled by corrupt politicians. This can only be remedied under a socialist system in which all political representatives earn only an average wage and are accountable to and immediately recallable by the popular masses; or in other words, under the rule of the workers and oppressed – one based on

popular councils and militias which suppress the capitalist class and their counterrevolutionary armed forces.

Last but not least, the Panama Papers demonstrate the shallowness of the preposterous assertions of various pro-Russian/Chinese social imperialists who claim that in some way Assad, Qaddafi, Xi or Putin are progressive or anti-imperialist. It is also a blow to those fantasists who still call China a "deformed workers' state" when China has in fact become an imperialist country ruled by millionaires who serving an even richer capitalist class.

It is vital that Marxist revolutionaries use this valuable investigation in their propaganda and agitation to help the working class and oppressed better understand the corrupt mechanism of global capitalism. In this way it will also be easier to explain the urgent need to expropriate the superrich and their corporations and banks, something which can only be achieved by means of a socialist revolution.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* have published the details of this scandal on this websites:

<https://panamapapers.icij.org/>

<http://panamapapers.sueddeutsche.de/>



Rapists in Blue – About the Vile Deeds of UN troops

by Almedina Gunić, Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION, April 2016

We live in the era of imperialism. This means that some very rich countries accumulate vast wealth through the exploitation and oppression of the population of the poor countries of the world. These very rich, imperialist countries are, among other things, characterized by their incessant military activity. This includes not only their leading imperialist wars fought in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, and Chad; it also involves their repeated military interventions and the permanent stationing of their soldiers, or those of “allied” lackey regimes, in poor semi-colonial countries. When deployed in the semi-colonies these combat forces and “auxiliaries” are inarguably serving the interests of the exploitive ruling classes of the imperialist countries; thus, in this capacity, the soldiers have a very definite, exploitive role model to follow. As a result, the behavior of these troops towards the poor and oppressed is often deplorable. No wonder, then that, among other forms of aggression, acts of rape of the local population by these soldiers is on the agenda; so much so that, among the world’s oppressed semi-colonies, UN peacekeepers have a gained a not unjustified reputation as rapists. Last year more than 200 cases of rape by such UN peacekeepers were reported in Haiti. The victims were largely underage women who received no medication, baby food, food for themselves, or other vital resources after having been raped by UN soldiers.

In early March of this year, a report was published about rape by UN “peacekeeping” forces in 21 countries around the world. The statistics cited in the report are probably just the tip of the iceberg, as there are more than 125,000 such soldiers deployed worldwide. The victims of rape committed by these forces only rarely get the opportunity to officially complain about these crimes, let alone actually

see their assailants prosecuted. In addition, the soldiers often frustrate attempts to prosecute them for rape, by seeing to it that their actions are perceived as “consensual” sex. They do this by giving their victims “gifts” after the act. Indeed, there are some young women who, in their economic misery and desperation, actually agree in advance to the soldiers’ advances in order to obtain vital resources; but in the overall context of imperialism, this can hardly be considered “consensual sex.” By analogy, if I were to commit a robbery, and the victim of this offense were to catch up to me, if I held a pistol to the perpetrators temple and threaten him lest he give me “permission” for my taking of his money or property, this is by no means a valid example of barter. No, it’s robbery. However, it’s accurate to say that investigations by the authorities into acts of rape allegedly conducted by peacekeeping soldiers are designed in advance to confirm them as cases of consensual sex. This demonstrates, once again, how little faith we should put in Civil Justice when it comes to the victimization of the oppressed and exploited.

The Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION call for:

** For the immediate expulsion of all UN peacekeepers and all other official military units and alleged “auxiliaries” of the imperialist countries of the EU, USA, Japan, Russia, China, etc. from the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo and all other semi-colonial countries!*

** For trial by jury selected from among the ranks of those affected, the oppressed and the workers’ movements, to pass judgment in rape cases involving “peacekeeping” perpetrators!*

** For the creation of self-defense units for women, supported by workers’ movements and all progressive organizations, to actively defend themselves against rape and to put an end to imperialist peacekeepers’ sexual attacks!*

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Brazil: The Only Way Forward: Defeat the Coup with Mass and Independent Mobilizations of the Working Class and Oppressed!

Statement of the Corriente Comunista Revolucionária (CCR, Section of the RCIT in Brazil), 22.4.2016

The process of political coup in Brazil, backed by the US, which we from the CCR have been denouncing for several months, took a decisive turn on the evening of Sunday, April 17, 2016. In a horror show in which the country's members of congress had to vote for or against impeachment of the democratically elected president of Brazil, Dilma Rouseff, they revealed to an astonished country the extent of their pettiness, not only with regards to political issues, but their total lack of a sense of the absurd. The impeachment of the President Dilma was approved by 367, exceeding by more than 20 votes the two-thirds majority needed. For those voting for impeachment, it was not merely enough to condemn a president for whom there is no actual accusation to justify the entire process; rather these deputies, almost to a person, in order to justify their vote in favor of impeachment declared that they were casting their vote for God, for their families, their cities, their pet dogs, for the love of the country, etc. All this nonsense, but nothing addressing the real matter at hand, the accusation that Rouseff had taken borrowed money from public banks to cover a shortfall in expenditure on social programs such as "*Bolsa Família*" (*family bonus for the poorest people*), one of the trademarks of the Popular Front governments of Rouseff and Lula during the past 13 years.

Congressman Jair Bolsonaro from the Christian Social Party (PSC) was unable to control his fascist impulses and even declared that he was voting in favor of impeachment in honor of the former military dictatorship and its main torturer, Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ulstra. (1)

Just a few days before the vote, the PMDB, the main bourgeoisie party participating the popular front, the most prominent representative of which was Vice President Michel Temer, declared that it was breaking with the government and that they were relinquishing their offices.

It was then that the leadership of the Workers' Party (PT) finally realized that the chief architect of the coup was the Vice President Michel Temer himself.

Soon after, other important bourgeois parties like the Popular Party (PP) and the Democratic Social Party (PSC) fell into line and declared that they too were in favor of impeachment.

It then became clear to the PT that their pact with the elites which had enabled Lula's two-time election to the presidency as well as that of his successor, Dilma Rouseff, was no longer in force.

Understanding the Background to the Coup

To understand the background of the coup which culminated in the vote of April 17, let's first recall a paragraph from the article we published here on December 6, 2015: "... from the point of view of Western imperialism (US-EU-Japan), the financial bourgeoisie, and Brazil's big landowners, the PT, despite its collusion with anti-

worker forces, is irreparably flawed due to its social origins rooted in the mass movements and the role its leadership played in the struggle against the military dictatorship in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Even though the PT leadership has sold out to the system and introduced many attacks on workers, especially public workers, like Lula da Silva's Pension Reform of 2003, such roots are unforgivable in the eyes of Brazilian and international capital, and it is for the reason that the coup is considered by them to be a necessity." (2)

First of all, it's vital to realize that Brazil is facing its worst recession in decades. Therefore, the bourgeoisie needs a more aggressive, anti-worker government for the implementation of liberal reforms and privatizations. The Popular Front government was not fit for such a task, due to the political and social influence of workers and mass organizations within it.

In addition, Brazil's conservative and reactionary bourgeoisie is pro-American because of the country's historical and traditional dependence on US hegemony throughout the South American continent, while they are anti-Chinese because the PT government's having aligned itself with BRICS.

Therefore, as we have stated in previous documents, the primary interest of the Brazilian bourgeoisie in overthrowing the Popular Front government has its origin in this class's fealty to US and European imperialism, in contradistinction to the rising eastern imperialist powers, Russia and China. As part of this campaign, it is incumbent upon western imperialism to smash the alliance of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India China and South Africa), as well as weaken the Bolivarian populist governments in Latin America. The coups that brought down the presidencies of Manuel Zelaya in Honduras in 2009 and of Fernando Lugo in Paraguay in 2012; the unrelenting right-wing pressure on Venezuela where an unsuccessful coup was staged in 2002; the right-wing pressure on Ecuador, Bolivia, and Argentina of the Kirchners; all these cases clearly demonstrate that what's at stake here is something much bigger than just a fight against corruption. The intervention of western imperialism to confront the growing influence the eastern imperialisms of Russia and China head on is evident not only in Latin America, but and in Africa, the Middle East, and in eastern Asia. The military coup in Egypt in 2013 which overthrew President Morsi under the command of General al-Sisi; the military dictatorship installed in 2010 in Thailand; and finally the formation of Ukraine's semi-fascist government in 2013 are all a part of this same process.

Due to the regional importance of Brazil, the largest country in South America and one of major countries of Latin America, with the ninth largest economy in the world, it simply was not possible for it to be left out of this ongoing, intensifying worldwide geopolitical dispute.

The Rules of the Game have Changed

This is why the conditions for the so-called “pact” of the elites with PT governments no longer exist. This is why only naïve impotence is expressed by speeches like that of former president Lula da Silva, who was astonished in light of the approaching coup, claiming that “never before had the rich gained as much as during my administration,” attesting to his inability to even comprehend why so much hatred is directed against PT, against the government of Dilma Rousseff, and even against himself personally during the recent attempt to arrest him.

Let there be no delusion that in the next step of the impeachment process, in the Senate, the coup will somehow be extinguished. The only way to stop the coup is by means of a broad popular mobilization. We cannot lower our heads. It is our task, we the working class, together with the trade union federations and the social movements and progressive parties, to organize large mobilizations culminating in an unlimited general strike to defeat the coup.

Fighting over the Spoils

In the last hours few hours, as the writing of this article draws to a close, two important news items have been released. First, Judge Maria Thereza de Assis Moura of the Superior Court of Justice (STJ), has declared the start of submission of evidence in the impeachment hearings of President Dilma Rousseff *and* of the Vice President Michel Temer. In addition, Judge Teori Zavascki from the Supreme Federal Court (STF) ruled last Wednesday, April 20, that the allegations made by Senator Delcídio Amaral (formerly of the PT/MS) must be included in the inquiry into the alleged corruption conspiracy at Petrobras. Amaral’s allegations include accusations against President Dilma Rousseff, but also against Vice President Michel Temer and former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, among other figures.

These two items taken together confirm beyond any doubt that there is now an open contest being waged between the main bourgeois parties over the presidency, should Rousseff’s impeachment be approved by the Senate. Given this dog fight over the booty, assurance had to be made that there is no longer a forgone conclusion that Vice President Michel Temer will assume the presidency should Rousseff be convicted in the Senate hearings (thus the ruling by Judge Maria Thereza de Assis Moura).

Clearly, from these developments we see that the main opposition party, PSDB, is not particularly interested, after having expended so much effort, in simply ousting the president, only to have to hand over power to the PMDB for another two and a half years, and all this *gratis!* Rather, for the PSDB, the most opportune thing now is to call for new elections for president, to be held together with the forthcoming local elections for mayors. This PSDB position, as incredible as it sounds, is *identical* to that made months ago by the pseudo-left PSTU party when they adopted a stance in favor of the coup demanding: “Throw them all out! For new general elections!” Furthermore, this very same position is now unabashedly being defended by former PT Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva, now heading up a green party called *Rede*, which in recent research by Datafolha Institute (always questionable) is supposed to have the support of 20% of the Brazilian electorate.

As we wrote in our article of December 6, 2015: *Brazil: No to the impeachment! No to the Call for New Elections!*, our tasks today remain to defeat the coup in the streets with independent mass mobilizations of the working class and the oppressed! To force CUT and all mass organizations to consistently fight for our rights! For the organizing of mass demonstrations, the occupation of squares and other public places and the declaring of a general strike against the putsch and the putschists! And for the formation of anti-coup action committees in all workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools!

- *Defend the PT, Lula and Dilma against the right-wing attacks! But no political support for the popular-front government! Fight against their anti-worker austerity measures!*

- *Nationalize the property of the multinational corporations under workers’ control. No cooperation with any imperialist Great Powers: the USA, EU, China, Japan and Russia!*

- *For the formation of a government of the working class in alliance with the urban poor and the landless peasants of throughout Brazil! We can only secure our future and our rights if we overthrow capitalism, the source of our misery!*

- *The CCR – Corrente Comunista Revolucionária - is dedicated to building an authentic revolutionary party in all of Brazil and Latin America. This is the only way that we can fight consistently for our rights!*

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DU6FFz3OZQ>

2. <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-impeachment/>

See also the interview of Glenn Greenwald on CNN: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb_W5OfcW6I

O Comunismo Revolucionário

New Portuguese-language Journal of the RCIT

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UK: For a General Strike to Bring Down the Cameron Government! For a Workers' Government! For a Constituent Assembly!

Fight against the corrupt Parliament which is inextricably linked with Big Business! Build Peoples' Assemblies and Action Committees to organise the struggle throughout the country!

Statement of British Supporters of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT Britain), 14.4.2016

1. The Cameron government faces its biggest crisis until now. It has become highly unpopular in the wake of never-ending austerity attacks, its unpopular desire to keep Britain inside the European Union and, more recently, the scandal surrounding the shady business affairs of Cameron and his family which have become public with the publication of the *Panama Papers*.

2. In reaction to this scandal, thousands of people have spontaneously demonstrated in front of Downing Street to express their disgust for Prime Minister Cameron. Many more will march on 16 April at the Peoples' Assembly demonstration. There is mass outrage among the workers, migrants and youth against the corruption and the profound lack of real democracy in Britain. Similar protests are currently taking place in South African and the US (dubbed "Democracy Spring").

3. This revelation of the *Panama Papers* demonstrates once more the enormous degree of corruption in the highest ranks of bourgeois politicians and their close links with Big Business. It illustrates how little democracy there is in imperialism's bourgeois "democracy." The government is

above any control by the people and is closely connected with the capitalist class via numerous personal and commercial links. Ministers and parliamentarians receive astronomical incomes many times higher than the average wage of a British or migrant worker. In addition, the workers in our country have to foot the bill for the so-called *House of Lords* and the whole decadent institution of the monarchy. Indeed, bourgeois "democracy" hides behind its self-righteous façade what is actually a "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" (Lenin) against the working people. Real democracy can only be achieved if the working class – the vast majority of the people – unites and overthrows the ruling class and replaces bourgeois pseudo-democracy with authentic democracy: a workers' government based on popular councils and militias which opens the road to socialism.

4. Shamefully, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has not even called for the resignation of Cameron. Obviously the Labour leadership wants to avoid an escalation of the domestic political crisis. This reflects the unwillingness of Corbyn and the left-reformist bureaucrats to wage a

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony

The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – *GREECE: A MODERN SEMI-COLONY*. The book's subtitle is: *The Contradictory Development of Greek Capitalism, Its Failed Attempts to Become a Minor Imperialist Power, and Its Present Situation as an Advanced Semi-Colonial Country with Some Specific Features*. It contains six chapters (144 pages) and includes 12 tables, 35 figures and 4 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

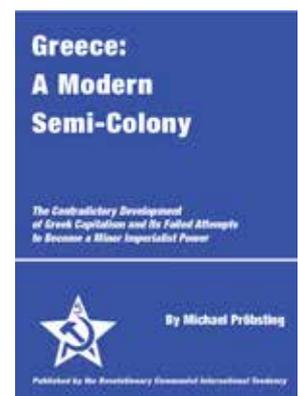
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

Greece is at the forefront both of the capitalist crisis in Europe as well as of the class struggle. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that what the Arab Revolution has been for the world in the past few years, Greece has been for Europe.

Subsequently, the question of the class character of Greece is of crucial importance both for the domestic as well as for the international workers movement: Is it an imperialist

state, a semi-colonial country or something else, and what are its specific features?

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Marxists' theoretical conception of imperialist respectively semi-colonial states. In Chapter II we give a brief historical overview of the development of Greek capitalism. In Chapter III we deal with Greece's failed attempt to become a minor imperialist power. In Chapter IV we outline the historic crisis of Greek capitalism from 2008 until today. In Chapter V we elaborate the most important programmatic conclusions and in the last Chapter we present a summary in the form of theses. The book contains 12 Tables, 35 Figures and 4 Maps. ■



consistent struggle against the government. This is because these party bureaucrats are inextricably connected with the capitalist state apparatus and big business. Instead of immediate confrontation with the bourgeois state, they prefer to wait for the next elections scheduled to take place in 2020! But the workers, migrants and youth cannot wait another four years during which their incomes and subsidies will be cut and their jobs increasingly threatened, while politicians unabashedly enrich themselves at our expense!

5. The RCIT calls for the formation of *people's assemblies* and *action committees* to organise the struggle throughout the country. Their main goal should be to organize *mass demonstrations* and an *indefinite general strike* in order to bring down the Cameron government. The road ahead is to confront and defeat the government on the streets and in the workplaces, not by means of political manoeuvring behind the scene. Socialists should demand that the leaderships of the Labour Party and the TUC organize such mass actions to bring down the government!

6. We also reject the orientation of various left-reformists and centrists who raise the call for new parliamentary elections. We think this is a cul-de-sac, since it focuses the attention of the workers and youth to the parliamentary field which is dominated by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats.

7. Instead, the RCIT Britain raises the slogan of a *Constituent Assembly*. Such an assembly would have the task of discussing the political and social system in which the people of Britain wish to live. There must be no pre-conditions on what type of constitution and what laws are possible. In particular, there should be no *a priori* commitment to protect of the property of the rich, the capitalists, and the financial institutions. Such a Constituent Assembly should be based on direct democracy grounded in workplace and residential constituencies; delegates should be elected proportionate to the numbers in each constituency; any delegate should be subject to instant recall if deemed appropriate by the electorate he or she represents; and each delegate must earn no more than the wage of an average skilled worker. After elaborating a new constitution, such a Constituent Assembly would dissolve itself.

8. Naturally, the RCIT Britain considers it the duty of authentic socialists to argue inside such a Constituent Assembly for a *program of revolutionary transition to*

socialism. The Constituent Assembly is *not* a government or a new parliament. It is only a temporary forum for debate to decide about a new constitution.

9. The slogan of a *Constituent Assembly* is the highest form of revolutionary democracy. It does not negate the need for revolutionaries to fight for a workers' government based on popular councils and militias. But it *is* a slogan which relates to the current democratic illusions among many workers and youth in Britain, without falling into the reformist trap (like the slogan for new elections does).

10. We expect various centrists to vehemently reject the slogan of a *Constituent Assembly*, pleading that such a slogan would deflect the workers attention from the struggle for a workers' government and socialism. However, this is entirely wrong and rather reflects the economistic limitations of such groups. This slogan is *not* counterposed to a workers' government (just as it was not the case in 1917 Russia, 1931-36 Spain, or in Latin America in the past decades). Rather it will advance the struggle for such a workers' government since the ruling class will do everything possible to prevent the election of such a *Constituent Assembly*. However, given the massive democratic illusions among the vast majority of the workers and youth, it is obligatory for socialists to advance slogans which relate to such illusions. The task is to raise revolutionary-democratic slogans which are opposed to bourgeois parliamentarism and to win the vanguard of the working class over to such a perspective. The RCIT Britain asks all militants who share such a perspective to join us in this struggle!

Postscript: We draw our readers' attention to the RCIT's program where we already envisioned a situation which might raise the need for a slogan calling for the Constituent Assembly. "Where there are basic issues of political sovereignty on the agenda and there is still no awareness among the masses about the superiority of proletarian council democracy, in certain phases the slogan of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly can be important. Bolsheviks-Communists advocate that the delegates should be controllable and open to recall by its people. Thus such a Constituent Assembly cannot easily become an instrument of the ruling class, they should not be called by a bourgeois government, but by a revolutionary government of workers and peasants' councils." (RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto, p. 46, <http://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/revolutionary-struggle-for-democracy/>)

The British Left and the EU-Referendum

The Many Faces of pro-UK or pro-EU Social-Imperialism

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A pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

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UK: Steel Crisis in Britain

Occupy and Nationalise all Steel Production in Britain under Workers Control Without Compensation!

Statement by Supporters of the RCIT in Britain, Aril 2016

TATA Steel production announced that the UK operation is unviable and hence they are going to sell their UK Business with huge debts. They claimed that they were looking for a new buyer. This new situation engulfing the Cameron Government in crisis once again confirms the prognosis made by the RCIT in its world perspectives .[1] The period we are now entering is a new period of immense contradictions for world imperialism. It shows the incapability of the capitalist government in Britain to resolve the crisis of a doomed system which is heading for a crash.

The Cameron Government is at the moment embroiled in political crisis of major proportions. The revelation that Cameron and his wife stood to benefit from offshore funds as revealed in the recent Panama scandal unearthed by investigative journalists. It shows how deep the corruption has seeped amongst all the sections of the world bourgeoisie. [2]

"The steel crisis amongst TATA management has increased with the revelation of senior staff being suspended because of corruption amongst its top executives". [3]

Jeremy Corbyn's and Carwyn James, first Minister of the Labour administration in Wales, has been very muted. Although Corbyn arrived in Wales before Javed, the Business Secretary, his only response has been to argue for partial Nationalisation until a buyer is found.

"If we don't intervene to protect this steel works, and the other steel works, we will have no steel industry in Britain. We will see a continual running down of our manufacturing capacity. We will no longer be able to call ourselves a proper manufacturing economy without a steel industry that goes with it. Our call to the government is 'intervene now' to protect these plants" [4]

"There have been some early expressions of interest in Tata's plants – I've spoken to one potential buyer this morning. How we deal with these expressions of interest is the substance of our joint work with the UK government. " [5]

Both responses from these reformists' shows that they have a corporatist approach. Instead of mentioning a program for nationalisation under workers control, they advocate a new capitalist buyer should be lobbied to buy the plant.

Len McCluskey, General Secretary of Unite, who has a great percentage of members in TATA steel refuses to propose any action to save the plants .His only response is to appeal to the Cameron Government to save the steel industry:" *McCluskey noted that Unite was dedicated to working with the government to save the steel industry before it's too late. We will work with them on all serious efforts to keep our steel sector alive". [6]*

This shows the utterly bankrupt nature of this labour bureaucracy who are only appealing to the capitalist class for help instead of organising their members for occupation and full nationalisation of the means of production. It exposes once again Leon Trotsky's immortal words in 1938. *"The crisis facing humanity is the crisis of proletarian*

leadership". [7] Trotsky's statement in the Transitional Programme is borne out by the craven attitude of these trade union leaders who have allowed workers to be dismissed without a fight. Their collaboration with the capitalist class continues with the recent announcement of the closure of the Redcar plant some weeks ago.

The perspective of the reformists and the bureaucrats has been to argue for protectionism and for sectional interests. They blame China for its cheaper steel production and they argue for trade tariffs against Chinese steel. They "forget" that China is an imperialist nation in a global war against other imperialist nations. [8] Furthermore there is no mention of the Chinese steel workers who like the workers in Britain will be seriously affected by trade barriers and protectionist measures.

The two leading centrist groups in Britain, the *Socialist Workers Party* and the *Socialist Party of England and Wales* have produced statements on the steel crisis. Such the SWP writes:

"Workers have industrial muscle when they withdraw their labour by striking—but this doesn't always work against bosses who want to sack everyone. But it's a terrible mistake to think they can never be won. Three things can give workers' action against sackings more weight. One is to spread it beyond those workers directly affected. The current anti-union laws make it difficult to do this officially. But there are others in dispute that could coordinate with steel workers and call strikes together. And there's nothing to stop workers walking out unofficially. Another is to take control of the bosses' assets by occupying. If even a small group of workers started sitting in at a small part of Port Talbot it would win huge support and disrupt bosses' plans". [9]

And the SPEW states:

"The idea of nationalisation, if raised in the context of socialist public ownership and economic planning, could totally transform the situation. We call for Tata's books to be opened and inspected by the unions and the workforce. The redundancies that have already been announced should be stopped. The steel distribution network should also be nationalised and every publicly-financed construction scheme in the UK such as Crossrail, HS2, and power projects, should be supplied with steel from the nationalised steel company. This would also pose the renationalisation of the railways, which is massively popular and would be another market for publicly-owned steel". [10]

To their credit the SWP raises the issue of occupation for the steel industry, but their close relation with the trade union bureaucrats means that they don't fully believe that the working class can fight for revolutionary demands. Likewise the SPEW argues for nationalisation but it is couched in national terms and they have a very reactionary attitude to other workers especially in their support for *"British jobs for British workers* as demonstrated in the dispute at the Oil refinery at Lindsay in 2009. [11] Their rank and file organisation, the *National Shop Stewards Network*, is closely identified with the bureaucracy .Their

demand for nationalisation is a reformist demand, since it is not combined with the call for occupation and not with the slogan of nationalization *without compensation and under workers control*. Furthermore, while the SPEW mentions “socialist public ownership”, it naively believes that socialist transformation through the parliamentary election of a socialist government is a realistic possibility. In fact, this is impossible without an armed struggle of the working class to overthrow the capitalist system.

Below is an excerpt of an interview which LIBERATION (the publication of the RCIT in Britain) conducted with a former UNITE Convenor at TATA Steel in Corby Northamptonshire which employs 683 steelworkers. This comrade agrees with the positions of the RCIT Britain that occupations and nationalisation of the steel industry under workers control and without compensation are the correct slogans in the fight against redundancies and possible loss of jobs.

Question: “How do you think that we can stop closures?”

Answer: “By Occupation, immediate walkouts and strikes:”

Q: “Do you think TATA or the government will find a new buyer, if TATA is loss making then what you think happens to the pension fund?”

A: “I think they are struggling. No new buyer will come without a massive subsidy. Pension fund is the major problem –no way for a buyer to take over the liabilities.”

Q: “What do you think of Cameron’s and Javed’s response?”

A: “Disgraceful! We must not appeal to the Cameron government for support, it is not part of their agenda, look what happened at Redcar where many steel workers lost their jobs.

Q: “Do you agree that we should have full nationalisation under workers control rather than a partial nationalisation as advocated by Corbyn and McDonnell and McCluskey?”

A: “Yes but I have some sympathy for Corbyn and McDonnell”

Q: “Do you agree with protectionism and trade tariffs to stop Chinese steel being imported?”

A: “I oppose tariffs and trade barriers against Chinese steel. We should support Chinese workers.”

The RCIT in Britain calls for a united front with all those forces fighting steel closures in Britain and worldwide. We put forward the following proposals to unite all sections of the working class including migrants and the most oppressed in their struggle to overthrow capitalism and imperialism and establish socialism.

* *Fight for revolutionary leadership in the trade unions. Organise all migrants and the oppressed in a struggle against the labour bureaucracy and labour aristocracy.*

* *Occupy all steel plants now: Elect an occupation committee which comprises steelworkers and members of the oppressed in all local committees where steel closures or redundancies are threatened.*

* *For full nationalisation of the steel industry under workers control without compensation.*

* *Councils of action to be built in all localities comprising of all workers, migrants and the oppressed.*

* *Oppose all forms of protectionism! Build solidarity with workers in Britain and worldwide including Chinese workers who are engaged in the same struggle to save their jobs and communities!*

* *For an indefinite general strike to bring down this hated Cameron government! Elect strike committees to organise and support workers who are faced with attacks on jobs and conditions!*

* *Support the junior doctor’s campaign and other sections of workers fighting for decent and safe working conditions.*

The RCIT in Britain says the only lasting solution to the steel crisis is the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism through a socialist revolution. The RCIT in Britain calls for all revolutionaries and socialists to join us as the first step to build a pre-party organisation in Britain leading to the formation of the worldwide revolutionary workers party as part of the Fifth International.

Footnotes

1) RCIT: World Perspectives 2016: Advancing Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contradictions Mark the Opening of a New Political Phase. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries (January 2016), 23 January 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/>

2) Michael Pröbsting: What Do the Panama Papers Reveal? 4.4.2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/panama-papers/>

3) <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/apr/08/tata-steel-crisis-senior-staff-suspended-sfo-probe>

4) <http://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2016/mar/30/uk-government-steel-industry-tata-port-talbot-business-live?page=with:block-56fbfa79e4b0597b15f4e78f#block-56fbfa79e4b0597b15f4e78f>

5) <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2016/apr/04/steel-crisis-boris-johnson-says-eu-rules-stop-government-helping-port-talbot-politics-live>

6) Unite News (Spring 2016): Now or Never, Interview with Len McCluskey, pg 11.

7) Leon Trotsky: The Transitional Programme and the Tasks of the Fourth International 1938, New Park publications

8) On China as an imperialist power see See Michael Pröbsting: Rusia y China como Grandes Potencias Imperialistas, <http://www.thecommunists.net/home/espaa%3%B1ol/rusia-y-china/>; Michael Pröbsting: China’s transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4> (a translation of this document into Spanish language is currently underway);

Russia and China as Great Imperialist Powers. A Summary of the RCIT’s Analysis, 28 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 22, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-china-and-russia/>; More on Russia and China as Great Imperialist Powers. A Reply to Chris Slee (Socialist Alliance, Australia) and Walter Daum (LRP, USA), 11 April 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 22, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-slee-on-russia-china/>; The China Question and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism. Again on China as an imperialist Power. Reply to a Polemic from CSR (Venezuela) and PCO (Argentina), December 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 32, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/reply-to-csr-pco-on-china/>;

No to chauvinist war-mongering by Japanese and Chinese imperialism! Chinese and Japanese workers: Your main enemy is at home! Stop the conflict on the Senkaku/Diaoyu-islands in the East China Sea! 23.9.2012, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 6, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-between-china-and-japan/>

9) [Tata bosses dump their workers to save their profits](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-between-china-and-japan/)

10) [Socialist Party :: Tata steel: Act now - fight for nationalisation](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-between-china-and-japan/)

11) For our position on this reactionary strike we refer to the resolution of the statement of our predecessor organization *Workers Power* which at that time was still revolutionary: No to the nationalist strikes, 1st February 2009, <http://www.workerspower.com/index.php?id=47,1821,0,0,1,0>. See also an article of Michael Pröbsting in German-language: Einleitung der Liga der Sozialistischen Revolution zur Stellungnahme Britannien: Nein zu den nationalistischen Streiks!, 5.2.2009, <http://arbeiterinnenstandpunkt.net/phpcms/index.php?id=25,579,0,0,1,0>

The Involuntary Self-Exposure of the WSWS

A Brief Reply to a Lengthy Attack by David North's WSWS Attack against the RCIT

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 18.4.2016

The so-called *World Socialist Web Site* has recently published a lengthy polemic against the RCIT in English and German. (1) The intellectual level of this attack can be assessed from the following quotes from the article:

"The documents written by its international secretary and leading theoretician Michael Pröbsting—notwithstanding references to Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, buttressed by radical-sounding rhetoric—read like strategy papers authored in the foreign and defense ministries and think tanks of the imperialist powers."

"In Africa and Asia, their supporters cooperate with extreme right-wing nationalist forces." (Which ones exactly? Naturally, the WSWS doesn't even bother to mention a single one of our supposed "extreme right-wing nationalist" allies!)

"This right-wing, bourgeois and pro-imperialist orientation has attracted support from other pseudo-left tendencies. Pröbsting is a welcome guest at many pseudo-left discussion events..."

And so on and so forth. Stalin would have been proud of such pupils.

Nevertheless, the WSWS polemic is a valuable document insofar as it provides a case study in the organization's theoretical ignorance, professional distortions, and hysterical accusations. Furthermore, it lays bare their gross rejection of Lenin's and Trotsky's method, as well as their thinly-covered adaption to the interests of Russian and Chinese imperialism.

The WSWS strongly denies the imperialist character of Russia and China, claiming that anyone who arrives at such a conclusion must be in the service of US imperialism. These are particularly bold claims, since the WSWS itself has proven itself completely incapable of producing an analysis of the class character of Russia and China. This anti-RCIT polemic fails to present a single fact or piece of empirical evidence to substantiate the WSWS position. Hardly surprising, the WSWS entirely avoids dealing with the substantive scientific literature which the RCIT has produced to prove its theses on the increasing rivalry between the Great Powers and its characterization of Russia and China as imperialist. (2)

This theoretical superficiality of the WSWS position is not the personal fault of the author of this anti-RCIT polemic. His inability to explain their position only reflects the collective failure of the WSWS to produce any analysis of China and Russia. For a numerous years, until now the WSWS has not produced a single theoretical article or study on this question which extends one or two paragraphs. In fact, the WSWS hasn't the slightest idea of how to characterize China and Russia. OK, they claim that these states are not imperialist. Fine, if so, what kind of capitalist countries are they? Are these semi-colonial countries super-exploited by imperialist powers like the US, EU or Japan, as a number of our opponents claim? Or are these "sub-imperialist" powers as others say? No one knows, as the WSWS is entirely silent about these issues which are so central to understanding the dynamics of the present world situation. (3)

To cover up for their blatant ignorance, the WSWS can only smear the RCIT and the author of these lines, claiming that we are in the service of US imperialism. In doing so,

they are again being faithful to their tradition: it was the same group and the same people (like the WSWS leader David North) who accused leading US-Trotskyists like Joe Hansen (a former secretary of Leon Trotsky) and others in the 1970s that they always had been agents of Stalin's secret service, the GPU!

So liberated from the necessity to prove anything, the real world driven by class contradictions in each and every country, the oppression of nations by other nations, and the rivalry between Great Powers is transformed into the surreal bonsai-world of North's WSWS, where all contradictions are reduced to Western imperialism – led by the US – against all the rest. In other words, Lenin's dialectical analyzes of the manifold class contradictions is replaced by the mechanistic simplicity of the contradictions in a first-person shooter computer game.

According to this mechanistic world view, all support of revolutionaries for class struggles, democratic rebellions and uprisings against national oppression can *only* be in the service of US imperialism if they are directed against other Great Powers. In order to prove their assertion, the WSWS has to conceal the RCIT's program of consistent democratic, anti-imperialist and socialist struggle against all Great Powers (either Western or Eastern) as well as against all semi-colonial bourgeoisies (either pro-Western or pro-Eastern).

The WSWS's contentions studiously repeat the logic of Stalinism in the 1930s and 1940s: At that time the bureaucrats accused the Trotskyists of being "in the service of the fascist powers" because the Fourth International supported the liberation struggles of the workers and peasants not only in the countries dominated by Germany, Italy and Japan, but also in India, Indochina, Latin America etc., i.e., the colonies and semi-colonies of Britain, France and the US. The Stalinists condemned the Trotskyist program of independent class struggle and national liberation struggles against *all* imperialist powers, and instead selectively supported one imperialist camp against the other. The WSWS is simply applying this reformist, anti-Marxist program of its teachers to present-day conditions.

The simplistic world view of the WSWS cannot fathom why people should rise up against brutal dictatorships like Gaddafi's or Assad's, except that they are being manipulated, paid and incited by CIA agents. Class exploitation and oppression in Syria, Libya, etc., which foment class struggles and democratic uprisings of the workers and peasants – all this is beyond the political imaginings of such people who have forgotten (or never understood) the basic ABCs of classic Marxist teaching.

In short, the wild attack of the WSWS against the RCIT says nothing about us, but reveals a lot about the Northites themselves. It is an involuntary self-exposure of the WSWS group laying bare the organization's theoretical illiteracy, its smearing methods, and its political adaption to Russian and Chinese imperialism. These political positions and methods of "debate" are appropriate for a group which is dominated by a leader who, in his professional career, is known as David W. Green, the CEO of *Grand River Printing & Imaging* – a company that earns 25 million dollars a year, according to its website. After a busy but profitable

workday, Green changes his clothes and lectures, now as David North, some university students about the Marxist program against the exploitation of the working class. (4) The WSWS's smear of the RCIT reflects its fear of the growth of authentic Trotskyism. It has every reason to do so.

We leave off with these brief remarks, but will deal with the WSWS attack in a more extensive article sometime soon.

Footnotes

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RCIT-Theses on the United Front Tactic

Theses on the Principles of the United Front Tactic and Its Application to the Current Conditions of Class Struggle

Document of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 9 April 2016

Preface

In what follows we detail the fundamentals and principles of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) on the issue of the united front tactic. These theses generalize based on our experience since then as well as on the further development of our political positions. In a forthcoming booklet to be published soon, we will elaborate our perspective on this subject in greater detail.

The theses given here are structured on those of our predecessor organization (League for a Revolutionary Communist International) which we adopted in January 1994. However, we have substantially revised them so that the current text represents a new document. Note that, when referring below to the revolutionary party, our intent is equally applicable to smaller pre-party formations.

I. The Nature and Principles of the United Front Tactic

1. The basic principles of the united front are simple. Their goal is to enable communists to extend their influence in the working class and among the oppressed – or to express it in the words of the Communist International “*towards the Masses.*” The basic principles of the united front apply to all agreements for delimited, practical, common actions which the revolutionary party proposes to, or undertakes with, other organizations based on the proletariat, on other exploited classes, or on groups of socially or nationally oppressed. These principles can be summed up in the military metaphor “*march separately, strike together.*” This means political and organizational independence of the revolutionary proletarian forces combined with unity of action against a common enemy. The aim of the united front tactic is (a) to establish the maximum unity of workers and oppressed in the struggle against the ruling class and imperialism and (b) to break the domination of non-revolutionary leaderships and win the workers and oppressed over to the struggle led by the revolutionary party.

2. These are the principles which govern the relations between the revolutionary vanguard and other organizations of the exploited and the oppressed in the struggle against capitalism, imperialism and all forms of reaction. They have various spheres of application. Primarily, they aim at joint actions with mass organizations of the working class and, secondly, with mass organizations of other oppressed and exploited classes and layers (e.g., poor peasants, urban poor). Under exceptional circumstances, the united front can include sectors of the bourgeoisie where it possesses mass influence and through objective circumstances is forced to fight against imperialist aggression, national oppression, etc.

3. The united front, bloc, or alliance, can potentially pass through the following phases: an appeal to form it, negotiations between organizations, the striking of an agreement, its active implementation, and eventually its breakup or dissolution. However, only in a minority of cases will it pass through all of these stages.

4. As an alliance which must be actively initiated, the united front should be distinguished from all episodic, co-incidental actions where no agreement on a common immediate goal or coordinated tactics is involved. Such coincidental actions, for example a fascist trade union supporting a justified workers’ strike, imply no advocacy of a bloc whatsoever. Similarly, the united front must be distinguished from mere participation in a mass demonstration whose political basis and leadership the revolutionary organization opposes, and for which it takes no responsibility. Here, the revolutionary party is *not* in a bloc with the leadership, gives no support to their slogans, criticizes them openly, and makes propaganda and agitation for its own slogans. In short, a united front must be formally struck between those organizations for the revolutionary proletariat to form temporary agreements for common actions.

5. Yet another distinction must be made between joint *political* actions and an exclusively military bloc, i.e., an agreement simply to coordinate fighting forces against a common enemy. Such agreements can be struck with bourgeois forces in a situation of war, without in any sense constituting a united front. However, in other circumstances, a military bloc – the formation of an anti-fascist workers militia or alliances during a civil war – may have a clearly-defined united front character. Mere military means are not the decisive issue, since war is the continuation of politics by other means. The question is what is the bloc for and with whom is it struck? More problematically, in some languages and national traditions, a distinction has been made between the *united front* proper, which is conceived of as a longer-term formal agreement involving a campaign, and *common or united actions* which are limited to a single event. Whatever the virtues of these terms one thing is clear: the basic principles of the united front apply to each and every one of them.

6. Thus, the united front is at its heart about establishing as close a relationship as possible between the revolutionary party and primarily the working class masses,

and secondly with other oppressed layers. While such relationships between the party and the masses must be permanent, they must also constantly be changing since the class struggle itself is both permanent and changing in form. The united front is thus a *ubiquitous* tactic; a tactic that is repeatedly being deployed in one arena or another. However, no one form of the united front is a permanently-deployed part of the revolutionary party's strategy. The united front itself is not a strategy, but a tactic. Indeed, it involves a range of tactics set within the overall strategy of the proletariat. In pursuing any one form of the united front, revolutionaries must always keep before their eyes the overall goal: the seizure of state power by workers' and peasants' councils and militias and the establishment of a world communist society by means of proletarian revolution. To realize this in practice an independent revolutionary Bolshevik-Communist party is an indispensable necessity. Only such a party can embody full class independence from the bourgeoisie and lead the proletariat in the struggle to establish its own dictatorship.

7. But to reach this stage we have to transform revolutionary nuclei into mass parties which have won the confidence of the broadest layers of the exploited masses. However, today, the great majority of the workers in the world support non-revolutionary and even counter-revolutionary organizations. Revolutionaries must expose the nature of these organizations and deprive them of their leadership, or rather misleaderships, over the proletariat and oppressed. On its own, propagandistic exposure of their errors and crimes is insufficient to achieve this. It is necessary to demonstrate in practice that the reformist, petty-bourgeois-populist, or centrist cannot adequately defend or fight for working class and oppressed interests. The revolutionary party has to deploy a range of tactics which prove to the masses in the course of the class struggle that only *it* is the consistent working class party. The party, in turn, must learn how to lead actual mass struggles, to demonstrate its capacity as an alternative leadership. In this process it must demonstrate both its independent initiative and its ability to co-ordinate its forces loyally with other mass organizations of the working class and oppressed. The mass of the working class and the oppressed, not yet won over to the revolutionary leadership, must come to trust the communists in daily battles and compare them favorable with their treacherous reformist and petty-bourgeois-populist leaders. In fact, it is in the

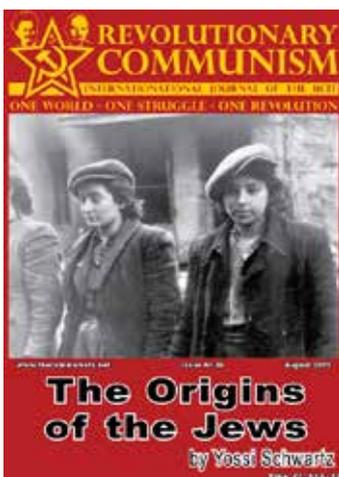
very defining of the arena in which such comparisons will be made that the united front tactic plays such a vital role in the building of the revolutionary party.

8. By extension, the enduring gain of a correct united front policy is the exposure of the limitations of reformism, petty-bourgeois populism, Islamism, anarchism, syndicalism, centrism, and various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies and programs within the working class, and the eventual replacement of all vacillating and inconsistent leaderships with a revolutionary communist one. Therefore, at every stage, the united front policy should be used to strengthen the revolutionary organization by increasing recruitment and deepening its roots within mass organizations.

9. However, the united front is not exclusively and solely a means to build the revolutionary party. Rather, it is a tactic in the ongoing class struggle which seeks to establish the broadest possible fighting unity for the exploited and oppressed masses regardless of their present political differentiation. The purpose of this unity is to repulse the attacks of the bosses and bourgeois governments and to secure better economic, social and political conditions for the working class and its allies in a way that brings nearer the goal of overthrowing capitalism. In this sense, the united front arises in the first place from the needs of the class struggle. For this very reason, revolutionaries do not simply respond to calls for common action against the class enemy but are the first to initiate the call whenever the class struggle demands united action.

10. As a consequence, on the one hand, united front tactics presuppose the maintenance of an independently organized revolutionary organization based on a transitional programme for the seizure of state power and the overthrow of capitalism. This party must participate as an independent detachment and not dissolve itself in the united front. On the other hand, the necessity of the united front presupposes the existence of broad non-revolutionary masses under the sway of other political forces.

11. The united front cannot be regarded as an uninterrupted series of actions with the same partner up to and including the seizure of power. Its repeated use constitutes only a series of tactics within the framework of the overall strategy of the proletarian vanguard party. This strategy by necessity includes the independent actions of the party. In widely different forms, the united front is constantly being struck and broken. It must never be turned into a



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systematic subordination of the proletarian vanguard to any limited platform of demands which are acceptable to various non-revolutionary leaders of mass organizations. This would be to relegate the revolutionary programme itself to passive propaganda and restrict agitation solely to immediate or, at best, transitional demands.

Ultra-Left and Opportunist Dangers

12. The united front is a *differentiated unity*. It is common action for clearly limited and prescribed goals; it also entails sharpest criticism of the united front partners. Without the former, capitalist attacks cannot be repelled or new gains won; without the latter gains cannot be consolidated nor the revolution advanced. All mistakes in the application of the united front begin when this differentiated unity is replaced by a *formal identity* between the tasks of the revolutionary organization and the limited and immediate tasks of the class.

13. Ultra-leftism invariably begins when the revolutionary program is advanced in contradiction to the demands essential to the immediate tasks facing the mass of the working class. For the ultra-leftist, the united front is intentionally proposed as an ultimatum, deliberately courting its rejection by reformist and centrist leaders in the vain belief that this exposes them. However, such "exposure" is, in reality, purely rhetorical in nature. Reformist leaders are not exposed because they fail to carry out revolutionary tactics or strategy but precisely because they fail to fight for the immediate interests of the masses. The sectarians, who limit themselves exclusively to denunciations, avoid being measured on the practical terrain of the class struggle, fearing that they will succumb to opportunist temptations.

14. The opportunist starts not from the platform of struggle, or even a single demand dictated by the objective needs of the class struggle, but rather by what the present consciousness of the masses is deemed to be or, worse, what their leaders can be expected to accept. In comparison, the scope of the proposals put forward by revolutionaries for a united front, while likely to be less than the "full program" is also likely to be considerably greater than the timid proposals of the reformist leaders, and even ahead of the social-general consciousness of the masses. At the same time, the slogans proposed for the united front must relate to the current consciousness of the advanced workers, both to win them over to the joint struggle as well as to exert pressure of the reformist leaders. The aim of the united front must be to link the present consciousness of the masses (and especially its advanced sections) to the urgent tasks of the day, as specifically dictated by the nature of the enemies' attacks. The slogans of the united front must enable the revolutionary vanguard to lead the masses into the struggle.

15. Because the united front is not a strategy, there is no such thing as a "united front program" that extends from today's struggle to the seizure of power. The revolutionary organization advances those parts of its program that appear necessary to unite broader forces in a practical fight. Having determined the nature of the attack and the balance of class forces, the revolutionary organization raises concrete demands that, taken together, can create the basis for a united fight against this present attack, in

order to repel it, or by extension secure new advances.

16. The character of the demands to be fought for in the united front does not fall into any schematic categorization. The demands must be specific, precise and avoid all extraneous and artificial demands or ideological dressing that does not pertain to the achievement of the common goal. Any concrete united front proposal may consist of only a single demand; but can also be composed of a single type of demands; e.g., immediate economic demands, democratic demands, or transitional demands. Finally, the proposal for a united front can be put forward or forged as a platform of several demands tied together in a series of actions designed to meet a particular crisis. Thus it follows that a united front can involve a single action – e.g., a strike or an armed action – or it can incorporate a longer campaign of various actions. The only valid criticism of a united front proposal would be that it entirely excludes an essential demand for action; action to which the masses can be won over and which exposes their leaders if the proposal is refused. Therefore, the absence of numerous revolutionary demands from a united front platform cannot be taken as a valid criticism; indeed, the presence of such demands in a non-revolutionary situation is a sure sign of passive propagandism, scholasticism and sectarianism. However, this is not the case when there is a mass upswing in the class struggle signaling the development of a revolutionary situation. In such a situation it becomes indispensable to fight for such multiple revolutionary demands as the best expression of the united front.

17. The demands must be associated with clear and precise methods of struggle (e.g., demonstrations, strikes, defense squads, armed militias) and forms of organization (e.g., strike committees, mobilization committee, soviets). The united front can thus vary in form and duration depending on the nature of the attack it seeks to repel. Committees which exist to co-ordinate a series of diverse or repeated actions aimed at achieving the objective are united front organizations; in this sense the united front is more than the action itself (e.g., a demonstration); rather it embraces the organizational preparation in advance of the action as well as its post festum evaluation.

The United Front Tactic, the Working Class, and Other Oppressed Layers and Classes

18. With which types of forces is it permissible to form a united front, or a bloc based on united front principles? There is no one answer to this question. Rather it depends on the situation, the character of the country (imperialist, semi-colonial or degenerated workers state), the objectives of the struggle, the class forces involved, and the degree of class differentiation. As a general guideline, revolutionaries initiate proposals for a united front tactic towards forces which have a mass base inside the working class and other oppressed layers and classes (usually these are reformist or petty-bourgeois-populist organizations). In exceptional circumstances, these can also be bourgeois and sometimes even centrist organizations which are objectively in a confrontation with reactionary forces (e.g., ruling class, imperialist powers, racist or fascist forces).

19. By contrast, the *popular front* is a bloc between bourgeois forces and workers' organizations in which the latter accept programs that restrict the workers within

the limits set by private property and which protect the bourgeois state. Thus, what distinguishes a popular front from a united front is not the participation of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces in itself, but rather the political subordination of the proletariat to the platform of the bourgeoisie in a popular front.

20. A popular front can also be very dangerous when it involves very weak bourgeois forces (the “shadow of the bourgeoisie”). Workers’ parties which have undertaken such ostensible united fronts with weak bourgeois forces “in defense of democracy,” for example, can find themselves defending the bourgeoisie and capitalism against the proletariat (as happened in Spain in 1936, Chile in 1973, and Greece in 2015). Whichever way it’s reached, wittingly or unwittingly, the popular front is, as Trotsky said, a noose around the neck of the proletariat.

21. No popular front has ever opened the road to socialism. On the contrary, they have repeatedly opened the road to anti-working class counter-revolution. Genuine Trotskyists always fight against popular fronts. They are in favor of *working class unity* and for the independence from and not unity with the bourgeoisie. We place demands on all the workers’ parties and unions, whose leaders have taken them down the road of the popular front and, consequently, class collaboration and insist that they break with the capitalist parties, defend workers’ rights, and take up the fight for workers’ power. Such demands to break with the bourgeoisie are similarly directed to petty-bourgeois populist forces which have a mass base among the workers and oppressed, as the Bolsheviks did it towards the Social-Revolutionaries in Russia until 1917 (e.g., Castro-Chavista organizations in Latin America, certain Islamist-populist organizations in the Middle East).

22. Naturally there are certain differences in the application of the united front tactic in imperialist as opposed to semi-colonial countries, as well as between different countries within each such category. In Western Europe, Canada, and Australia bourgeois workers’ parties play an important role within the working class. However, at the same time they are undergoing massive bourgeoisification. In other imperialist countries, either no bourgeois workers’ parties exist (the US, China, Russia) or only very weak ones do (Japan). In the countries of the South (where nowadays ¾ of the world proletariat live) there are no or only weak bourgeois workers’ parties (important exceptions are India and South Africa). At the same time radical (petty-)bourgeois-populist formations often do play an influential role among the working class and the oppressed in these countries. Petty-bourgeois-populist formations also play an increasingly influential role among migrants – a growing sector of the working class – within imperialist countries. Under certain circumstances, new petty-bourgeois-populist forces can possess an influential role among sectors of the workers and youth in imperialist countries (e.g., the Occupy Movement in the US; PODEMOS in Spain)

23. Given the conditions in colonies and semi-colonies, even the national bourgeoisie, or sectors of it, can at times be forced to form alliances with oppressed classes against reactionary forces. This is also true for bourgeois forces among oppressed layers in the imperialist countries (e.g., migrants, oppressed nations). The national bourgeoisie can suddenly find itself crushed and exploited by im-

perialist big capital, discriminated against via national oppression, or oppressed by imperialist armed intervention or by local military forces acting for imperialism. Under such pressure, bourgeois nationalist parties not only resort to anti-imperialist rhetoric but, on rare occasions, may also enter into a real struggle with the imperialists or their local agents.

24. Normally, under such conditions, it is the radical petty-bourgeoisie which engages inconsistently in such struggles and with whom the proletariat can form a *democratic or anti-imperialist united front*. But we cannot exclude the possibility that a bourgeois party, with a mass plebeian following, might also do so. Under such conditions, it too might be included in the proposal for a democratic or anti-imperialist united front. This is possible, of course, on the condition that the proletariat’s hands are not tied, nor is it forced to renounce the struggle for power – let alone any promised political support for a bourgeois government; such a united front would *not* be a popular front.

25. In semi-colonies (and even under certain very specific circumstances in imperialist countries and degenerated workers states), politically bourgeois forces which have a mass plebeian following, or even a working class following, and which suffer from systematic social oppression (e.g., ethnic and national minorities, women) could participate in actions based on united front principles without this transforming such a bloc into a popular front. Clearly, the actions would be defensive and limited in scope and duration.

26. The key question would then be whether the demands which such a bloc would fight for are sufficient for, or even necessary, for the workers’ *own* struggle at this particular conjuncture. Bourgeois parties of the nationally oppressed, or bourgeois women’s organizations, might be drawn into united actions or campaigns, especially where their leaders hold the allegiance of large sectors of the oppressed, particularly of the oppressed workers. For the revolutionary party, the aim of such a united front, other than maximizing opposition to bourgeois reaction, would be to break away the proletariat elements from the bourgeois leadership of the oppressed. Towards this goal, joint action would contribute by exposing the character of this leadership in the course of the struggle.

The United Front Tactic and the Non-Revolutionary Leaderships of the Workers and Oppressed

27. The permissibility or non-permissibility of any united front does not depend upon the past record of the leaders of the other parties in the bloc. If the formation of a united front becomes necessary with mass workers’ organizations led by today’s versions of Kerensky, Noske, Zorgiebel or Stalin – all of whom, in their original incarnation, were responsible for the murder of revolutionary workers – we cannot nevertheless rule out forming a united front with them. Forming a united front with counter-revolutionary leaders is a necessary evil, hence the famous dictum that the united front might get struck with “the devil and his grandmother.” That’s to say that the offer of forming a united front does not constitute a vote of confidence for counter-revolutionary leadership to whom it is proposed.

28. Thus, the freedom to criticize these leaders throughout the common action is an essential principle of the united front. Such criticism must be directed at the vacillations of the bloc partners in carrying out the objectives of the united front, as well as their broader political failings. There should be no common propaganda, as this can only be done at the cost of placing aside important – even decisive – differences between revolution and reformism. The only common publications which are permissible are those specifically associated with the united front (e.g., strike committee bulletins, leaflets for mobilizing demonstrations) and which are designed *only* to agitate for the united front demands and objectives. The precise balance between common action and criticism cannot be established by some predetermined formula. We reserve the right to criticize our partners before, during, and after the common action. When, and in what form, we exercise that right depends on concrete judgments made in specific circumstances. But it is obligatory that such criticism be made.

29. The united front must be addressed to the rank and file as well as to its leadership. However, we reject the notion of coalescing a united front from below, *only* because it is a self-defeating and ultra-left trap. If the workers could indeed be persuaded to abandon their leadership by such a direct and unilateral appeal, there would be no need for the united front in the first place. The purpose of directing the united front appeal to the leaders is to draw the latter into action. It is in this way, rather than by means of declamatory exposure, that we can prove to the masses how fatal the limitations of their leaders actually are.

30. In the great majority of cases, the proposal for a united front will remain just that, and no practical agreement will be reached with the reformist, populist, and other leaders to whom it is addressed. In such conditions, the proposal will remain part of an agitational and popular propaganda campaign aimed at the rank and file members of the non-revolutionary organizations.

31. Even when some success has been achieved in breaking away radicalized workers from their non-revolutionary leadership, the united front continues to retain its full validity and force for those who remain behind. In such cases, implementing the united front from below may indeed bear fruit, after the non-revolutionary leaders have refused to act in concert with the revolutionaries. As an extension of what we wrote above (see Thesis 29), at this point it is necessary to combine denunciations of the leaders with proposals for action aimed at the rank and file or individuals under revolutionary leadership. But even here part of the aim of this tactic is to generate pressure from within the organization upon its leaders to act. If successful, this can only have the effect of drawing even more layers into action.

32. Dissolving the united front can be as important as forming it. When the united front has served its purpose, and its goal has been either achieved or lost, the united front needs to be redefined or dismantled and the appropriate lessons drawn for the forces involved. The following circumstances may necessitate the dissolution of the united front: (1) When it is maintained only as diplomatic or literary exercise and entails no obligation on the part of bloc partners to act; (2) When bloc partners are actually sabotaging or undermining the aims of the united front

either by not implementing it or by compromising with the class enemy; (3) When the partners of the united front refuse to take seriously its extension to other mass forces, and instead restrict membership in the bloc to sect like proportions. Where such circumstances necessitate dissolution of the united front, at the same time revolutionaries must still attempt, as far as possible, to continue the united struggle with the informal leaders of the rank and file, encouraging them to split with the organization's formal leadership and establish their own, while winning over to their own ranks the best elements from their respective non-revolutionary organizations.

33. Short-term blocs with centrist organizations without mass influence can be legitimate for the purpose of organizing practical actions. They are subject to the same principles as those for the examples of the united front discussed above. However, they cannot, as Trotsky repeatedly emphasized, really be considered as united fronts given the lack of influence of these organizations among the working class and the oppressed. For small communist pre-party organizations, such short-term blocs should only play a secondary role in comparison with proposals for cooperation directed to the mass organizations.

34. While adhering to the above considerations is a necessary condition if the united front is to be principled, it is not sufficient in itself to guarantee either its principled nature or its success. Only a concrete analysis of a situation can determine what the correct basis for a united front proposal is. Leadership and experience, accumulated over years through involvement in the class struggle, is required to determine what united front demands are permissible and necessary and to which forces these demands may be addressed. However, by understanding the basic purpose and principles of the united front, revolutionaries can prevent many unnecessary basic errors.



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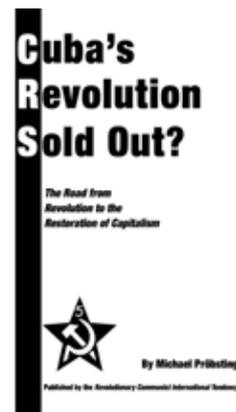
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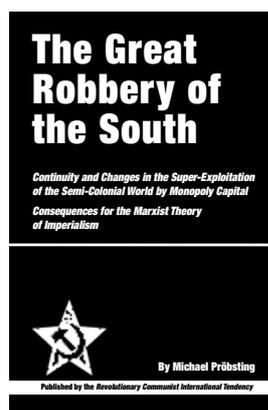
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The Author: Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 34 years. He is the author of many articles and pamphlets in German and English language. He published books or contributed to books on Rosa Luxemburg (1999), on the World Economy (2008), on Migration (2010) and the Arab Revolution (2011). In addition to *The Great Robbery of the South* and *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* he also published in 2014 the book *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. He is the International Secretary of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency*.

II. Various Applications of the United Front

35. The united front tactic was elaborated by the Bolsheviks and first codified at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1922. By that time, the post-war revolutionary tide had ebbed. Throughout the world, the capitalist classes were on the offensive and the young Communist Parties had failed to win over a majority of the working class in most developed capitalist countries. At the same time, a wave of anti-imperialist liberation struggles began in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. However, in these latter countries, the working class represented only a small fraction of the population and bourgeois forces wielded huge influence with large sectors of the petty-bourgeois, peasant-dominated population. Under such conditions, the Comintern developed the *workers united front tactic* as well as the *anti-imperialist united front tactic*.

36. Obviously, there have been important developments since the 1920s and '30s. While at that time, the huge majority of the world proletariat was situated in the old imperialist countries, today quite the reverse is true and the focus of the proletariat has moved to the South. At the same time, there are increasing divisions within the respective proletariats of the imperialist metropolises, divisions between the privileged labor aristocracy (the traditional main bases of the reformist parties and trade unions) and the broad mass of the working class. During the course of decades, social democracy and Stalinism underwent intense bourgeoisification and were integrated into the accepted political milieu of many bourgeois states. While this occurred, in parallel there arose new layers of radicalized, mostly young, workers and oppressed. However, because of the substantial weakening of *authentic* revolutionary forces, the radicalization of the younger generation in most cases has led to the formation of new populist or radical-reformist formations. Revolutionaries must attentively study these changes, and should incorporate into their tactical arsenal the lessons gained. To do so, they should apply the method elaborated by the Comintern and, later, the Fourth International to current

concrete conditions. Primarily, we should be aware of the dominant influence among the working class and the oppressed which (petty-)bourgeois forces wield, as a result of the developments just cited. Clearly, rather than making the application of the united front tactic superfluous, these developments only augment its importance.

37. The Marxist united front tactic contains, firstly, the *workers' united front*. Its goal is the broadest possible *unity of the working class* in the concrete struggle against the bourgeoisie, together with the splitting the proletariat away from its reformist and populist leaders. Furthermore, the Marxist united front also encompasses the *democratic or anti-imperialist united front*. The goal of this latter united front is to create an alliance with the *non-proletarian oppressed classes* under the leadership of the proletariat in a common struggle against reaction (racism, dictatorship, imperialism, etc.), while wresting away leadership from the same (petty-)bourgeois forces to which these non-proletarians previously looked.

38. However, such categorizations must not be understood schematically. In real life, there are often overlaps and combinations with characteristics of both the workers' united front and the democratic or anti-imperialist united front. In any case, with few exceptions, the same principles apply for all forms of the united front. As we mentioned above, bourgeois workers' parties (social democracy, Stalinism) play a dominant role for the working class in only a relatively few countries – mainly in Western Europe. Furthermore, these parties have and are continuing to rapidly bourgeoisify. Thus, the workers' united front should be directed not only to the traditional reformist organizations but often also to (petty-)bourgeois populist forces which wield a significant influence inside the working class. Furthermore there are numerous political class struggles (e.g., against imperialist war, against racism, for democratic rights) which by their nature mobilize not only organizations of the working class but also of other oppressed layers and classes.

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The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony within the United Front

39. The central task of revolutionaries consists in always focusing their attention on the struggle for *proletarian hegemony* in their application of the united front tactic. This means, in particular, the need to fight for the strengthening the revolutionary forces within the united front at the expense of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces (social democracy, Stalinism, petty-bourgeois populists, Islamists, etc.). This is because the latter constellations constitute an obstacle to the political independence of the proletariat and other oppressed layers and, it follows, makes them politically dependent on the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the paramount importance of achieving the political hegemony of the proletariat also requires revolutionaries to advance the creation of an alliance with the peasants and other oppressed layers *under the leadership of the proletariat*.

40. In order to establish proletarian hegemony within the framework of the united front, Communist Parties must make demands on the reformists, petty-bourgeois-populists, and centrists to defend the interests of the workers and the oppressed against the capitalist offensive. Such demands are manifested in the slogan raised by the Comintern "*March separately, strike together.*" No less, communists need to also demand that the non-communist organizations of the working class, the peasantry, the urban poor, oppressed nations, migrants, etc. (parties, trade unions, etc.) break with the bourgeoisie and take up the struggle for workers' and popular councils and militias.

41. We must remember that the entire objective of the united front is to achieve maximum unity in action in the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeois ruling class and imperialism by means of an alliance between it and its allied layers. At the heart of the united front is the struggle for *class independence* from the bourgeoisie and the imperialist powers. Thus, its guiding principle is the challenge which the revolutionary organization addresses to reformist and populist leaders of mass workers and oppressed organizations: "*Break with the bourgeoisie!*" This being so, the tactic of the united front is applicable to a range of scenarios, from the most limited and defensive actions up to a broad-based mass offensive against the entire bourgeois order. The latter is typical of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations, when the gauntlet is thrown down as a challenge to the reformist and populist misleaders "*Break with the bourgeoisie; take the road of struggle for a workers' government!*" or for "*a workers' and peasants' government!*" as circumstances dictate.

42. The principles of the workers' united front find a wide range of applications in trade unions and similar mass organizations. But the united front cannot be restricted exclusively to the trade unions as the Bordigists sought to do. Rather, it's equally applicable at times of heightened class struggle, and even more so by political parties claiming to represent the interests of the workers respectively the oppressed and which, in fact, actually do organize broad sections of the proletariat or the peasants and other oppressed layers. In such contexts, the purpose of the united front is to drag the reformist and populist leaders out of their union offices, their parliamentary chambers, their banquets and secret meetings with the class enemy,

into the streets and force them to join the class struggle – i.e., participate in mass demonstrations, picket lines, etc., and, in revolutionary conditions, onto the barricades. The fact that these leaders may ultimately prove themselves to be lackeys of the bourgeoisie can be no argument for not proposing a united front to them. What is decisive is that these traitors still hold, if not the confidence, then at least control over large masses of the proletariat and, it follows, the revolutionary party has not yet won the confidence or the organized leadership of these masses.

43. In both imperialist and semi-colonial countries, revolutionaries should initially direct the united front tactic towards workers' organizations or mass organizations with strong roots among the working class. This includes not only trade unions and workers' parties, but also organizations representing proletarian women, migrants, youth, etc. Proposals can be made to traditional bourgeois workers parties (mainly social democrats and Stalinists) as well as to newer workers' parties (e.g., the former *Democratic Labor Party* in South Korea or the *Partido de los Trabajadores* in Bolivia). In exceptional circumstances, where centrists wield mass influence, this tactic can also be applied to them (e.g., FIT in Argentina)

44. Moreover, the united front tactic also plays a central role in the struggle against fascism (*anti-fascist united front*). Here, each fascist movement must be specifically analyzed and distinguished from versions of right-wing populism and Bonapartism, as fascism aims at a "*particular governmental system based on the uprooting of all elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois society*" (Trotsky). The anti-fascist united front cannot be separated from other forms of this tactic (one that fights for democracy, etc.); it adheres to the same rules and principles applied in other variations of the tactic. The libertarian and ultra-left approaches tend to differentiate the anti-fascist struggle from the general one (which focuses on social and democratic realms). This differentiation results in two fundamental errors: (a) The ultra-left forces act in place of the working class and; (b) the adoption of a Popular Front tactic involving bourgeois parties and churches, which assume strong political influence in such alliances. A special feature of the anti-fascist united front is the need to create from the outset joint self-defense groups of workers (whether unionized or not), migrants and leftist activists against fascist forces. This is because, neither the police nor the judiciary are reliable forces in the struggle against fascist attacks; rather they protect the latter. Yet another deviation from the united front is the so-called "red-brown" strategy in which the left forms an alliance with fascists to fight against capital and its state.

45. Petty-bourgeois forces often have tremendous influence on the working class in semi-colonial countries and among oppressed peoples or migrants in imperialist metropolises. Various examples of this would include: Castro-Chavista organizations in Latin America (the Bolivarian parties and organizations in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, and populist mass organizations in Argentina, etc.); certain Islamist-populist organizations in the Middle East and Asia (e.g., Hamas, al-Qadri's PAT in Pakistan, various FSA and Islamist rebel groups in Syria, Libya, and Egypt, and the Houthis in Yemen); progressive-populist organizations in Asia and Africa etc.; the Northern Irish Sinn Fein/IRA before its capitulation in 1998; Sinn Fein in

the Republic of Ireland, the Basque HB and its successor organizations, CUP in Catalonia, etc.; numerous migrant organizations in the imperialist countries, and organizations of blacks in the US and Britain, etc.

46. Furthermore, revolutionaries should also apply the united front tactic to mass organizations which represent other oppressed layers (e.g., poor peasants, urban poor, lower strata of the intelligencia, etc.). Here, appropriate examples would include: the MST or various *favela* organizations in Brazil; militant peasant organizations in Africa; and various petty-bourgeois democratic groups in Egypt, Tunisia, etc. Similarly, petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations of oppressed peoples (e.g., the Palestinian Balad party in Israel) and of migrants should also be approached.

47. Finally, revolutionaries must always consider new formations spawned by developments on the ground. In the last few years, in light of the rapid bourgeoisification of traditional reformist workers parties and the failure of centrists, new petty-bourgeois populist forces have emerged in imperialist countries; for example the Occupy Movement in the US in 2011 and PODEMOS in Spain. Such formations can wield broad influence among the working class and youth. Consequently, revolutionaries should apply the united front tactic towards such formations as well.

48. Soviets are the highest form of a united front. They appear in a revolutionary situation and reflect a contradiction: on the one side, the power of the exploiting class, many times in a form of a popular front, as opposed to the power of the working class on the other. One of these two opposing forces must win and smash the other. Without revolutionary leadership of the Soviets, they will be led by reformists, bourgeois forces, populists and centrists who will subordinate the working class to the power of the capitalist class. Within the soviets, revolutionaries must fight for leadership with the slogan "*All Power to the Soviets.*" However, in certain situations *other* forms of working class organizations can be the force that leads the revolution. For example, when Soviets are still under the leadership of reformists and centrists who represent an earlier phase of the revolution, actions committees can take the lead and represent the majority of the active workers. After the revolution, the Soviets in power manifest working class power. They can be form a socialist coalition government only with forces that defend the socialist revolution. By contrast, the slogan of the counter revolution is "*Soviets without the Communists.*"

The United Front Tactic and Bourgeois Forces

49. As Trotsky wrote in the *Transitional Program*, the Marxist tactic of the united front is based on an "anti-bourgeois" thrust, thereby emphasizing the need to counterpose organizations of the working class and its allied layers and classes to all blocs with the parties or individual representatives of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat does *not* refuse the support of sympathetic individuals from the bourgeoisie for its *own actions*. In the imperialist countries, the bourgeois parties are incapable of any systematic progressive actions and revolutionaries must therefore oppose these parties' participation in common fronts with organizations of the workers and oppressed. Under *all*

circumstances revolutionaries reject any call for support of a government of the reformist workers parties with the parties of the bourgeoisie, a "Left" coalition or Popular Front. If an organized pseudo-united front or popular front is formed between mass workers' organizations and bourgeois-imperialist parties, revolutionaries must strive to develop tactics for expelling the latter from this front by demonstrating to the workers that bourgeois parties are incapable of mass struggle; that they only obstruct and betray such struggles; and that the reformist leaders constantly use the need to retain their support as a pretext for actually avoiding vital struggles.

50. Things are somewhat different with regard to bourgeois forces in semi-colonial countries or ethnical or national oppressed layers within imperialist countries. Given imperialist oppression, these bourgeois forces are under constant pressure from above. At the same time, they often wield significant influence over the workers and other oppressed layers who create pressure from below. Thus, under certain circumstances, in such cases the application of the united front tactic towards bourgeois forces can be justified; for example: the Chinese Kuomintang in the 1920s; the Baathists when they resisted US aggression; the Muslim Brotherhood after the 2013 coup in Egypt; the *Red Shirt*-movement in Thailand during the struggle against the coup, etc. In any case of coup d'état, revolutionaries should defend a popular front or a bourgeois-populist government against the counter-revolution, *without* lending it any political support (e.g., the 1973 coup against Allende in Chile; that of 2013 against the Morsi government in Egypt; against the government of the Taksim party in Thailand in 2006 and 2014; and the PT-led popular front government in Brazil 2016).

51. At the same time, revolutionaries should never forget that the bourgeoisie of oppressed peoples will immediately betray the struggle at the next possible opportunity. Hence, revolutionaries must under no circumstances subordinate or curtail their own demands, immediate or historic, for the purpose of winning such uncertain allies from the petit bourgeoisie or maverick bourgeois notables. In imperialist countries, the bourgeois strata of the oppressed are the main force for compromise and surrender of the interests of the oppressed. Therefore, the proletariat must strive to break their hegemony, disintegrate their "popular fronts," and replace them with a united front led by the working class under the leadership of the revolutionary party as early as possible. However, it still may be necessary to organize common actions with and even participate in existing popular front campaigns with the aim of breaking bourgeois hegemony.

52. Given the bourgeoisie's vacillating character and constant readiness for treachery, revolutionaries reserve no place for it in the united front. By contrast, they do actively seek the participation of plebian and poorer sectors of the petit bourgeoisie. At *no time* must the working class sacrifice its struggle and refrain from making independent class demands against native capitalism and the national bourgeoisie in order to secure a united front with it. Doing so would constitute a joining a popular front.

53. The anti-imperialist united front tactic in no way implies giving support to so-called "anti-imperialist governments." Communists cannot, under any circumstances, give support to a bourgeois government, i.e., to a govern-

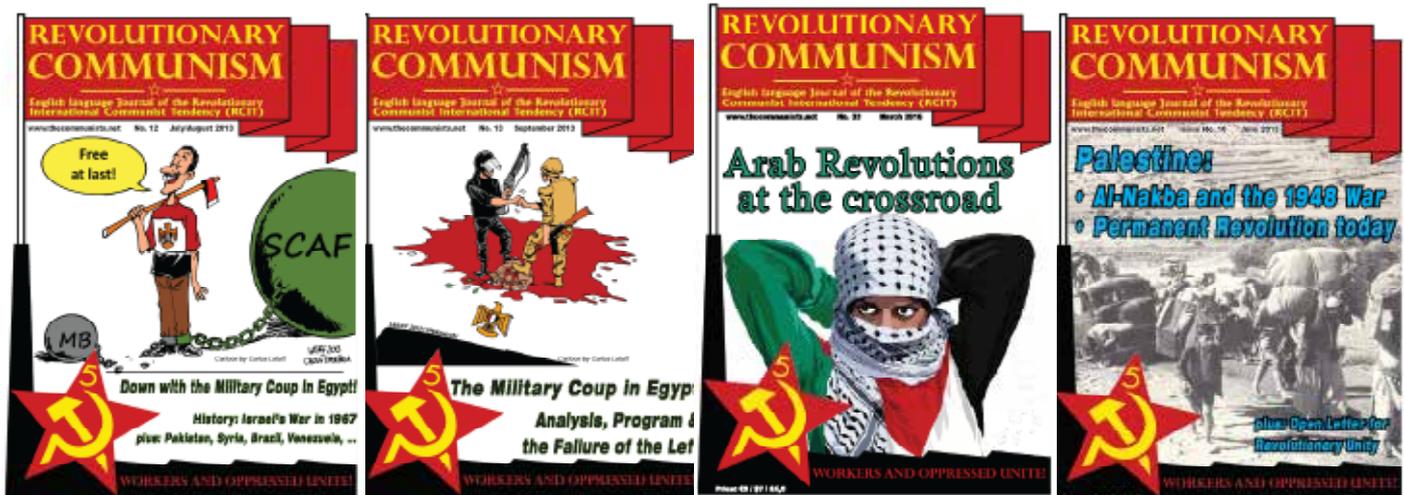
ment of their own exploiters. Any government claiming to be “above classes” or representative of “the people as a whole” is peddling deceptions. We do support any serious action of such governments taken against imperialism (e.g., the nationalization or expropriation of imperialist corporations) or against a right-wing coup d’état. The working class and the oppressed *can* lend their support to the fight for democratic rights, insofar as these rights allow them to organize and develop their own revolutionary struggle. But such struggles and slogans should never become an end in themselves, being seen as self-contained or self-limiting once erected. Rather, soviets must eventually replace even the freest parliaments; and a workers’ dictatorship the democratic republic.

54. Communists should support and participate in military actions taken against imperialism (e.g., in Nicaragua against the *Contras*, in Argentina against Britain in the Malvinas, in Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist aggressors, in Palestine against Zionism); in such struggles they should fight for the arming of the workers and the oppressed, and for the establishment of democratically controlled workers’ and popular militias. Similarly, where civil war erupts around a rebellion against a dictatorship, communists may enter a military united front, whenever possible as an independent armed force, accepting common discipline in battle, making agreements under a common command. We recognize that military united fronts are one form of the united front—a form not qualitatively different from united actions for political goals. When we call for the military victory of such movements in their fight against imperialism or its agents, we are not endorsing victory for their political program. Within such a united front we struggle for our own program and fight to split the workers and poor peasants away from the bourgeoisie, steering it towards a road leading to a workers’ and peasants’ government.

The United Front Tactic and Slogans about Government

55. The united front tactic also involves making demands on the “parties of petty bourgeois democracy” (Trotsky) – i.e., social democrats, Stalinists, petty-bourgeois populists – to break with the bourgeoisie and struggle for a workers’ and peasants’ government or (in most imperialist countries) a workers’ government. In moments of acute political crisis this can become *the* major slogan of the day. What is an authentic government of the workers and peasants? One that takes decisive actions to disarm the bourgeoisie and arm the workers and peasants; one that aids the workers and peasants in the struggle to seize the key vantage points of capitalist power – the banks and the big monopolies. Clearly such measures cannot be carried out via electoral and parliamentary politics. To reformist workers and peasants who harbor illusions that they, in fact, *can* achieve this, we say: “Go ahead, elect your parties to office; force them to attempt taking such measures if you can; but be ready, if your leaders take any serious measures threatening private property, to mobilize your unions and your parties for the inevitable bourgeois declaration of civil war. We will critically support your parties’ electoral victory and defend them against bourgeois attack.” To centrist workers who believe that a combination of a parliamentary victory and independent mass mobilization is sufficient we say: “It is suicidal to tie workers’ mass actions to electoral timetables, to respect majorities and minorities, and to fail attacking the real core of the state, and its special bodies of armed men, out of some notion of constitutional or legal scruples. The ‘workers’ and peasant government’ that does not win over the soldiers and their weapons, tearing them away from the bourgeois officer corps; the high command, etc., that does not arm a workers’ and peasant militia and disarm and dissolve the police force will have its throat cut.”

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56. For communists to support the taking of power by any non-revolutionary political force, two main conditions must prevail. First, it must be a mass organization of the working class or the oppressed. Second, communists must make it clear that they will remain in political opposition to such a government. Revolutionaries would defend this government against any attempted overthrow by right-wing forces, without at the same time lending it any political support. They would also support only those governmental measures which really serve the interests of the workers and oppressed.

57. Under certain exceptional circumstances, communists can themselves form a common government with non-revolutionary forces drawn from the workers and peasants. Such a government would not yet constitute the proletarian dictatorship. But, as the Communist International made clear, with strict conditions attached, communists could offer their backing to this government. Such a government must be based on workers' and peasants' councils and militias. It should at once attack and disarm the bourgeoisie as a class. It should impose workers' control of production and allow full freedom of criticism of the government's actions by communists. In such a government, communists may constitute a minority. In short, such governments are revolutionary workers' and peasants' governments, transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Communists would seek to use their positions in such a government to complete the overthrow of the capitalist class and to install a new revolutionary dictatorship.

58. However, it is utterly wrong to assume that revolutionaries must fight for governments of parties representing the "*parties of petty bourgeois democracy*" as a necessary and unavoidable stage. In certain cases, communists will call for non-revolutionary parties of the workers and peasants to take power. They will combine such support with putting forth a concrete transitional program (expropriation of the bourgeoisie, public works programs, etc.) as well as the demand that these governments should base themselves on mobilizations and mass organizations of the workers and oppressed (soviets, trade unions, etc.). At the same time, revolutionaries should never stop warning the working class and the poor peasantry that such a bourgeois workers' and peasant government will maintain and reinforce the capitalist state. We can never call for a government of bourgeois forces, or for a coalition between workers' and peasants' parties and such forces.

59. The united front tactic also recognizes the possible entry of communists in non-revolutionary – reformist, petty-bourgeois populist or centrist – parties (i.e., the tactic of entrism). This tactic is legitimate under certain conditions: the party represents a significant sector of the radical workers, oppressed or youth moving to the left; there is a true possibility to openly argue for the revolutionary program within the party. Such entrism will not be of long duration, since the party leadership will not tolerate a consistent communist opposition, and a longer stay inside the party could only be achieved through opportunist adaptations. This is proven through the experience of various centrist groups which lodged themselves for years or decades in such parties (e.g., the CWI in the past and the IMT until today, the Morenoites in their Peronist phase, the Lambertists in social democracy).

The United Front Tactic during Elections

60. Revolutionaries should also, if possible, apply the united front tactic during election campaigns. Elections, particularly in periods of low-level class struggle, are an important arena of class struggle. Revolutionaries strive not to stand aside when class-conscious sectors of the proletariat participate in the electoral campaign and the elections themselves; rather they undertake to intervene with appropriate tactics. This means that, when it is not possible for revolutionary communist candidates to stand, we can give electoral backing to the candidates of the mass working class organizations, in particular those who have the support of the most militant sections of our class. In general, critical support for non-revolutionary workers parties is a legitimate tactic for helping class-conscious workers to overcome their illusions in reformist leaderships. However, this tactic must not be applied schematically. In situations where a bourgeois workers' party (usually as a governmental party) serves as a whip or executioner in the implementation of serious attacks on the working class – austerity programs, imperialist wars, racist hatred, attacks on democratic rights, etc. – it is necessary that revolutionaries *not* call for the electoral support of this party, with the aim that vanguard workers will break with it. Concretely, we would either call for critical support for another party which better reflects the desire of the progressive workers and oppressed to fight back or, if such a party does not stand at the elections, call for a blank vote.

61. In countries, where no bourgeois workers' party (not even a reformist one) exists or where the existing bourgeois workers' parties are already so degenerated that they repel the workers' vanguard, revolutionaries call upon the workers' vanguard and mass organizations to found a *new workers' party* (or "*Labor Party*"). Here, too, interim stages are conceivable. Revolutionaries might support alliances towards such a goal or the foundation of new organizations of oppressed layers (e.g., migrant organizations) which could also stand at elections.

62. The demand for a *Labor Party* is a special application of the united front tactic used by small Communist forces engaged with larger working class formations (e.g., trade unions) in countries where a mass bourgeois workers' party does not exist. Such a Labor Party must be independent of the capitalist and petit-bourgeois parties, and during election campaigns run against them. This tactic can be successful in a period of intensified working class struggle, something which we can anticipate in the coming period. Such a party should *not* be political propaganda block that merely hides the betrayal of the reformist and the centrists. Rather, within the framework of a Labor Party, Communists do *not* call for a reformist measures as a step forward, but struggle for the adoption of the full transitional program as the program of this party. In this way, Communists constitute the revolutionary tendency, one that fights for the leadership of the party by exposing the betrayal of the reformists and the centrists in the actual struggle. This can be done by making a minimal number of appropriate transitional demands which unify and mobilize the workers and the oppressed against the capitalist class enemy, using the tactic of the united front with other forces against the common enemy according to the prin-

ciple “march separately, strike together.”

63. When no bourgeois workers’ parties with mass influence exist, or those that do exist are subject to such massive bourgeoisification, if at the same time there are petty-bourgeois populist parties with mass influence among the working class or the oppressed, critical electoral support for the latter is legitimate. The Bolsheviks did so for the petty-bourgeois populist parties of the Trudoviks and the Social-Revolutionaries in Russia; later on the Communist International did the same towards populist forces in Mexico in 1923, as did the US-Trotskyists with the Farmer-Labor Party in the 1930s. Today, such forces might be petty-bourgeois populist in semi-colonial countries (e.g., Evo Morales and the MAS at the first elections in 2005; Julius Malema’s EFF in South Africa; *Sinn Fein* in the Republic of Ireland; the Palestinian *Balad* party as well as the *Joint List* in Israel, etc.). Such critical electoral support could also be applicable for petty-bourgeois nationalist parties of oppressed nations (e.g., militant parties of the Tamils in Sri Lanka like the TNA; the Northern Irish *Sinn Fein/IRA* before its capitulation in 1998; the Basque HB and its successor organizations; CUP in Catalonia; etc.). This could also be applicable to new petty-bourgeois populist parties in imperialist countries, like George Galloways’ RESPECT in Britain.

64. Critical electoral support should only be given while simultaneously denouncing these parties’ bourgeois or petty-bourgeois programs, challenging them to break with the capitalists and fight them not only in words but in deeds. Note, however, that communists can never call for a vote for or the taking of power by parties or candidates

of the bourgeoisie – neither in imperialist nor in semi-colonial countries. Revolutionary Marxists advocate a workers’ and peasant government and not a government of the workers, peasants and sectors of the bourgeoisie. The latter would be a popular front government. Such openly bourgeois parties directly represent the ruling class against which revolutionaries seek to mobilize the workers and oppressed. Electoral support for such a party would not represent a step towards class independence but rather towards subordination of the workers and oppressed to the bourgeoisie. We should demand that all workers’ and peasants’ parties break with bourgeois candidates whom they have enrolled on their list, or break from a popular front list. In certain circumstances we may still vote for the candidates of the workers’ or peasant party on a popular front list, if we take care not to vote for, or crossing off the list, the bourgeois candidates.

Summary

65. To summarize: the united front tactic is a central tool for the Bolshevik-Communist organization (a) to achieve the broadest possible unity of the working class and its allied oppressed layers and classes, and (b) to undermine the ominous dominance of the reformist, petty-bourgeois-populist or centrist leaderships and replace them with a determined revolutionary leadership. The most important requirement for this is an independent and clear profile of revolutionary communists as well as the successful founding of a Bolshevik combat organization.

New Book!

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a book called *BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE*. The book’s subtitle is: *Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. The book is in English-language. It contains four chapters on 148 pages and includes 42 pictures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

A few months ago, our movement commemorated its 25th anniversary. In the summer of 1989 our predecessor organization, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) was founded as a democratic-centralist international tendency based on an elaborated program. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) continues the revolutionary tradition of the LRCI. Below we give an overview of our history, an evaluation of its achievements as well as mistakes, and a summary of the lessons for the struggles ahead. This book summarizes our theoretical and practical experience of the past

25 years.

In Chapter I we outline a summary of the Bolshevik-Communists’ theoretical conception of the role of the revolutionary party and its relation to the working class. In Chapter II we elaborate on the essential characteristics of revolutionary party respective of the pre-party organization. In Chapter III we deal with the history of our movement – the RCIT and its predecessor organization. Finally, in Chapter IV we outline the main lessons of our 25 years of organized struggle for building a Bolshevik party and their meaning for our future work.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/> ■

**Building the
Revolutionary Party
in Theory
and Practice**

*Looking Back and Ahead after
25 Years of organized Struggle for Bolshevism*



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

What the RCIT Stands for

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) is a revolutionary combat organisation fighting for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. It has national sections in a number of countries. The working class is composed of all those (and their families) who are forced to sell their labor power as wage earners to the capitalists. The RCIT stands on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers' movement associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

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

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

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

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for only this class has the collective power to bring down the ruling class and build a socialist society.

The revolution cannot proceed peacefully because a ruling class never has nor ever will voluntarily surrender its power. By necessity, therefore, the road to liberation includes armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasants' republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in councils democratically elected in rank-and-file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods, and schools. These councils, in turn, elect and control the government and all other state authorities, and always retain the right to recall them.

Authentic socialism and communism have nothing to do with the so-called "socialism" that ruled in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and which continues to do so in China and Cuba, for example. In these countries, the proletariat was and is dominated and oppressed by a privileged party bureaucracy.

Under capitalism, the RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of the workers and oppressed, while simultaneously striving to overthrow this system based on economic exploitation of the masses.

Towards these ends, we work from within the trade unions where we advocate class struggle, socialism, and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy perniciously connected with the state and capital via status, high-paying jobs, and other privileges. Thus, the trade union bureaucracy is far from the interests and living conditions of

its members, based as it is on the top, privileged layers of the working class – a labor aristocracy which has no real interest in replacing capitalism. Therefore, the true struggle for the liberation of the working class, the toppling of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their "representative" from the upper trade union strata.

We also fight for the expropriation of the big land owners as well as for the nationalisation of the land and its distribution to the poor and landless peasants. Towards this goal we struggle for the independent organisation of the rural workers.

We support national liberation movements against oppression. We also support the anti-imperialist struggles of oppressed peoples against the great powers. Within these movements we advocate a revolutionary leadership as an alternative to nationalist or reformist forces.

While the RCIT strives for unity of action with other organizations, we are acutely aware that the policies of social democrats and pseudo-revolutionary groups are dangerous, and ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class, peasants, and the otherwise oppressed.

In wars between imperialist states we take a revolutionary defeatist position: we do not support either side, but rather advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class in each of the warring states. In wars between imperialist powers (or their stooges) and a semi-colonial countries we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed countries.

As communists, we maintain that the struggle against national oppression and all types of social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) *must* be led by the working class, because only the latter is capable of fomenting a revolutionary change in society. Therefore, we consistently support working class-based revolutionary movements of the socially oppressed, while opposing the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism, etc.), who ultimately dance to the tune of the capitalists, and strive to replace them with revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class be victorious in its struggle for liberation. The establishment of such a party and the execution of a successful revolution, as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks in Russia under Lenin and Trotsky remain the models for revolutionary parties and revolutions in the 21st century.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries!
For a 5th Workers International to be founded on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

