



# LIBERATION

BULLETIN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL TENDENCY (RCIT) IN BRITAIN

**WORKERS AND OPPRESSED, UNITE!**

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## Vote for Labour – but organize the resistance!

**Critical electoral support for Jeremy Corbyn on an anti-war and anti-austerity program!**

*Statement of the RCIT Britain, 25.04.2017*

### The ruling class in political crisis and turmoil

The conservative, Prime Minister Theresa May has decided to call a General Election in Britain on the 8th June 2017. May has said that the country is behind her in her campaign for a hard Brexit, this means to abolish the single market and to get rid of free movement of migrants in Britain. She is opposed in parliament by the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP and a minority of remain supporters in the Tory party. The parliament is sabotaging her political plans and therefore she wants to change it, in the hope that she could go forward with her agenda.

As the RCIT said in Liberation 14 May faces an enormous crisis of British imperialism.

“The decision to leave the European Union has caused an immense crisis amongst the ruling class in Britain. Theresa May, who succeeded David Cameron as Prime Minister, is trying to negotiate Brexit amongst a deeply divided and split Tory party. She is desperate to hold her party together while she negotiates terms to leave Europe by activating Article 50.

A section of the ruling class wants to desperately stay in the EU to have access to the single

market. Another section wants to get rid of the restrictions of Strasbourg and other European nations. The situation has been complicated by the legal challenge to Brexit which insists that any decision to leave the European Union must be discussed by Parliament”. [1].

This weak and divided Tory Government hopes by calling an election before the expiry of her full term in 2020 to strengthen her position with the European Negotiators to leave the European Union.

### A divided Labour Party

The Labour Party also remains a deeply split party between the left reformist Corbyn and the pro-war and pro-austerity Blairite section of the party who is opposed to both Corbyn and Brexit. The Blairites want a relationship with the EU and the single market. Tony Blair - who is a war criminal - although nominally a member of the Labour Party is pushing his democratic alliance to support the Liberal Democrats, which is the most committed party to remain in the European Union.

The Blairites are hoping that Corbyn is defeated and that the party will return to its Blairite fold. The



bourgeois press and others are touting Yvette Cooper, a former Minister in Blair's government, as a possible replacement in the event of a Labour Party defeat.

"The Labour Party with the left reformist Jeremy Corbyn as leader is deeply split. Although Corbyn is nominally leader, the control of the party remains in the hands of the Blairites who as well as controlling the Parliamentary Labour party are in charge of the bureaucratic structures as well. Tony Blair, ex-Labour leader and indicted war criminal, has returned to lead the attack on Corbyn and his supporters in Momentum. The Blairites through the PLP have attempted two coups against Corbyn but have been roundly defeated. The issue of Brexit has given them the opportunity to remove Corbyn and his supporters. Corbyn has capitulated to the Blairites at every turn even inviting some of them into his shadow cabinet. Blair is now involved in setting up a new centre coalition of pro-Europeans including Tories and Liberal democrats. His aim of course is to try and reverse Brexit". [2]

The weakness of Corbyn and Momentum was revealed when McNichol the General Secretary of the National Executive committee and a Blair functionary announced that candidates would be imposed on the Labour party membership and sitting Blairite MP's without any discussion from the membership will be imposed on them. There will be no 'trigger ballots' or reselection of sitting Labour MP's. But we call for a critical vote for the Labour Party and we call upon the rank and file to push the leadership to more radical actions. We answer the following to our "orthodox" (in fact sectarian) critics who will tell us but that is an adaption towards reformism: "We are not adapting our program just one inch towards reformism, but we will try to put Labour in power, so that the more radical rank and file workers can make their own experiences with Corbyn in power and we will try to organize the rank and file and to make Corbyn go further than he wants!"

In fact Corbyn and Momentum expect the vast majority of Labour party members to campaign for openly pro-war and pro-austerity candidates. To date Corbyn has said nothing

about the undemocratic procedure now being followed.

The RCIT in Britain has consistently followed a revolutionary socialist perspective. We would patiently explain to the masses and the oppressed the necessity to organise a General strike to bring down the May Government in the event of a Labour Party defeat at the polls. If Corbyn was elected and that is very doubtful, May has an 18-21 points lead in the opinion polls, we would patiently explain to workers and the oppressed our anti-war and anti-austerity message and the urgency for a General strike as a first step towards the establishment of a real workers government, which will be based on workers and popular assemblies, the mobilization on the streets and which will not be simply a bourgeois government, sitting in Westminster and simply lead by the Labour Party.



### From Brexit to a united socialist Europe!

In the RCIT open letter after the Brexit result we pointed out the wrong positions of the main centrists groups in Britain who supported either the Leave campaign or the remain campaign.

"The results of the BREXIT referendum in Britain have ignited a political crisis not only in the UK itself but throughout the entire European continent. On the one hand, the referendum has obviously strengthened reactionary nationalism, as is reflected in the increasing numbers of hate-crimes against migrants in Britain as well as in the surge of the far right in other Western European countries. On the other hand, the vote to remove Britain from the EU has also created confusion, uncertainty and nervousness among the forces of monopoly capital both in Britain and in Europe in general. Shamefully, in the months leading up to last week's historic referendum, large sectors of the left in Britain had called either for the country to LEAVE or REMAIN in the EU. In both cases, the proponents of these diametrically opposed positions were guilty of adapting to one of two imperialist camps. Those who supported LEAVE unabashedly adapted to the reactionary "UK First" imperialist camp dominated by the most extreme right-wing forces like UKIP; those in the left who called for a REMAIN vote no less shamelessly adapted to the pro-EU imperialist camp of the big bourgeoisie and the leadership

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Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT). The RCIT has sections in Pakistan (Revolutionary Workers Organisation, RWO), Sri Lanka (United Lankan Workers Party, ULWP), Brazil (Corrente Comunista Revolucionária, CCR), Mexico (Agrupación de Lucha Socialista, ALS), Turkey (Sınıf Savaşı), Israel/Occupied Palestine (Internationalist Socialist League, ISL), Zimbabwe (Socialist League of Zimbabwe, SLZ) and Austria (Revolutionär-Kommunistische Organisation BEFREIUNG, RKOB). In addition the RCIT has members in Yemen, Tunisia, Germany, Venezuela, New Zealand and Britain.



For a constituent assembly, peoples assemblies and action committees to fight for a real workers government!

of the Labour Party. Again, we contend that both strategies were and remain nothing more than variants of social-imperialism". [3]

Centrists either of the ultra-left variety or the opportunist's variety have never being able to understand the role of the Marxist united front as practiced by Vladimir Lenin or Leon Trotsky. The RCIT in a major study of the Marxists classics explained our attitude to the United Front and our tactics towards Reformist parties like the British Labour party.

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 (May) government (if elected on June 8th). 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! 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." [5].

In this period of international global crisis the RCIT in Britain puts forward the following transitional demands as a proposal for to workers and the oppressed who want to join the fight.

*\* Critically support the Election of a Jeremy Corbyn Labour Government on an anti-austerity and anti-war program. Expel and purge all Blairite MP's and cleanse the party of all pro-war*

*and pro-austerity elements.*

*\* In the event of an election of a May Tory government: for an indefinite General Strike and the formation of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly with peoples assemblies in all areas of the country!*

*\* For self-defense guards of the workers and migrants to defend our communities against fascist attacks and police provocations!*

*\* Battle for open borders for all refugees' full equality for all migrants' equal wages full citizenship and rights to speak their native language.*

*\* Self Determination for the people of Scotland!*

*\* For a Unified Ireland as a 32 County Workers Republic as part of a united Socialist states of Europe!*

*\* For a workers government pledged to bring down Capitalism and destruct British imperialism!*

We call on all workers and the oppressed to join the RCIT and help to build a new World Party of the socialist revolution, which will be the Fifth International.

# Free All Palestinian Political Prisoners!

## Support the Demands of the Palestinian Freedom Fighters in Israeli Prisons!

*Statement of the Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine), 21.4.2017*

According to Palestinian activists, more than 1500 Palestinian political prisoners out of 6500 political prisoners, began an open end hunger strike on April 17th (Israel claims that 1100 prisoners went on strike).

The hunger strike was led by Marwan Barghouti, a prominent political figure of Fatah movement. Polls have shown that Barghouti is the most popular choice to succeed Abbas, the Palestinian president. Barghouti was arrested in 2002 during the second Intifada and convicted in a political show-trial, on multiple counts of murder. Israel charged him with directing suicide bombings against its citizens and he was sentenced to five life terms.

The political prisoners demand: proper health treatment for sick prisoners, an end to the denial and cutbacks on family visits, and an end to administrative detention and solitary confinement. In addition, they demand the installment of a public pay phone.

In a moving letter published in the New York Times, Barghouti wrote: "Israel has established a dual legal regime, a form of judicial apartheid, that provides virtual impunity for Israelis who commit crimes against Palestinians, while criminalizing Palestinian presence and resistance."

Since 2006, following the capture of Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier, by Hamas, the political prisoners have been held under even harsher conditions. As Barghouti described in the same letter:

"Israel has built nearly all of its prisons inside Israel rather than in the occupied territory. In doing so, it has unlawfully and forcibly transferred Palestinian civilians into captivity, and has used this situation to restrict family visits and to inflict suffering on prisoners through long transports under cruel conditions. It turned basic rights that should be guaranteed under international law — including some painfully secured through previous hunger strikes — into privileges its prison service decides to grant us or deprive us of. Palestinian prisoners and detainees have suffered from torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, and medical negligence. Some have been killed while in detention. According to the latest count from the Palestinian Prisoners Club, about 200 Palestinian prisoners have died since 1967."

Because of such actions

Palestinian prisoners and their families also remain a primary target of Israel's policy of imposing collective punishments.

### Israel's Cynical Justification

Israel justifies the treatment of the Palestinians political prisoner on two grounds. The first one is that Hamas is cruel toward Israeli captives - dead or alive. For example, it complains that: "Hamas has rejected an Israeli offer to free 18 Palestinians and hand over 19 bodies seized during the 2014 war in Gaza in exchange for the bodies of two IDF soldiers who died in the 50-day conflict, and two other Israelis that crossed the border to Gaza. One of them is mentally ill. Israel's chief negotiator Lior Lotan said." He added that Hamas demanded to free other prisoners as well for this exchange.

What he did not tell us is that Israel has arrested even Hamas members of parliament. A parliament that has not been convened for over 10 years as part of Israeli pressure tactics on Hamas.

In an interview with Al-Monitor, a senior Hamas official in Gaza who is involved in the prisoner issue said that: "the details published to date are "disinformation." For about a year, he said, all contacts on the issue have been deadlocked, because of one condition that Hamas considers essential to any deal. We are steadfast in our demand for the release of the 54 Shalit deal detainees. Without that, there is nothing to talk about and no way to proceed," the official declared. The detainees were released as part of the 2011 exchange for the IDF soldier Gilad Shalit but rearrested after the abduction and murder of three Israeli teens in the Etzion settlement bloc in 2014.

Secondly, that the Palestinian political prisoners are "terrorists with blood on their hands". However,



Free all Palestinian political prisoners!

the Zionists are the last ones who can claim that the Palestinians have blood on their hands. In addition to the ethnic cleansing of 1948 resulted in the removal between 750,000-900,000 Palestinians and the over 30 massacres carried out by the Zionist armed forces, since the formation of Israel at least 10,000 civilians Palestinians were killed by Israel. Since 1967 around 800,000 Palestinians have been in prisons.

According to the BBC between July 8th and August 27th, 2014, more than 2,100 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip, along with 66 Israeli soldiers and seven Israeli civilians. The UN says the vast majority of Palestinian casualties are civilians. But figures from previous operations over the past six years in the densely populated Gaza Strip show it is not the first time civilians have paid a heavy price. The UN says at least 2,104 Palestinian died, including 1,462 civilians, of whom 495 were children and 253 women.

However, according to the Israeli government, Israel killed 1000 terrorists. Thus, for Israel unarmed children and women are in fact terrorists.

### Israel tries to suppress the Hunger Strike

The kind of judicial apartheid that Barghouti wrote about was demonstrated in the trial of sergeant Azaria who received 18 months for the cold blooded murder of an injured Palestinian.

Many thousands of Palestinians demonstrated in the West Bank and Gaza in support of the strike. 11 were injured by the Israeli army shootings.

"At a rally marking the annual Palestinian "Prisoner's Day" in the West Bank, Abbas sent his support to the hunger-strikers and said Israel was being "stubborn" for refusing to "accept the just humanitarian demands of the prisoners."

According to the Ynet news website, Abbas made no mention of the strike's initiator and leader Marwan Barghouti. Some Palestinian officials have attributed Barghouti's call for the strike to an attempt to send a message to the Fatah leadership and Abbas, who excluded Barghouti's people from a recent Central Committee meeting and didn't give Barghouti the position of deputy chair to the PA.

This may explain why the supporters of Abbas in the prisons have not joined the strike so far.

While for the Zionists Barghouti and the other Palestinian political prisoners are dangerous criminals, for the Palestinians and all who oppose the systematic repression of the Palestinians by Israel, the so called "security prisoners" and "terrorists" are freedom fighters against national oppression.

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine fully supports the hunger strike. We oppose the Israeli government that is trying to smash the hunger strike by various methods including the isolation of Barghouti for two "offenses". The first one for going on hunger strike and the second one for expressing his views in the New York Times.

Israeli Minister of Public Security, Gilad Erdan, has threatened to deny prisoners on hunger strike access to standard hospitals in an attempt to thwart the strike and block popular solidarity in Palestine '48. Instead, he has ordered the creation of a "field hospital" in the Negev desert prison, planning for the transfer of hunger strikers, and potentially threatening hunger strikers with forced feeding.

At the same time Fadwa Barghouti, Palestinian lawyer

and the wife of Marwan Barghouti, urged solidarity for the prisoners' demands and their hunger strike. A number of Palestinian organizations and institutions have organized events for Palestinian Prisoners' Day and the coming weeks.

The Palestinian political prisoners are freedom fighters, not different from the black political prisoners in South Africa during the Apartheid regime. Not different from the known Black Panther prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal.

### An Analogy: The Heroic Uprising in the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw

77 years ago, during World War II another group of freedom fighters stood up against oppression. At that time it was a group of Jews. They were also considered by the (German) state authorities to be criminals "with blood on their hands". Israel is not Nazi Germany, but it is an oppressive state, as it was recognized by Marek Edelman (1919-2009) a leader of this Jewish group.

World War II was the continuation of the World War I. The root cause of these wars was the contradiction between a world economy and the existence of imperialist powers struggling to control the world economy. Germany that had developed industry was in need of colonies but these colonies were controlled by the so called "democratic states", Great Britain, France and USA.

The only major power that was not an imperialist state was Stalinist Russia where the counter revolutionary bureaucracy removed the working class from the political power by a political counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin.

In the 1932 elections the Nazis won 33 percent of the votes, more than any single party. The Social Democrats (SPD) and the German Communist party together had more votes but they were unable to form a united front. In January 1933 Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany.

Between 1933 and 1939 the interest of the ruling classes in the western states was to turn Hitler against the Soviet Union and for this reason, for example, the 1936 Olympic Games were held in Berlin. For this reason the policy of the "non intervention" during the Spanish civil war helped Franco that was supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

At the same time, in countries like Britain, to volunteer to fight against Franco was considered a crime. In Palestine the Communist party organized 300 Jews and Arabs to the International Brigades. The Zionists not only opposed them but were busy in stealing Arab lands in what was known as the Tower and Stockade operation during the 1936-39 Arab revolt.

All the enemies of the working class revolutionary wave, which Spain was the last part of, united to prevent and smash the revolution. A similar event has been taking place in Syria in the last six years.

Around 100 million people died in WWII, most victims were civilians, among them millions of Jews. Shortly after Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland, in September 1939, more than 400,000 Jews in Warsaw were confined to a small part of the city. This ghetto was sealed off by brick walls, barbed wire and armed guards, and anyone caught leaving the Ghetto was shot on sight. The Nazis controlled the amount of food that was brought into the ghetto. It is similar to the Ghetto in Gaza.

In 1942 the Nazis began the "Final solution"- the systematic killing of the Jews. Heinrich Himmler the head of the Nazi paramilitary corps, the SS, ordered

that Jews be sent to extermination camps. In September 1942 some 265,000 Jews had been deported from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Between 55,000 to 60,000 Jews remained in the Warsaw ghetto, and small groups formed underground self-defense units. The larger one was the Jewish Combat Organization, or ZOB, which managed to smuggle in a limited supply of weapons from anti-Nazi Poles. It was a united front of Anti Zionist and left wing Zionists. There was another military anti-Nazi smaller organization the ZZB was formed by the right wing Revisionists.

The ZOB received their weapons from the Communist underground while the ZZB received their weapons from the Nationalist Polish Home Army. The Zionists in Palestine did not provide even one bullet. They kept their weapons and ammunition for the Arabs.

A few Jewish fighters survived, one of them was Marek Edelman who was one of the leaders of the ZOB. After the war he remained in Poland. In August 2002, he intervened in Israel's show trial of the now jailed Palestinian resistance leader, Marwan Barghouti. He wrote a letter of solidarity to the Palestinian movement, and though he criticized the suicide bombers, its tone infuriated the Israeli government and its press. Edelman had always resented Israel's claim on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising as a symbol of Jewish liberation. Now he said this belonged to the Palestinians.

He addressed his letter to the Palestinian ZOB, "commanders of the Palestinian military, paramilitary and partisan operations – to all the soldiers of the Palestinian fighting organizations". The old Jewish anti-Nazi ghetto fighter had placed his immense moral authority at the disposal of the only side he deemed worthy of it.



Freedom for Syria and Palestine!

## We Condemn the Astana Deal as an Attack on the Syrian Revolution!

*Joint Statement by activists who support the continuation of the Syrian Revolution*

1) We strongly condemn the Astana Deal as a maneuver of Assad, Russia, Iran and Turkey, with the support of the US, against the Syrian Revolution.

2) The Astana Deal, if implemented, is aimed at partitioning Syria country and liquidating the revolution. It would hand over control of the liberated areas ("de-escalation zones") to the reactionary regimes of Putin, Khamenei and Erdoğan. As Russian and Iranian forces have supported the Assad regime in its massacre of the Syrian people for years, handing control over the liberated areas to them is equivalent to handing them over to Damascus, i.e., annulling many of the gains of the revolutionary struggle since its beginning. Furthermore, the deal justifies the continuation of the barbaric war of Assad, as well as that of the Great Powers – both inside and outside the so-called "de-escalation zones" – against forces which are legitimate part of the Syrian Revolution, but which are considered "terrorists" by these imperialist state terrorists and their lackeys.

3) We oppose all infighting between Syrian revolutionary factions. Such internecine bloodletting is tremendously destructive to the struggle for liberation and only assists Assad and his backers in liquidating the Syrian Revolution.

4) We call upon all factions of the Syrian Revolution to condemn the Astana Deal and to immediately end their participation in the ongoing negotiations in the capital of Kazakhstan.

5) We unequivocally call for the continuation of the Syrian Revolution against the tyrannical regime of Bashar al-Assad.

6) We oppose all military aggression and intervention in Syria on the part of all foreign powers, whether great (Russia, the US and EU) or regional (Iran, Hezbollah, and Turkey).

7) We call for the creation of an international popular movement in support of the Syrian Revolution.

## continuation from page 8:

IV) Finally, a crucial, if not the most important, goal of the deal is to split the rebel forces and to encourage the leadership of several factions to become accomplices in the liquidation of the liberation struggle. Behind the scenes, Russia, Iran, and Turkey, as well as the US and EU, are actively attempting to bribe the leaderships of various rebel forces into directing their struggle away from the forces of Assad and towards Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham.

4. We also draw attention to the fact that key powers of Western imperialism, like the Trump Administration and Germany's Merkel government, have already expressed their fundamental support for the Astana deal. (They only publicized reservation is about the role to be played by Iran.) This once more affirms our warning that all the imperialist powers involved – Russia, the US, and the EU – share a common interest in liquidating the Syrian Revolution by any means necessary. It also demonstrates, yet again, the idiocy of all those Stalinists, Castro-Chavistas and numerous centrists who claim that US imperialism is supporting or even controlling the Syrian rebels with the aim of overthrowing the Assad regime. In fact, such reactionary slander is designed to discredit the legitimacy of and popular support for the Syrian Revolution.

5. The RCIT repeats its warning that the biggest current danger to the Syrian Revolution – in addition to the direct threat of the daily bombardment by the forces of Assad, Iran and Russia – is the ongoing conspiracy of the Great Powers behind the scenes. They are pressuring the leaders of several rebel factions to turn their weapons against Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and others who more consistently fight against the Assad tyranny. It is this imperialist conspiracy which explains the repeated recent acts of aggression by Ahrar al-Sham against HTS in the Idlib region as well as those of Jaish al-Islam against HTS and Faylaq al-Rahman in the East Ghouta enclave. While both attacks against HTS failed and provoked popular outrage, it is clear that the imperialist powers, Russia and the US as well as their regional allies, will continue to encourage these forces to attack and weaken the more consistent defenders of the Syrian Revolution. It is hardly an accident that the leadership of Jaish al-Islam is part of the negotiation team in Astana and Ahrar al-Sham, while not part of the delegation, supports the participation of the Astana "peace process." In fact, it is revealing that the negotiators of the Syrian rebels attempt to justify their rejection of the deal by emphasizing the role of "co-guarantor" to be played by Iran, when this is, in fact, is a rather minor detail of the thoroughly reactionary Astana agreement. The imperialist conception of the "de-escalation zones" would involve the liquidation of the Syrian Revolution with or without Iranian participation! From this smokescreen tactic of blaming Iran's role, we understand that the leaders of various rebel factions are currently laying the groundwork to sell-out the revolution in the interests of the imperialist Great Powers!

6. All these developments re-affirm our previous warnings that both secular and Islamist petty-bourgeois leaderships are incapable of consistently fighting for the

interests of the democratic revolution. Rather, they are all prepared to betray the struggle and to serve the interests of a regional or Great Powers. In the long run, this is also true of the HTS leadership, despite the fact that they are currently refusing to capitulate.

7. In the present situation, it is crucial to put massive pressure on the rebel leaderships not to support the Astana deal. In fact, all those who are authentically true to the Syrian Revolution must demand that all negotiators claiming to represent Syrian rebels must immediately stop their participation in the so-called "peace negotiations" at Astana and Geneva. Similarly, all forces which instigate armed provocations, in the interests of the Great Powers, against rebel factions fighting against the Assad tyranny must be denounced.

8. In the present situation, all loyal supporters of the Syrian Revolution must call for the creation of an anti-capitulationist united front of all forces which unambiguously reject the Astana deal, which oppose the partition of the country by the Great Powers and their regional allies, and which support the continuation of the struggle against the Assad tyranny. We call upon all revolutionaries around the globe not to stand idly aside in this crucial hour, but to rally in defense of the Syrian Revolution. Organize rallies in support of the continuation of the Syrian Revolution and against the Astana deal! Organize material support for the Syrian revolutionaries who are continuing the liberation struggle against the Assad tyranny and their imperialist backers!

9. Finally, we repeat that the only way forward for the Syrian Revolution is to create popular councils and militias, under the control of the workers and poor peasants, which will fight for a workers' and peasant republic. We call for an international workers' and popular solidarity movement in support of the Syrian Revolution. Furthermore, we urge all authentic supporters of the liberation struggle to unite and found a revolutionary party in Syria and a global revolutionary international based on a program of permanent revolution.

*\* Down with the Assad regime! Victory to the Syrian Revolution!*

*\* Condemn the reactionary Astana deal! No participation in the Astana and Geneva "peace talks"!*

*\* Down with the interventions by the US and Russia in Syria! Defend the Syrian people's sovereignty! Drive all Great Powers out of Syria!*

*\* The international workers' movement must support the liberation struggle of the Syrian people! Organize rallies in support of the continuation of the Syrian Revolution and against the Astana deal! Organize material support for the Syrian revolutionaries!*

*\* For the creation of popular councils and militias! Fight for a workers' and peasant republic!*

*\* For the founding of a revolutionary party in Syria and the establishment of a new international!*

# Syria: Condemn the Reactionary Astana Deal!

## The so-called “De-Escalation Zones” are a First Step towards the Partition of Syria and a Conspiracy by the Great Powers to Defeat the Revolution

*Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 7 May 2017*

1. The governments of Russia, Iran and Turkey signed an agreement on 4 May in the Kazakh capital, Astana, according to which four so-called “de-escalation zones” are about to be created. These zones cover significant parts (but far from all; Qaboun for example is not zoned) of those areas which are currently controlled by the Syrian rebels fighting against the tyranny of Assad. (1) While the plan officially calls for the cessation of hostilities between the rebels and the pro-Assad forces in these zones, it makes important exceptions. It explicitly states that the “guarantors” (i.e., Russia, Iran and Turkey) will continue to fight against all “terrorists,” both inside and outside of these zones. In addition to Daesh, the agreement refers to Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), among other groups, as being “terrorist.” Furthermore, the deal envisages that Russia, Iran and Turkey (and possibly other “third parties”) will administer these zones and station troops (“armed foreign monitors”) there. (2) The US government, as well as that of Germany, has already released a statement welcoming the Astana deal and its support for the liquidation of the HTS “terrorists.” (3)

2. The so-called High Negotiations Committee, a “moderate” coalition of several forces of the Syrian opposition led by Riyad Farid Hijab, who was Prime Minister under Assad from June to August 2012, refused to sign the deal and criticized it as “vague” and “illegitimate.” In fact, more or less all relevant rebel factions published statements rejecting the agreement. This is hardly surprising, as these negotiations are extremely unpopular among the Syrian people and, thus, there is massive popular pressure on the delegations of Syrian rebels not to become a party to the deal. However, several of the rebels’ negotiators in Astana merely focused their criticism on the inclusion of Iran as a “guarantor,” i.e., the presence of military forces of the Teheran regime in the administration and enforcement of these “de-escalation zones.”

3. The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) calls upon all forces supporting the Syrian Revolution to unconditionally condemn the Astana

agreement and openly refuse any cooperation with the Assad regime or the so-called “guarantors”! This deal is nothing but a dangerous conspiracy aimed at liquidating the Syrian Revolution by force of arms and placing the still-liberated areas under foreign occupation. All forces loyal to the Syrian Revolution must condemn the Astana deal, primarily for the following reasons:

I) The deal hands over control of the liberated areas (“de-escalation zones”) to the reactionary regimes of Putin, Khamenei/Rohani and Erdoğan. The Russian and Iranian forces have supported the Assad regime’s massacring of the Syrian people for years. Handing over control of the liberated areas to these regimes is equivalent to handing them over to Assad, i.e., abrogating very important gains achieved by the revolutionary struggle. Troops from Russia, Iran, and Turkey will be responsible to militarily secure the “de-escalation zones.” Sergei Rudskoi, an official with Russia’s military general staff, explicitly stated that the “work of checkpoints and observation posts, as well as the management of security zones, will be carried out by the personnel and formations of Russia, Turkey and Iran”.

II) The deal legitimizes the continuation of the reactionary war by Assad, as well as the interventions by the Great Powers, against Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham – which is the largest and most disciplined single force defending the liberated areas against the pro-Assad terrorist forces – as well as other so-called “terrorists” throughout all Syria, i.e., both inside and outside the “de-escalation zones.” (The deal is actually not relevant to Daesh, as only small units of its forces are found in any of the designated “de-escalation zones.”)

III) Furthermore, the deal advances the long-sought goal of the Great Powers of liquidating the Syrian Revolution by partitioning the country. As a result, the Assad regime – in reality its Russian and Iranian backers – would control most of the country, while Turkey and the US, together with their Kurdish YPG allies, would control sectors of the central and eastern parts of northern Syria. A few enclaves would still remain under the control of some rebel factions who have expressed their willingness to act as the local gendarme for the Great Powers.

