



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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## Special Issue: Documents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the RCIT

- \* Strategy for Women's Liberation
- \* Lessons of the Russian Revolution 1917
- \* Manifesto for Liberation of Africa

- \* Essay by Michael Pröbsting:  
Military Coups and Marxist Theory

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## English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No. 2, January 2018

*Editorial Note: This issue of Revolutionary Communism is a special edition devoted primarily to the documents adopted at the second World Congress of the RCIT. This congress was held in two parts in Zambia and Mexico in November resp. December 2017. A report of the congress will be published soon.*

### *Documents of the 2nd World Congress of the RCIT (November/December 2017)*

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The picture on the cover is a poster from revolutionary Russia in the 1920s calling women to join the struggle for socialism.

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

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# Imperialism, the Oppression of Women and the Struggle for Liberation

## Political Guidelines for the Revolutionary Women's Work

*Resolution of the 2nd World Congress of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT),*

*(drafted by the International Women's Secretariat)*

**1. Women are the weaker sex, but only in the hierarchy of a class-based society.** Women's oppression is an organic part of capitalism as it was in earlier class-based societies. Each and every ruling class in human history has utilized the oppression of women to maintain its power and to weaken *all* of the oppressed classes. Women are not now nor were they ever in the past equal. We have been those who are exploited and oppressed in *all* fields of life. Like men, we suffer from racism, national oppression, and exploitation as workers. But, in addition to all of these existing forms of discrimination, we are automatically placed at a disadvantage in capitalist society due to our sex. This discrimination is not rooted in any biological or mental differences between men and women, but is the result of the emergence of private property as the means of production (dominated by men), the concomitant designation of women as being primarily responsible for domestic labor and child care, and the resulting class-based societies. Therefore, in contrast to the women of the ruling class we, as working class women along with our sisters from the rural and urban poor, don't desire to achieve equality

with the men of the ruling class *within* the existing capitalist system. No, we want to *eradicate* class-based society as a whole and establish a socialist society, one without exploitation and oppression.

**2. Today's class-based society is capitalism, "the epoch of the bourgeoisie" as the famous revolutionary Karl Marx characterized it.** The current class system, capitalism, has two main camps – the ruling class (capitalists/bourgeoisie) and the oppressed class created by capitalism, the working class (proletariat). The latter is unique in the entire history of humanity, as it is the first class that can open the road towards a future society without exploitation and oppression. Why is this so? First, the working class is the source of the creation of all wealth. Second, the proletariat owns no means of production other than its own labor power. In this it is different from the capitalist class which creates no wealth but which owns and manages the means of production. In the current world order, it is the capitalists who control the governments and constitute the ruling class. Third, the working class is a collective class and its struggle will not lead to new society

## Books of the RCIT

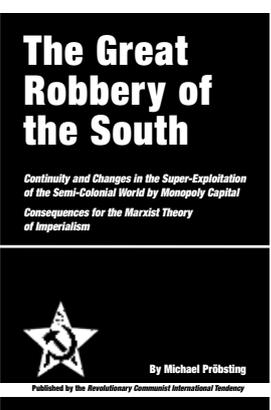
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He shows that the relationship between the small minority of rich capitalist countries and the huge majority of mankind living in the semi-colonial world forms one of the most important elements of the imperialist world system we are living in. The Great Robbery of the South shows that the past decades have been a complete confirmation of the validity of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its programmatic conclusions. *The Great Robbery of the South* demonstrates the important changes in the relationship between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Using comprehensive material (including 139 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that never before

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

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future. Order your copy NOW! \$20 / £13 / €15 plus p+p (21\$ for US and international, £9 for UK, €10 for Europe)



based on private property, but rather one based on socialized production. Hence, the struggle of the working class is *the* precondition for the creation of a classless society in which wealth will serve the interests of *all* people. But in contrast to capitalism, and by definition, a classless society will have no class or layer that lives off the labor of others. Work and wealth will be shared equally by all people thereby creating a society of freedom, peace and equality. Such a society is called socialism. We as women constitute half of the working class and we represent at least half of the rural and urban poor. Together we have the greatest interest in smashing the current world order. The liberation of our sex is intrinsically tied to the struggle for socialism.

**3. Under capitalism, there can be no authentic unity of all women, because the women of the ruling class oppress and exploit us just as the men do.** Our struggle is against the oppressors of *both* sexes. We must fight the ruling class *alongside* our class brothers. We must fight backwardness and sexism *within* the ranks of our own class *together* with our progressive class brothers. And we must fight against the misconception of a cross-class unity of all women. Instead, we fight united with our class brothers *for* the liberation of women along with all other oppressed persons and for the future of the human race. All of these tasks are intrinsically tied to each other. As the great revolutionary Friedrich Engels formulated in 1888: "(...) *nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class – the proletariat – cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class – the bourgeoisie – without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction, and class struggles.*"

**4. While the oppressed classes must be united in their historical task to smash capitalism irrespective of sex, age and nationality, admittedly there are differences in their respective personal and collective experiences of oppression and exploitation.** For example, migrants, in addition to capitalist oppression, also face racism; women encounter sexism; and the peoples of the semi-colonial countries (those of the African continent, Latin America, Asia with the exclusion of China, Japan and South Korea, as well as Eastern Europe) must contend with imperialist exploitation. The world is split in two great camps – proletariat and bourgeoisie (oppressed and oppressors) – but it is also divided into two camps related to nation states: the oppressed countries and oppressor countries. The poor countries of the world are economically plundered by the rich countries, regardless of the nominal political independence of the former. This exploitation is an integral, organic part of the last stage of decaying capitalism, Imperialism. During the imperialist stage capitalism, it is crucial that we learn from all experiences of oppression as well as from all struggles of resistance against it. The experiences of our brothers and sisters in the oppressed countries – the semi-colonial countries – are therefore crucial for all of us engaged in the revolutionary struggle. As the famous woman revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg said a century ago, from now on there are only two possible alternatives for humanity "*Socialism or Barbarism.*"

**5. Imperialism involves the brutal super-exploitation of the poor countries of the world and the inhuman oppression of poor women.** However, the bourgeois me-

dia spread the illusion that parts of the world are democratic and free. But each and every progressive element and reform in today's societies exists solely thanks to two main factors: First, the historically successful struggles of the workers and oppressed for these reforms. And second, the readiness of the ruling classes to pacify entire layers of the oppressed classes in order to weaken their resistance. This is the reason why, for example, the rich countries can create the illusion of relative equality of women. It appears as if women in imperialist countries are *nearly* equal, because of reforms which give them advantages that women in the semi-colonial countries don't have. However, while the women of the oppressed classes in the imperialist countries are far from being equal to men of their respective class, it is the women in the semi-colonial countries who experience the full extent of the brutality of the imperialist beast. But revolutionary women do not accept *relative* equality for one part of the world, but rather fight for *full* equality for *all* parts of the world. This struggle is based on a revolutionary program for the liberation of *all* workers and oppressed. Part of this program is the struggle for the liberation of the women in the semi-colonial countries.

**6. A revolutionary program for the liberation of the women of the poor countries is based on their economic, political and ideological liberation.** It is the task of *all* revolutionaries throughout the world, irrespective of gender, age, or nationality, to fight together with the women in the semi-colonial countries for their liberation. In this struggle, the women of the poor countries are the teachers. We women in the poor countries have unique experiences to share and we are the architects of our own future. Furthermore, women of the semi-colonial countries are also a crucial and leading part in the building of an international revolutionary women's movement and the revolutionary world party. It is no exaggeration to say: None of these can be achieved without the leading role played by the women of the semi-colonial countries.

**7. Economic development means less isolation for women.** In Black Africa as well as in Southern Asia more than 60% (in some countries, even more than 80%) of all working women labor in agriculture. Often concentrated in time-intense and physically challenging occupations, these working women are often unpaid or remunerated very poorly. No wonder that in Black Africa only 21.4 % of the working women are wage earners. In Southern Asia the number is even smaller (20%). All other working women are occupied in family-related work, mainly agricultural. Irrespective of the concrete relationship with the family members, there is nothing idyllic about agricultural, family-related work. Work in factories and other professional fields is also hard, but at least it offers the possibility of communicating with many other working women (and men) and of exchanging experiences. In addition, women working in factories and other professional fields receive a wage and therefore have a base for relative economic independence vis. à vis. their male relatives. Whatever the concrete relationship with male relatives looks like, an economically independent base is always an advantage for us women. For this reason, revolutionary women fight for public employment programs which can increase the integration of women in the working class (in agriculture as well) and higher wages for women. They fight against

the dependence of women upon their male relatives. As the woman revolutionary leader Alexandra Kollontai has stated, women who become part of the working class also become more "independent inside and self-reliant outside."

8. **Militant trade unions are crucial for organizing working class women against the arbitrariness of their bosses.** We, as working class women, gain some important independence from our men folk when we receive our own income. However, this does not mean that the struggle for equality and independence is complete for women. This is just the beginning and needs to be organized against the capitalist bosses. This also means joining forces with male workers against the bosses. Working class women are not only an important part of the work force and, therefore, important fighters against capitalism. Often it is reported that women of the oppressed classes and peoples are far more determined in their struggle against the oppressors. Yaa Asantewaa, for example, the queen of Edweso and a strategic leader of the revolutionary uprising of the Ashanti people, provoked an uprising against the British occupiers in 1900 by claiming that the women will start a war against the British occupiers if the men refuse to do so. Militant trade unions should learn from history and organize women, putting them in positions of leadership. Furthermore, militant trade unions need to fight for day care centers, paid maternity leave and other demands which are very important for women workers. Women caucuses within the trade unions must be built, supported by progressive male workers, in order to fight against any form of sexism within the labor movement! Revolutionary women fight for such militant trade unions; they build and lead them together with male workers. The latter can consider themselves lucky to have such determined partners

in class struggle!

9. **The land must be given to the poor peasants with women playing an equal role!** Professional work areas eliminate the relative isolation of many women employed in family-related economic units. However, the demands and wishes of many poor peasants must be respected and fulfilled. Poor peasants *must* become the allies of factory and service workers in order to smash capitalism and to build a socialist society. More than this: Only close collaboration between the peasants and proletariat can develop economical strength. As the famous revolutionary Leo Trotsky stated: "We must explain to the village that all the attempts of the worker to help the peasant by supplying the village with agricultural implements will give no result until workers' control of organized production is established." Revolutionary women fight for the expropriation of the large foreign and domestic landowners and agricultural corporations. We fight for the nationalization of land and for the distribution of the land to the poor peasants who should be the ones who utilize it. The distribution of land must be equal between the men and women of the poor peasantry, i.e., female peasants must have an equal share in the jointly-owned property of land. Cooperatives of poor peasants should be built on a voluntary and gender-equal basis. Furthermore, selling the land should be prohibited. Most women in the rural areas of Black Africa need to walk for at least 30 minutes to reach water. Therefore, for us women of the poor peasantry, it is vital that the agricultural infrastructure be developed, including the water supply, electricity, sewage systems and more. None of this can be achieved without close collaboration with the proletarian workers!

## Books of the RCIT

### 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 Bolshevnik-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 Bolshevnik 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

10. **The urban and rural poor are close allies of the workers in the fight against imperialism.** Semi-colonial countries are in such bad shape economically because they are forced into and held in dependence by the imperialist countries, which plunder the country's natural resources and super-exploit its people. The result is starvation and poverty for the majority of the people, affecting us women the most. Women make up more than half of the world's population and contribute 2/3 of the working hours (when we include unpaid domestic work). However, we receive only 10% of the world income and possess less than 1% of the resources. No wonder that 60% of the poorest one billion are women. The protection of the national economy against the imperialist influence is extremely important, as we are driven into poverty through super-exploitation by the imperialists. It is the imperialist beast that exploits the workers in the factories and at the same time creates masses of rural and urban poor. While the rural poor are mainly poor peasants, the urban poor are "self-employed" former workers. 20% of the urban population in Latin America, 31% in South Asia and 55% in Black Africa live in slums. Overall this means that 1 out of 8 people in the world live in slums. Like the rural poor, the urban poor have an interest in collaborating closely with the working class to smash the class-based system. Revolutionary women argue for organizing joint forces of the working class, the rural and urban poor to drive the imperialists out of the semi-colonial countries. We fight for real independence of the semi-colonial countries and for the immediate cancellation of all debts to imperialist institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. These institutions force our countries into debt and, as a result, we are forced to live in poverty so that they can garner their huge interest payments! Instead, the gangster financiers should be forced to pay us back every cent they received under the imperialist debt regime. Furthermore, the imperialists must pay massive reparations to the people of the poor countries whom they have been robbing for centuries!

11. **Massive public investment programs to create jobs by developing the economy, the infrastructure and the social system are important demands to eradicate poverty.** In addition, it is vital that massive investments be made to improve the current living conditions in the slums. However, all of this is impossible as long as the

economy of the semi-colonial countries is in the hands of the imperialists. The oppressed classes in the semi-colonial countries are the only ones we are capable of getting rid of the imperialists. While, on the surface, it would appear that it is in the interest of the domestic capitalists to protect their own national economy, they are in fact the first to obey the imperialist dictates in order to maintain their own wealth and rule. They justifiably fear for the position of their own class, as there will be no exploiting class, no capitalist class, under socialism. We as women of the oppressed classes have the greatest interest in a developed and protected economy, a strong infrastructure and a social system that serves the poor, one that serves the majority of us women. We want to end poverty. We have no sympathy at all for those who want to retain their own personal wealth in a system which is so dependent on keeping us poor! We demand a social system that includes public high quality and free childcare facilities! We want to end illiteracy, as more than 40% of the women in Black Africa are affected by it. Therefore, we demand a strong educational system that is free and accessible for all, regardless of gender and age! We demand a social system that covers all health costs, including birth control and abortion! We demand a strong infrastructure and public laundries, cafeterias and many more facilities which will relieve us from the burden of the household! We demand all of this and much more and we are willing to organize ourselves to fight for these demands!

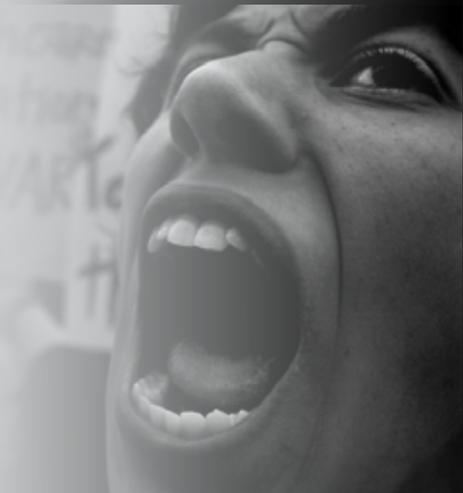
12. **We want to build a revolutionary women's movement based mainly in the semi-colonial countries.** While it is the unity of all workers and poor that we aim for, we respect the varying needs of each and every layer of the oppressed classes. As we face specific additional forms of oppression that (most) men don't face, including sexual violence, we want to organize ourselves in an international revolutionary women's movement. Such a movement should be based mainly in the semi-colonial countries. Such a movement must be part of a revolutionary world party that organizes all oppressed classes and all layers of oppressed in the joint struggle for socialism. We will prove it again, once and for all: We as women of the oppressed classes are the most determined militants of the class struggle!

## Two Pamphlets on the EU and Brexit

- \* **Marxism, European Union and Brexit**
- \* **The British Left and the EU-Referendum**

*Written by Michael Pröbsting  
(International Secretary of the RCIT)*

*Price for one pamphlet: 2 Pound (plus delivery charges)  
Order the pamphlet via our contact addresses*



# Resolution on the Lessons 100th Anniversary of the October Revolution: History Teaches Us that to Win the Revolution We Must Struggle Today for a Socialist Future!

## Liberation is only Possible if a Revolutionary Party Organizes the Working Class in Alliance with the Rural and Urban Poor for the Socialist World Revolution!

*Resolution of the 2nd World Congress of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*

1. The socialist revolution in Russia in October 1917 remains the most important event in the liberation struggle of the working class and the oppressed in the modern era. It was the first time that the working class, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, succeeded in overthrowing the capitalist class and created a workers' and peasant republic with the goal of spreading the revolution internationally. The RCIT stands in the tradition of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and the socialist revolution in Russia of October 1917. Our goal is to build a Bolshevik Party nationally and internationally in order to carry forward a new October Revolution.

2. The socialist October Revolution has confirmed a number of Marxist maxims which are extremely relevant for any fundamental revolutionary transformation today. The first is that the revolution will inevitably be defeated or thrown back if it is not continually driven forward, without interruption, until final victory is achieved and the working class takes power and overthrows the capitalist system. Any uncompleted revolutionary process which leaves the bourgeoisie in power, or a fraction of it, or reformist and petty-bourgeoisie leaders who act as servants for capitalism; all such unfinished revolutions will not succeed in solving any fundamental antagonism of the capitalist society. The revolution must become a "*Permanent Revolution*" (Trotsky) until the working class takes power through a socialist revolution or it will stall, be thrown back and ultimately defeated.

3. The theory of permanent revolution was the strategic conclusion of the Marxist's understanding that the development of humanity was ruled by the historic "*Law of Uneven and Combined Development*". In Russia the capitalist mode of production was developed within the feudal relations of exploitation of the peasants. As a result, Russia was a backward imperialist state with a large majority of peasants and a working class mainly based in very large factories (many of them owned by foreign capitalists). On the left there were three different theories on the coming revolution. The reformist Mensheviks argued that the revolution will have a bourgeois character and that the working class and the peasants must support the capitalist class. Lenin, until 1917, argued that the revolution will have a bourgeois-democratic character but will be made by the alliance of the working class and the poor peasants. Finally, there was Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution which stated that the revolution will begin as a democratic revolution but that the working class must lead the poor peasants and strive to take power. Once the working class will take power it will continue with the socialist tasks as part of the world revolution. Lenin adopted Trotsky's theory upon his return

from exile in April 1917 and called, despite opposition by Kamenev and Stalin, for a socialist revolution as part of a world revolution.

4. Capitalism inevitably throws the working class into misery, and torments it with *unemployment, low wages, job insecurity*, etc. This is the situation today on every continent of this planet. This was also the case in Russia before 1917 and remained so after the February Revolution in that year, when the workers overthrew the Tsarist autocracy but were prevented from taking power by a coalition of reformist "socialist" parties and bourgeois forces ("*popular front*"). It was only when the working class imposed *workers' control in the factories* and the Bolsheviks took power in October, only when they *nationalized the large enterprises and banks under workers' control*, that these crucial issues of working men's and women's life were solved. It was only later, when the Stalinist bureaucracy replaced the Bolshevik leadership in 1924 after Lenin's death that, one after another, rights were taken away from the workers.

5. The same is true for the *agrarian issue*. As long as the working class revolution is not victorious, so long as it does not expropriate the bourgeoisie and the land owners, the poor peasants will always remain an oppressed and exploited class. When the February Revolution brought the biggest petty-bourgeois peasant party – the so-called "*Social-Revolutionary Party*" – to power, it proved unable to expropriate the big land owners and distribute their lands among the poor peasants. Only when the October Revolution smashed the capitalist system, was it possible to *expropriate the big land owners by nationalizing the land and handing it over to committees of poor peasants so that they could distribute it among themselves*. This guaranteed the loyalty of the poor peasants to the Soviet Republic and enabled the latter to be victorious in the devastating civil war (1918-1921) during which 14 foreign armies fought against it on the side of Russian counter-revolutionary forces. The Bolsheviks advocated the creation of *voluntary cooperatives and state farms* to raise agrarian productivity. It was the Stalinist counterrevolution which took away the land from the poor peasantry in 1928-29 ("*forced collectivization*"), a policy that led to devastating famine which ensured the complete alienation of this important segment of society from the socialist goal.

6. The issue of *liberation of oppressed nations* is another example of the relevance of the Marxist teachings of Lenin and Trotsky for today's revolutionary struggle. Tsarist Russia was a "*prison house of peoples*," with 57% of the population being non-Russians who were denied their fundamental rights. This didn't change when the reformist-bourgeois government took power between February and October 1917. It was only the Bolshevik government, after

October, which guaranteed the oppressed people of their *right of national self-determination*. All nations were ensured full equality, their languages were taught in schools, their culture promoted, they had the right to found their own state, etc. It was only after the Stalinist counter-revolution that non-Russian nations were increasingly oppressed, that Great Russian chauvinism was promoted and that a number of small nations like the Chechens, the Crimean Tatars and others were forcefully deported to remote places thousands of kilometers away from their homelands. Likewise, the Bolsheviks consistently defended the Jews already during the 1903 pogroms as well as after the revolution. In contrast, the capitalist counter-revolution killed numerous Jews. Characteristically, Stalin also waged his campaigns against oppositional groups with anti-Semitic undertones. Likewise, the right-wing Zionists led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky supported the reactionary and anti-Semitic regime of Symon Petlura in the Ukraine during the civil war which killed many Jews.

7. Similarly, the Bolsheviks were committed to *unconditional support for the liberation struggles of the oppressed people in the colonies and semi-colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America*. They called for an end of imperialist domination and supported the anti-colonial uprisings of the Rif-Berbers against Spanish and French imperialism, of the Indians against British imperialism, of the Chinese against all Great Powers and of Turkey against Britain. Lenin and Trotsky called for unconditional support for the struggle of black people in the US and in Africa against imperialist super-exploitation and racism. They gave unconditional support to such struggles despite the fact they were usually led by non-socialist, (petty-)bourgeois nationalist and religious forces (*"anti-imperialist united front tactic"*). However, the Communist International advocated simultaneously the independent organization of the working class. It emphasized the necessity for the working class and the oppressed to prepare to replace the non-revolutionary leaderships as the latter will inevitably betray the liberation struggle.

8. The Soviet Union at the time of Lenin and Trotsky was the first state in the world which gave *women full equality*. For the first time women were ensured equal wages, voting rights, maternity protection, the right to divorce, to abortions, etc. Furthermore women played a crucial role in the revolution itself. Alexandra Kollontai became the first female minister in the world; women fought in the Red Army and played an important role in the political and social campaigns among the popular masses; and the Bolsheviks went on to create a communist women's movement. Likewise the young Soviet Union abolished all oppressive laws related to sexuality, including laws which criminalized homosexuality. Again, it was the Stalinist counter-revolution which took away from women a number of rights (like that of abortion). Similarly, Stalin added an article to the criminal code in 1933, which made male homosexuality a crime punishable by up to five years in prison with hard labor.

9. Lenin, following Marx and Engels, characterized the victorious workers state as a *"dictatorship of the proletariat."* Bourgeois demagogues maintain that this explicitly precludes democracy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Surely, the victorious revolution cannot tolerate its sworn enemies who will use all means necessary to restore

the power of the old capitalist class. Bourgeois historians refer to the example of the Constituent Assembly which was dissolved by the Bolsheviks in January 1918. However, the Constituent Assembly with its majority of petty-bourgeois parties (right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) represented an institution hostile to the revolution and it did not represent the will of the majority of the workers and poor peasants as it was expressed in the All-Russian Soviet Congress. Contrary to the claims of bourgeois ideologists, the young Soviet Union was full of debates about the course of the revolution and even saw numerous blocs and factions within the Bolshevik Party. Authentic workers' democracy existed in the revolutionary workers' and peasants' republic at the time of Lenin and Trotsky. Only when the Stalinist bureaucracy took power, did they systematically suppress any dissent. It expelled the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky at the end of 1927, and subsequently threw tens of thousands – later even millions of oppositionists – into prison, many of whom were later executed. Stalinism is not the continuation of Bolshevism but the embodiment of its negation. A line of blood is drawn between these two antipodes.

10. *The revolution is doomed to degenerate, to bureaucratize and finally to collapse if it fails to spread internationally to other countries.* This is so because (a) the imperialist enemies will unavoidable do everything in their power to subvert, to attack and finally to smash the revolution; and (b) because the modern productive forces, by their very nature, transcend all borders of the nation state. True, the revolution will not succeed in several countries in a single stroke. The working class will first take power in one country. But, while striving for consolidation of the socialist nation state as much as it is possible under the condition of imperialist encirclement, the priority must be given to the internationalization of the revolution, of spreading it to other countries. If this fails and the revolution remains isolated for a number of years, it is doomed. If a country remains isolated, it will suffer from backwardness and poverty. However, socialism can only be built on the basis of modern productive forces in order to free humanity increasingly from the burden of labor. Hence, socialism cannot be built in isolation in one country, as Stalin infamously proclaimed in 1924, but only on an international level. This was proven by the fate of the USSR, China and all other Stalinist states: first they bureaucratized and suppressed the working class and popular masses and finally they collapsed and opened the road to capitalism in 1989-91. This is why Lenin and Trotsky advocated the internationalization of the revolution as a chief priority after 1917. This is why they launched the Communist International in 1919. And this is why Stalin transformed this International into a subordinated appendix of Moscow's foreign policy and finally dissolved it in 1943.

11. Contrary to the claims of numerous reformists and centrists, *the socialist revolution cannot be accomplished by peaceful means.* The ruling class will inevitably launch massive and violent attacks against insurrectional workers and oppressed. The October Revolution itself was conducted relatively peacefully in those days, with only a limited number of deaths – proving that the working class is not bloodthirsty but rather interested in an orderly transformation. However, following the Bolshevik Revolution, the ruling class and their imperialist allies orga-

nized a vicious counterrevolution which opened years of bloody civil war. The experience and legacy of the Bolsheviks teaches us that every oppressed class that desires to overcome its circumstances must organize and arm itself in *workers' and popular militias* and later, after the successful revolution, create a *Red Workers' and Peasants Army*. The pacifist preachers of a "*peaceful transformation*" are nothing but lackeys of the bourgeoisie who only serve to disarm the working class and oppressed.

12. Another crucial lesson of the October Revolution is that *all forms of coalition governments with bourgeois parties, any kind of government which tacitly administers capitalism are in fact betraying the interests of the working class and oppressed*. Lenin and Trotsky rightly and vehemently opposed any attempt to politically support – to say nothing of actually joining – the bourgeois-reformist government between February and October 1917. For the same reason, the Bolsheviks continued to pursue the line of *revolutionary defeatism* during the war as Russia remained an imperialist state after February (albeit Lenin modified the application of this strategy in specific situation when e.g. the Kerensky government conspired to allow the German occupation of Petrograd so that the later could suppress the revolutionary workers and soldiers). The Bolsheviks resolutely generalized this experience and called the issue of support for or participation in coalition governments with pro-capitalist parties as a crucial line of demarcation between communism and reformism. Later this lesson was trampled by Stalin when he ordered the Communist parties in France, Italy, Spain, Austria, etc. to support or openly join capitalist governments and to oppose working class struggles against such governments (as took place,

for example, in the 1930s and again in 1945-47).

13. *Similarly, Lenin and Trotsky strongly denounced any political collaboration with or support for imperialist states*. While practical deals like diplomatic treaties and trade agreements are legitimate and unavoidable, this must never lead to any political support for such regimes. Hence, the Bolsheviks, after being forced to conclude the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany in March 1918, and again the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, never stopped supporting and assisting the German Revolution during this period which culminated first in the November Revolution of 1918 as well as in the ultimately unsuccessful uprising during the autumn of 1923. In contrast with Lenin and Trotsky, Stalin *did* advocate political support for and collaboration with one or the other imperialist camp (with French, British and American imperialism in 1935–39 and again in 1941–47; and with Nazi Germany in 1939–41). Such collaboration resulted in political support for or even the joining (by Stalinist political parties in Europe) of imperialist governments, and the advocacy of ceasing the class struggle against the imperialist allies, including the violent denunciation of anti-colonial uprisings in India in 1942 and Algeria in 1945.

14. Another crucial lesson of the October Revolution is how the Bolshevik party successfully used the *united front tactic* to win over the masses that initially supported the reformist parties. While refusing to politically support the reformist government which came to power after February 1917, the Bolsheviks made concrete demands on these coalition parties and called upon reformist-minded workers and peasants to put pressure on them by organizing the struggle in the streets, in the factories and on the

## Books of the RCIT

### 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

land. When sectors of the masses in Petrograd pre-maturely wanted to take power in July 1917, the Bolsheviks tried to restrain them as the relationship of forces in the whole country was not ripe for a revolution. Since a large section of the working class still had illusions in the reformists, the Bolsheviks called to throw out the ten bourgeois ministers. The Bolsheviks were prepared to side with the reformists when a military crisis ensued following threats of a military coup by General Kornilov in September 1917, but refused to give any *political* support to the government. However, such practical collaboration did not stop Lenin and Trotsky from sharply criticizing the reformists for their failure to carry the revolution forward. As subsequent history showed, such situations of the counter-revolution preparing a military coup to smash a popular front government, often take place (e.g. Spain 1936, Chile 1973) and revolutionaries must use the same approach as the Bolsheviks in 1917.

15. The Bolsheviks emphasized the *importance of the Soviets* to the revolution. Such councils exist as a democratic hierarchy – with councils organizing the workers and oppressed in every work place, neighborhood, and village. These local soviets elect delegates with a clear mandate to the next higher body – local, regional and finally national soviets. These delegates remain under control of the electoral base and can be recalled at any time if their performance is unsatisfactory. As representatives they earn an income no higher than that of an average worker. While such soviets already existed in the autumn of 1905 in the city of St. Petersburg, where Trotsky was elected as chairman, in 1917 they spread to the whole of Russia as well as to many other countries. We saw similar workers' and popular councils in Chile 1973 and in Iran in 1979. A similar form of direct workers' democracy existed in the daily assemblies and decision making bodies set up by the heroic South African miners in Marikana in August 2012. In fact, every authentic popular revolution is characterized by its being based on these types of mass workers' and popular councils in stark contrast with a coup by a small armed minority. Various centrists claim that the Bolsheviks made the revolution by calling for "*Bread, Land and Peace*". While it is true that they raised this slogan, the centrists omit the fact that the Bolsheviks combined this with the slogan "*All Power to the Soviets*". By this omission, the centrists distort the Bolsheviks' strategy and transform it into a Menshevik two-stage revolution.

16. Another important lesson of the October Revolution is that *the socialist revolution must be led by the working class*. The working class is the modern class that epitomizes the negation of capitalism. It is – and must be – the leading class of the revolution, even if it constitutes a relatively small force in society. In Russia in 1917, for example, the proletariat accounted for no more than 10% of the population, while the huge majority of Russians were peasants. There is hardly a country in the world today where the working class is smaller in relative terms. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks rightly insisted that the city leads the countryside and the workers lead the peasantry, because of the former's central role in the process of production. This lesson remains fully valid today.

17. However – and this is another crucial lesson of the socialist revolution of October 1917 – *the working class cannot succeed in its struggle to topple capitalism without an alli-*

*ance with other oppressed classes and strata of the population.* This is especially so regarding the poor peasantry which faces barbaric exploitation in the semi-colonial countries and which constitutes a substantial part of the popular masses in these countries. Another important sector is the growing layer of urban poor. In the old imperialist countries (North America, Western Europe and Japan) special importance must be given to the struggles of the socially oppressed layers of the popular masses – women, migrants, youth, national minorities.

18. The experience of the Russian Revolution, the early Soviet Union and its Stalinist degeneration offer rich lessons for our programmatic vision of the kind of society we want to build. Our Socialism – in contrast to its Stalinist caricature – will be revolutionary and free! Our struggle for the *Socialism of the 21st century* is inspired by the revolutionary spirit of the young Soviet Union at the time of Lenin and Trotsky, but which was subsequently annihilated by the Stalinist bureaucracy. We are fighting for socialism where the working class, the peasants, the urban poor (including both those still in being educated as well as those who are already pensioners) rule the society via popular councils which are present in all enterprises, schools and universities, and in the slums and villages. The *Socialism of the 21st century* – in contrast to the Stalinist dictatorship – is bottom up and *not* top down. All important issues are discussed in these councils and delegates are elected to represent the viewpoint of the rank and file in higher bodies; local, regional, national and international. These delegates must be recallable if the rank and file no longer feel that they are being adequately represented. The *Socialism of the 21st century* must *not* be a socialism where a caste of bureaucrats rule society as was, and is, the case in the Stalinist countries. It is an important lesson of the 20th century that socialism must never be a dictatorship of bureaucrats against the workers. Nor can the *Socialism of the 21st century* be one in which only a single party exists and rules. Rather, the working class and the popular masses will express their views in different parties which will compete democratically for a majority in the councils. Neither must the *Socialism of the 21st century* be one in which a caudillo rules over society as a combination of a parliamentarian and bonapartist system (as is the case in Venezuela). The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for will be characterised by a global planned economy and a world federation of socialist republics. It will move towards the creation of *general wealth for the whole of humanity* and, in this process, state structures and classes will gradually *whiter away*, to use Marx's analogy. However, in the period of socialist revolution and in the transition period following it, when the old ruling class will try to hold on to, or to take back, power by any means, the working class must do everything necessary to win what will be a long and bitter civil war. In such a period of transition, it is clear that only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the popular masses can smash and suppress the resistance of the old ruling class. Otherwise they will smash us.

19. The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for is one where the economy is in the hands of the working class and the oppressed and one which is democratically planned. Immediately after the successful socialist revolution, the working class will socialise the banks, key financial institutions, transport and utility companies and

major industries. Family enterprises and the peasant economy will remain as private property and will be integrated in a plan for economic development. In the end, however, the economy will never achieve its optimal development as long as significant parts of it remain in private hands. Of course, with regard to small scale production and property, such as peasant farms, socialisation should proceed cautiously, on the basis of voluntary agreements, and not by force as was the case with the Stalinist bureaucracy. The *Socialism of the 21st century* we are fighting for is therefore a socialism where people own the economy together and work together. We reject the vision of a Socialism based on autonomous cooperatives. Of course, for a transitional period after the revolution, there may well be cooperatives. But we have to be aware of their inherent dangers; competition between the cooperatives would inevitably lead towards the redevelopment of a market economy and, in the end, capital accumulation and concentration and the re-emergence of classes. When there is no private ownership of the economy, "ownership" will be vested in those who produce, and those they produce for, at the appropriate level; local, regional, national, international. Anything that can be decided locally will be. Broader allocations of resources and exchanges of products will be done on a national, regional or global level. Since there will be no competitive struggle for profits, no hidden privileges for bureaucrats or experts, there will be no need for secrecy. Information about resources and decisions will be available to all. We would not have a single, monstrous, bureaucratic central plan, such as existed under Stalinism, where everything was decided in one place by a caste of privileged bureaucrats. Under real socialism, what will exist will be an ascending series of plans at all appropriate levels, each decided on after debate in a workers' and consumers' democracy. Such a democratically planned economy is not a dream as the bourgeois propagandists claim. Via modern technologies it is possible to communicate needs and necessities and to coordinate production and transport across the globe in seconds. Indeed, every modern multinational corporation works this way. But, in contrast to the capitalist corporations, we will utilise the achievements of modern technologies not for the profit of a few but for the wealth of humanity as a whole.

20. The final, and probably most important, lesson of the October Revolution is that *the working class insurrection cannot succeed without the leadership of a revolutionary party*. The October revolution could only take place because the Bolshevik party had prepared for it for one and half decades by constructing a militant, combative party. Such a party can only exist on the basis of a solid and scientific Marxist program derived from theory. It can only operate successfully if it is based on iron discipline and democratic centralism (democracy in internal debates, unity in action). Its cadre can only be steeled by regularly intervening in the class struggle and by rooting the party in the working class. It can only exist as a workers' party with a special focus on organizing of women, minorities, youth, etc. The revisionist thesis that Lenin would have thought that the reformists could lead a socialist revolution is a falsification of history. Lenin thought that, under pressure, the reformists could go further than they wanted initially. However, he understood that such forces could never lead a proletarian revolution. In fact, the failure of later revolu-

tions has to be explained by the absence of such a Bolshevik party. Building anew such parties constitutes the chief task of revolutionaries today.

21. The October Revolution also demonstrated once more *the important role of personality in history*. Without Lenin and Trotsky, the revolution would not have taken place. Most of the Bolsheviks' Central Committee gave critical support to the popular front before Lenin arrival to Russia. In autumn many members of the Central Committee opposed Lenin demand for armed insurrection. Zinoviev and Kamenev even betrayed the party and informed Gorky that Lenin was preparing an insurrection.

22. Lenin and Trotsky always insisted that such a *revolutionary party must not exist in national isolation but can only exist as a world party*. Capitalism exists, and can only exist, on an international plane. Hence, the working class must also organize its struggle against the exploiters internationally. This is why Marx and Engels always strived for the creation of international workers' parties. This is why the Bolsheviks called for the creation of the Third International from the autumn of 1914 onwards and finally founded it in March 1919. This is why Trotsky saw the construction of the Fourth International – after the Stalinist degeneration of the Third – as the chief task of the 1930s. This is why the RCIT identifies the building of the Fifth revolutionary International as our central task today! We call upon all revolutionary workers and youth to join us in this struggle!

\* \* \* \*

***We encourage organizations and activists who share the general outlook of this document to contact us so that we can discuss working jointly for the liberation of the workers and oppressed:***

*The RCIT is an international revolutionary organization which unites sections and activists in 14 countries on the basis of a joint program and the organizational principles of democratic centralism (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel/Occupied Palestine, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and Austria).*

*For a more extensive overview of the RCIT's viewpoints we refer those who are interested to our website [www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net). We want to draw particular attention to our programmatic documents:*

*RCIT: Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation. The Tasks of the Liberation Struggle against Decaying Capitalism (adopted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the RCIT in October 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/>)*

*RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto, April 2012, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/>*

# Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

## Economic Freedom and Political Power for the Workers and Oppressed through Socialist Revolution!

*Document of the 2nd Congress of the RCIT in Lusaka (Zambia), November 2017*

### Introduction

For many years, the pitchmen of the ruling class told us that Africa has a bright future. In fact, these years were only shiny for the capitalists. We, the workers and oppressed in Africa, continue to suffer from the consequences of capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression.

Our continent is bleeding: climate change – caused by the reckless profit-driven economy of the capitalist corporations in the rich countries – increasingly destroys the fertile basis of our continent by leading to expanded erosion, desertification, deforestation, and most importantly drought and water shortages. As a result, 300 million Africans live in a water-stressed environment and this number is expected to increase dramatically in the next decade. Likewise, the World Bank estimates that, by 2030, the population living in dry lands is expected to grow by 58–74%.

Our raw materials and lands are plundered by American, European and Chinese corporations as well as white, Chinese and Indian settlers, while the African workers, youth and poor peasants continue to live in poverty!

Given the misery of life in Africa, it is not surprising that nearly a third of all people in sub-Saharan Africa seek to move abroad. While capitalism has introduced computer and mobiles, it has been incapable of leading Africa's people out of backwardness and poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 750 million people, who live in dire poverty (earning less than US\$1 per day), rely on subsistence agriculture as their major source of food and income. In the mines and the oil and gas industries, the big corporations super-exploit our workers – among them many children – until exhaustion and death!

This situation will not and cannot improve as long as the big enterprises and land are in the hands of capitalists – a class which by its very nature can only feather their own nests at the cost of the overwhelming majority, the working class and the poor peasantry.

As capitalism has entered an historic period of decay since 2008, poverty, wars and climate catastrophes will inevitable increase until the working class and oppressed rise up and overthrow this system globally. Under conditions of declining capitalism, the ruling class around the globe is relentlessly accelerating its attacks on the workers and poor. The imperialist Great Powers of West and East (US, EU, Russia, China, Japan), whose mutual rivalry is steadily intensifying, are terrorizing the peoples of the semi-colonial world both militarily and economically by means of super-exploitation.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) declares that economic freedom and political power can *only* be achieved if a country's working class, in alliance with the poor peasantry, overthrows the ruling class, expels the foreign imperialists and opens the road towards socialism – first in its own country, then throughout Africa

and finally internationally!

Confirming and building upon its programmatic manifestos of 2012 and 2016, as well as its *Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa* (2017), the RCIT issues this *Manifesto* to the militant fighters of the African working class, youth and oppressed. We call upon all revolutionaries to unite and organize for the international struggle for socialist revolution and the liberation of humanity!

### Foreign Exploiters – Out of Africa!

Since the European colonial powers entered Africa centuries ago, they have plundered our continent and enslaved our peoples. In the past, they shipped millions of black Africans as slaves to North and South America. Today, the imperialist Great Powers and their monopolies repress and exploit our people under the guise of formal political independence of the African countries. This is why we characterize these formally independent capitalist states as “*semi-colonies*” or “*neo-colonies*.”

As a result, the strategic sectors of Africa's economy, like mining, oil and finance, remain dominated by foreign capitalist monopolies. For example, as many as 101 companies listed on the London Stock Exchange have mineral operations in sub-Saharan Africa. These corporations control over US\$1 trillion worth of Africa's resources with just five commodities – oil, gold, diamonds, coal and platinum. Furthermore, these foreign monopolies command vast swathes of Africa's land area, their concessions covering a staggering 1.03 million square kilometres of the continent. More than 52% of all banks in sub-Saharan Africa are in foreign hands.

It is therefore not surprising that the imperialist monopolies succeed in reaping massive profits out of Africa every year. A recently published study gives the following figures: “*While \$134 billion flows into the continent each year, predominantly in the form of loans, foreign investment and aid; \$192 billion is taken out, mainly in profits made by foreign companies, tax dodging and the costs of adapting to climate change. The result is that Africa suffers a net loss of \$58 billion a year.*” (Health Poverty Action Briefing, July 2014)

We see, therefore, that for centuries Africa has been plundered because of its wealth in minerals and as a source of cheap labour. As a result, today it is the poorest and most backward continent. In other words, we can say that “*Africa is poor because it is rich.*”

For these reasons, the RCIT supports the call for the old and new colonial powers to pay compensation for centuries of slavery, exploitation and oppression! We denounce the hypocrisy of the western Great Powers which deny African nations and Afro-Americans reparations and ask us to forget the past atrocities perpetuated against these peoples. What a contrast this is compared to the reparations which have been paid because of the horrible Nazi crimes

against the Jewish people! Are African lives worth less?! After 1994, a sham *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* was created in the “new” South Africa as a healing mechanism. In fact white murderers were forgiven for their crimes.

Traditionally, our people had to suffer from the European imperialists and, since World War II, from North America as well. Today, new exploiters have arrived to grow rich from our blood, sweat and tears. This is the case with China, in particular, the new emerging imperialist Great Power and, to a lesser degree, with Japan and India. China has become the biggest trading partner of Africa and one of its three largest foreign investors on the continent. About 10,000 Chinese corporations operate in Africa. They control about 12% of its total industrial production.

Various greedy politicians, camouflaging their goals with some pseudo-socialist phraseology (like the ANC and the Stalinist SACP in South Africa or Mugabe’s ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe), try to sell us China as a better, benign Great Power. As a matter of fact, the Chinese monopolies are no better than their European and American rivals: they *all* are sucking us dry!

The RCIT calls for a joint struggle of the workers and popular mass organizations to expropriate the imperialist monopolies and to scrap all imperialist deals which impose on the African countries another form of slavery – economic slavery!

As a result of our economic dependence on the Great Powers and their monopolies, in our political life we are dominated by them too. True, they don’t occupy our land directly as they did in the epoch of colonialism. Today, they control the African continent indirectly via the local ruling class. While occasional and temporary conflicts can occur between the imperialists and African capitalists, the latter are organically incapable of breaking with the imperialist system. This is because no national capitalist market can exist in isolation from the world market and the latter is dominated precisely by the imperialist monopolies. Capitalism in Africa exists, and can only exist, as an amalgamation of imperialist capital and indigenous African capital in which the latter is subordinate to the former.

In order to better control our continent, the Great Powers increasingly create military bases and intervene either directly or via local puppets: French and German troops have been stationed in Mali to put down the insurgency of the Tuareg people in Azawad; US and European troops repeatedly strike and kill in Somalia as well as Libya; France and the US operate military bases in several African countries as does China in Djibouti; and various Great Powers deploy warships offshore from both Somalia and Libya. Furthermore, the Great Powers increasingly deploy local African troops which formally operate as independent forces, but in reality are foot soldiers for imperialism (e.g., AMISOM in Somalia, the G5 Sahel Force). In fact, these examples are just a repetition of what took place during colonialism when France and Britain used African soldiers as cannon fodder to save their own skins.

The working class of the semi-colonies must resist the establishment of military bases under the US’s AFRICOM. This is an attack on the sovereignty of African nations and a cover to re-colonise African states and protect capitalist interests of the Great Powers. Let’s never forget that, at the height of Zimbabwe’s land reclamation in 2008, Tony Blair threatened to invade Zimbabwe using the US airbase

at Botswana.

The RCIT supports the resistance of the people in Somalia, Azawad and other countries against occupation by imperialist troops and their local agents. Likewise, we call for lifting the sanctions against Zimbabwe which – under the pretext of being directed against the Mugabe regime – in reality are an attack on the people! These illegal economic sanctions are in fact punitive measures meant to stop other African peasants from following the Zimbabwean example of expropriating land from white settlers. The RCIT unconditionally supports land reform in Zimbabwe – but at the same time gives no *political* support to the Mugabe government. We also support the increasingly determined demand of the South Africans to take back their land from the white settlers without compensation.

Another legacy of old and new colonialism are the minorities of privileged settlers. Traditionally, various African countries experienced the transplantation of white settlers. More recently, Chinese settlers (and in some cases also settlers from India) have taken up residence on our continent. Usually, they become privileged minorities which assist the Great Powers in exploiting our people. We say openly: the settlers can only stay in our country *if* they accept the loss of all privileges and the nationalization of their wealth (which they accumulated by bleeding our labour and land), and live among us as equals.

While the imperialist powers are no longer able to ship slaves, they continue to exploit our people via migration. Given the misery on our continent, millions of Africans are forced to migrate to Europe and the US where they are exploited as cheap sources of labour (relative to the domestic workers) and are oppressed on a national basis (i.e., discriminated against in terms of citizenship rights; terrorized by the authorities and racists; religious discrimination of Muslims and other minorities, etc.). As result of this mass migration from Africa, the imperialists deprive our continent of their educated labourers. For example, more African scientists live in the US today than in Africa!

We know that the solution for Africa’s misery is *not* migration but a socialist future, without capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression. At the same time we deplore the imperialist Fortress Europe, which bears key responsibility for our misery, and deny it the right to limit our freedom of movement! We demand free access to Europe! Likewise, we reject being used as cheap labour and demand equal wages and full citizenship rights in the wealthy countries!

Both in Africa, as well as internationally, the RCIT demands to:

- \* *Expel all the Great Powers (US, China, EU, etc.) from Africa!*
- \* *Expropriate all the imperialist banks and corporations without compensation! For the nationalization and centralization of all banks and the creation of one state bank operating on the basis of socialist guidelines!*
- \* *Cancel all debts to African countries! Down with the economic terrorist regime of the IMF and World Bank! No to all “free trade” treaties with the imperialist powers!*
- \* *Drive the Great Powers from African soil and territorial waters! Shut down all imperialist military bases!*
- \* *Defeat the military intervention of the Great Powers and their local stooges! Support the resistance against the imperialist occupiers in Mali and Somalia!*
- \* *Force the old and new colonial powers to pay compensation for*

*centuries of slavery, exploitation and oppression!*

*\* Abolish all privileges for the settlers!*

*\* No sanctions against Zimbabwe or any other African countries!*

*\* Reject imperialist border controls! Open the borders! Raise the wages for migrants to the levels of domestic workers! Full equality of migrants! Stop the racial oppression of Black people in Europe, Latin America, US and other parts of the world! Stop the Islamophobic discrimination of Muslim migrants in Europe; No to all religious-based persecution of minorities!*

### **The Wealth to Those Who Create It! Economic Freedom Now!**

In Africa – as everywhere else in this global capitalist bloodsucking system – the workers and poor peasants have to work hard to make the bosses rich. According to the UN's International Labour Organization, more than ¾ of all labourers in sub-Saharan Africa have to work in insecure employment conditions. About 80% are so-called "working poor," i.e., they are poor despite their having a job and must feed themselves and their families on an income of less than \$ 2 a day! Often they suffer super-exploitation beyond imagination. For example, an estimated 40% of artisanal (small-scale, subsistence, "free-lance") miners in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are children, who are forced to use their bare hands to extract materials, utilizing few tools and no machinery, with devastating consequences to their health! Likewise, many women and children have no choice but to work as street traders, domestic slave labourers (maids / servants/cleaners / baby-sitters) for the upper exploiting classes. Inequality is continuing to increase. Today, for example, the richest 10% of Ghana's population account for one third of national consumption, while the poorest 10% consume only 1.7% of goods and services!

The central class leading the liberation struggle is the working class, currently constituting about 30% of the African labour force. Among them are more than 37 million women workers. *This* is the class which produces surplus value and, hence, the profits of the capitalist corporations. It is *this* class which can paralyze the capitalist economy. Miners in the DRC, for example, produce more than half of the world's supply of cobalt, without which mobile phones could not operate. When the heroic miners of Marikana in South Africa went on strike and paralyzed the South Africa platinum industry for weeks, the entire capitalist world watched nervously. The same takes place when oil workers in Nigeria go out on strike. It is the *working class* which develops a collective consciousness, free of any desire to become small property owners. It is the *working class* which will lead the struggle for a socialist future, one without classes, exploitation and oppression!

The most important sectors of the African working class are those employed in the strategically crucial raw material industries (oil, gas, mines, etc.) as well as other central sectors like telecommunications, transport and the public sector.

Given their precarious living conditions, the struggle of the working class for higher wages, decent jobs, safety in the work place, and permanent contracts instead of unprotected, informal and temporary ones – all such immediate demands play a crucial role in the coming struggles of the

African working class.

However, as long as the capitalists control the means of production – the big enterprises and the mines – we will continue to be little more than wage slaves on the receiving end of their despotism. Economic liberation is *only* possible if we take back what we have created and what must serve the interests of the people. This is why the working class must organize and fight against all exploiters – irrespective of whether they are foreign corporations, white, Chinese or Indian settlers, or black capitalists!

This is why the RCIT says that any consistent strategy in the interest of the working class must strive to nationalize all big corporations, mines and banks under control of the workers! Only if the workers control state enterprises will we be able to ensure that no corrupt state manager or bureaucrat will misuse the means of production for the benefit of non-working class interests.

The most important ally of the working class is the poor peasantry – particularly in Africa – where agriculture still constitutes the largest economic sector, employing 48% of all the labour force. As, under capitalism, land can only be distributed extremely unequally, Africa has 33 million farms of less than 2 hectares in area, accounting for 80% of all farms. Landless households or those owning less than 0.1 hectare (1,000 square meters) constitute 25% of all rural agricultural households. At the same, huge swaths of African land are owned by white settlers – in South Africa a small minority of an estimated 50,000 white farmers owns around 90% of all commercial farmland in that country! Such figures reveal the authentic, capitalist nature of the government of the ANC and the Stalinist "Communist" Party which has been in power since 1994; a government that has forged an alliance with the old white ruling class instead of undertaking any serious land reform!

Furthermore, imperialist corporations are buying huge tracts of African land for specialized export production. Over the last 10 years, large-scale investment contracts in Africa have allocated 20 million hectares, more arable land the cultivated areas of South Africa and Zimbabwe combined!

Finally, there is also a significant layer of black capitalist land owners. In Kenya, three powerful political families are estimated to own more than 1 million acres (404,000 hectares) of rural land, while at least 4 million rural Kenyan citizens are entirely landless and at least 11 million own less than 1 hectare.

The RCIT calls for the nationalization of all large estates so that popular committees of poor peasants can decide how best to redistribute and utilize such land! Furthermore, the state must provide the poor peasants with interest-free loans. In our opinion, the most effective way to increase agricultural productivity is through the voluntary association of peasants into cooperatives.

An essential part of our program is the struggle for full equality for women. Today African women earn 30% less than men. They are exploited as cheap rural wage slaves in the agricultural sector. There are only few opportunities for public childcare (nurseries, kindergartens, etc). Furthermore, women suffer from violence and sexual oppression (rape, female genital mutilation, etc.). We say that, as women constitute half of our class, there can be no serious struggle for liberation without fighting for full equality for women. The RCIT therefore calls for the creation of a *revol-*

*lutionary women's movement!*

Africa is the world's youngest continent: 60% of sub-Saharan Africa's population is under 25 years of age! Like women, the young constitute a super-exploited sector of our class. 70% of working youth are statistically poor despite having a job. In South Africa, half of all youth are unemployed and 40% of those employed are informal workers. Access to education is pathetic, with the result that 29.6% of all sub-Saharan Africa young people are illiterate (2011). But, in countless struggles over the past years, the youth have proven that they are determined to take their futures into their own hands! There can be no doubt that the youth will play a vanguard role in the liberation struggle! For a *revolutionary youth movement!*

As a result of the ravishments of imperialism, Africa's health system is in a disastrous state. In sub-Saharan Africa, infectious diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS cause 69% of all deaths. While Africa bears one quarter of the world's disease, it has only 2% of the world's doctors. In Zambia, the doctor to patient ratio is 1:100,000! We call for a massive expansion of the health system financed by the raising of taxes on the rich.

Environmental pollution is a big threat to our health and our future. It caused the death of more than 9 million people worldwide in 2015, most of them living in the semi-colonial countries. In Black Africa even more people (approximately one million) die from air pollution than from malnutrition. Multinational corporations are the biggest polluters as 12.5% of worldwide industrial carbon pollution since the year 1854 is caused by *Chevron, ConocoPhillips, BP, ExxonMobil* and *Shell* alone. In addition climate change is also hitting the African continent and will have the worst consequences for our people in near future. While the imperialist countries will protect themselves from droughts, storms and other natural disasters, they will force us to die in humanitarian catastrophes like they did since now. The economic liberation of Black Africa is highly urgent in order to protect nature from the imperialist beast and to establish a sustainable and environmentally friendly production. We demand the closure of all polluting companies without reparation for the capital-

ists! However, the closed companies must be replaced by environmentally friendly companies to keep the jobs safe for all workers! Industry and agriculture must be based on renewable resources including renewable energy! Abolish the emissions trading system! It only serves the multinational corporations, but damages the national economies in Black Africa not to speak about the catastrophic consequences for the health of the people and the planet as such. Replace it with a 100% clear energy regulation for all!

Pathetic conditions of housing for most urban Africans is yet another expression of the poverty enforced on us by the imperialist predators. Half of the urban citizens in Nigeria live in slums; in Ethiopia and Congo the figure is three quarters! All in all, today 60-70% of urban African households reside in slums.

Africa's infrastructure also suffers from backwardness imposed by imperialism. Power production is pathetic: the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa (with a combined population of 800 million) generate roughly the same amount of power as Spain (with a population of 45 million)! Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer and most populous country with more than 160 million people, produces only 4,000 megawatts of power (less than half of its total demand), a fact which costs the country approximately 4% in lost GDP annually. The people of Lusaka, Zambia's capital, experience water stoppages that last days at a time.

Similarly, the roads and the public transport systems are, in general, in a deplorable state: Only one third of Africans residing in rural areas live within 2 km of a paved road. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that a mere 11% of all African trade takes place within sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that it would cost more to ship a ton of wheat from Mombasa (in Kenya) to Kampala (in Uganda) than to ship the same consignment to Chicago! We must enforce a public employment program to vastly expand the infrastructure and housing in sub-Saharan Africa!

Both in Africa, as well as internationally, the RCIT calls for:

*\* Jobs for all and higher wages! For safe and secure job! For a public employment programs to expand infrastructure, housing, health care, etc., financed by massive taxing of the rich!*

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\* *Nationalization of all big corporations, mines and banks under control of the workers!*

\* *Nationalization of large estates so that the poor peasants can decide how to best utilize the land!*

\* *Raising women's wages to the level of their class brothers! For a popular campaign to stop violence against women!*

\* *Jobs and education for all youth! Equal wages! Abolish child labour!*

\* *Free health system for all, financed by a massive taxing of the rich!*

\* *The right to decent food, housing and social protection for all!*

### **Down with the Capitalist Dictatorships and Corrupt Pseudo-Democracies!**

While, officially, African countries are no longer colonies of the imperialist Great Powers, they lag very far behind any notion of true political independence. Rather, these regimes of formally independent republics all serve the interests of foreign monopolies and domestic capitalists. They certainly do not serve the African people, but collaborate with the imperialist Great Powers.

This situation is the result of the subsequent selling-out of the heroic liberation struggle of our parents and grandparents, who forced the colonial powers to leave our countries, and its betrayal by the new elite ruling class of African capitalists and careerist politicians.

As a result, not a single one of the fundamental tasks of the liberation struggle – authentic democracy, real national independence, land reform in the interests of the poor peasants, and social justice – were achieved. This will remain the case as long as the working class and the oppressed don't topple the capitalist class and seized power!

Given the economic misery and social inequality throughout Africa, it is hardly surprising that the small black capitalist elite and their imperialist patrons only manage to retain power by means of open dictatorships and corrupt parliamentary pseudo-democracies. The decades-long dictatorships of the Gnassingbé clan in Togo, of Mugabe in Zimbabwe, of Kabila (father and son) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, of Compaoré in Burkina Faso, are just examples. In other countries, the faces of ruling politicians change more often; however they are all thoroughly corrupt and serve their capitalist masters.

Every day, attacks on the most fundamental democratic rights take place in our countries. Police and military feel omnipotent and behave accordingly. Urban and rural poor regularly experience their common despotism. How often do we have to pay bribes when we need deal with the authorities?! Oppositional activists, active trade unionists or students, activists for the rights of poor peasants or women, and critical journalists must live in fear of persecution or worse. Likewise, minority ethnic and religious groups often face discrimination. The struggle for the defence of the most basic democratic rights is a key issue in our struggle for liberation!

However, no authentic democracy is possible so long as economic power remains in the hands of small elite of domestic and foreign capitalists. As long as this is the case, the elite will be able to bribe whoever is in power and prevail over the interests of the working class and poor.

The rulers use the constitution to exercise their power in the interests of the rich. In order to fight against this, the

RCIT calls for the convening of a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly* for each African nation. Such an assembly should be a bourgeois democratic body with delegates who are controllable by those who elected them and who are open to recall by their constituents. The youth, who already possess the "right" to work, must also have the right to vote for such an assembly. The assembly's role will be to debate and decide on a new constitution. It must not be controlled by the ruling class which would only manipulate it in its interests, but it should be convened and protected by workers' and popular militias against any intimidation of reactionary forces.

\* *For the freedom of speech and assembly!*

\* *Defend the right to strike and demonstrate!*

\* *For the freedom of political and union organization, as well as the freedom to make use of all communication and information media!*

\* *No discrimination of ethnic or religious minorities!*

\* *For the right to elect and recall all public officeholders!*

\* *Access to human rights, including political rights for prisoners!*

\* *All state officials and their actions – especially police, army, intelligence, administration, legal, enterprise directors, etc. – must be monitored by workers' and popular councils!*

\* *For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!*

### **Organize the Workers and Oppressed for the Mass Struggle!**

The workers and oppressed in black Africa possess a proud tradition of struggle for liberation! Again and again, they have demonstrated that they are willing to make the utmost sacrifices to achieve freedom and justice. Like their Arab brothers and sisters who rose up in 2011 against the reactionary dictatorships, so have black African workers and oppressed. We have seen mass strikes in Nigeria and South Africa; democratic uprisings against reactionary regimes in Burundi, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Togo and Ethiopia, among other African states; an ongoing armed guerrilla struggle in Somalia against a foreign occupation force trying to pacify the country in the interests of the imperialist powers, to name just a few examples.

However, it is a crucial lesson of the past that serious improvements of our living conditions, to say nothing of our liberation from the capitalist yoke, cannot be achieved by looking for help from the Great Powers or the United Nations. To do so would replace one pack of politicians by another, whether this were done via parliamentary elections or by seizing power by an elite-led guerrilla struggle.

We can achieve freedom *only* if the workers and popular masses enter the political arena as an organized, fighting force. For this reason, our demands and goals are *not* a list of appeals which we call upon the capitalist state to implement, like reformist and populist bureaucrats regularly do; focusing on behind-closed-doors negotiations, elections and parliamentary manoeuvres. Rather, our action program is a militant one which focuses on the leading of an uncompromising class struggle to advance the self-organization of the workers and oppressed.

We therefore repeat the conclusion as we stated in the *Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation* adopted at our last Congress in 2016:

"It is for this reason that revolutionaries call upon the

working class and the oppressed to fight for their interests using all forms of mass struggle dictated by concrete circumstances – beginning with *mass demonstrations, strikes and general strikes, occupations, up to armed insurrections and civil wars*. Similarly, in all struggles revolutionaries call for the formation of *action committees* of workers, youth and the popular masses in workplaces, neighbourhoods, villages, schools and universities. Furthermore, revolutionaries call for the formation of *self-defence units* in order to defend strikers, demonstrators, migrants and refugees against the violence perpetrated by police and fascists. In situations of acute class struggles, such bodies can be expanded so that action committees can become *councils* (like the soviets in Russia in 1917) backing and backed by *armed workers' and popular militias*."

**For a Government of Workers and Poor Peasants!  
For a Socialist Revolution!**

Naturally, any defensive struggle for democratic rights and any successful strike for higher wages can only achieve temporary victories since, as it decays, capitalism is aiming to strangle and abolish bourgeois democracy and impoverish the workers and peasants so that it can squeeze out profits by any means necessary. This is true in *all* capitalist countries around the world, and even more so in Africa given the massive economic and political antagonisms within these societies.

However, even such temporary achievements cannot be won by appealing to the corrupt governments or by hoping to reform the omnipotent capitalist state machinery. Even the best-intentioned revolutionary politicians will either be corrupted by this machinery or, as we saw with the tragic fate of Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, Kwame Nkrumah, they will be eliminated. This is why a revolutionary party with a number of leading comrades is crucial for the future of the liberation struggle. Such a party can both correct wrong tendencies of a single comrade as well as continue the revolutionary tradition even if leading comrades have been arrested or murdered.

The only lasting solution, the only road to achieve economic and political freedom, is a socialist revolution. Such a revolution cannot be achieved via parliamentary elections or via a coup of a sector of the military, but only by a popular uprising based on councils and armed militias of the workers and the poor peasants. A resulting government of workers and poor peasants would go further than past revolutions: it should nationalize the land and give it to the poor peasantry; nationalize the large enterprises under workers' control; expel the imperialist powers and expropriate the bourgeoisie without compensation; abolish the western and neo-colonial education and introduce a new, a socialist educational system. In other words, in order to liberate the African people, we need to combine the democratic revolution with a socialist one.

Our socialism has nothing in common with the bureaucratic caricature which began in the USSR after Stalin took power in 1923/24. Our socialism will be revolutionary and not bureaucratic; it will be internationalist and not nation-centred. It will be socialism in the spirit of the October Revolution 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky!

**For Pan-African Unity!  
For the United Socialist States of Africa!**

The revolution cannot succeed if it remains isolated to a single country. This basic truth, emphasized by Lenin and Trotsky, has been vindicated by the developments of various African countries when their leader, after achieving political independence, focused only on their own country and not on internationalizing the struggle for liberation. It is particularly important to keep this truth in mind during the present epoch when the forces of production have become more internationalized than ever.

Despite the rhetorical commitment to Pan-African unity by numerous politicians during the past decade, the lack of any real desire to follow these words with deeds is demonstrated by how little trade actually takes place *between* African countries and how precious few rails and roads connect these states.

Africa will not and cannot be liberated if every country operates only for itself. The task of the socialist revolution in each and every country is to strive to support the struggle of the workers and oppressed in *all* other countries – inside *and* outside Africa. The revolution must strive to expand to other countries and to succeed in creating true Pan-African Unity.

Naturally, Pan-African unity must not be created bureaucratically, from above, but voluntarily from below. This means that we do not accept the official borders between the states African states which are often an artificial legacy of the colonial powers. The imperialist policy of divide and conquer, as well as the reactionary policy of bourgeois African leaders looking for factional support along tribal lines, has been a huge obstacle for the formation of modern nations (e.g., the tensions between Hutu and the Tutsi in Rwanda, between the Xhosa and the Zulu in South Africa, or between the Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe). Our goal is to *unite* the African peoples by first taking into account the huge diversity among its nations and ethnic groups (e.g., between 1,200 and 3,000 languages are spoken on the continent). We strive for maximum unity throughout the entire continent combined with a respect for the rights of *all* ethnic minorities (except, of course, those of privileged settlers). Our vision of Pan-African unity is characterized by its voluntary and federal character, as well as by an honouring of local self-government. Furthermore, we support the Arab workers and poor peasants who are also fighting against reactionary dictatorships and imperialist aggression (e.g., in Syria against Assad, ISIL/Daesh, Russia and the US; in Egypt against General al-Sisi's regime, in Yemen against the Saudi aggression, in Palestine against the Zionist state, etc.). Our goal is to achieve unity with the Arab people on the basis of equality and without any discrimination.

Africa cannot be united on the basis of capitalism. Such a capitalist unity – if at all possible – would inevitably lead to the discrimination and oppression of significant sectors of the oppressed peoples. Revolutionaries fight for the unification of Africa on the basis of a socialist program leading to the overthrow of the capitalist class and the creation of a federation of workers' and poor peasants' republics. In short, our goal is the creation of the *United Socialist States of Africa!*

One of the first tasks of the *United Socialist States of Africa*

would be an economic plan for massively expanding the infrastructure in Africa. Any integration of the continent will be illusionary as long as it is not united by rail and roads! Down with the territorial borders drawn by the colonial, imperialist powers!

### For a United Front of Struggle!

#### Overcome the Crisis of Leadership – Build a Revolutionary Party Nationally and Internationally!

Again and again, the African workers, youth and oppressed have demonstrated the utmost of heroism in their struggle against exploitation and oppression. But they suffer – like their brothers and sisters on all other continents – from the terrible crisis of leadership.

Just look what has become of those who took power in order to liberate our countries! They have become dictators grabbing wealth and privileges for themselves and their clan! They have become lackeys of old and/or new imperialist powers like the US, EU or China! This is the real nature of the ANC leadership in South Africa, of Mugabe in Zimbabwe, of Kabila in DRC, of Gaddafi in Libya, etc.

The so-called “Marxists” like the *South African Communist Party* are a similar example of a leadership which has betrayed the working class and acts as an administrator for the capitalist class, with ministers sitting inside government since 1994, and as servants of Chinese imperialism. We will never forget when this government attacked the heroic miners of Marikana in August 2012 and encouraged the police to smash this workers’ uprising!

Compared with these old traitors, new forces like Julius Malemas’ *Economic Freedom Fighters* (EFF) in South Africa look like fresh and healthy alternatives. True, the EFF rallies thousands of dedicated fighters for a just cause who can, in fact, play an important role in the liberation struggle. But, unfortunately, the EFF leadership is following a petty-bourgeois populist program which is orientated to becoming part of the capitalist parliamentary game. In order to get posts, the EFF leaders, who are fighting white monopoly capital in words, are actually collaborating with the *Democratic Alliance*, i.e., the traditional party of white monopoly capital! Similarly, while the EFF’s program talks about socialism, it calls for support for black business, which is an enemy of black labour!

Among the worst examples of misleadership are *Boko Haram* in Nigeria and ISIL/Daesh in general. While pretending to be radical opponents of the ruling class, they in fact direct their struggle not against the oppressors but against innocent civilians. They are a cancer which must be eliminated by all authentic liberation forces.

This does not mean that we advocate sectarian abstinence from popular struggles which take place under wrong leaderships. This would be doctrinaire nonsense. The RCIT calls for a *united front* of struggle composed of all mass organizations of the workers and oppressed. However, revolutionaries will reserve the right to criticise the petty-bourgeois misleadership when they fail in the struggle.

For the same reason it is necessary to work within the mass organizations even if they are led by bureaucratic leaderships instead of creating new trade unions or peasant organizations which, however, remain isolated from the masses. Revolutionaries should work inside such or-

ganizations but build their own fractions. They support efforts to build rank and file opposition movements inside trade unions and similar organizations in order to challenge and finally replace the corrupt and privileged bureaucracy at the top.

However, the most important task of Marxists is the creation of *revolutionary parties* throughout all African countries as part of the struggle to build a *revolutionary world party*. Such a party should be based on a revolutionary program in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Likewise it will build upon and be inspired by the spirit of self-sacrifice and dedication of the heroes of the struggle for Africa’s freedom like Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, and Thomas Sankara! It will have the task of organizing the working class for the struggle for power, i.e., to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to build a workers’ and peasant republic.

There is no *national* road to the building of a world party, only an *internationalist* one. Hence, a true revolutionary party, as well as pre-party organization, must *from the beginning exist* as an *international formation*. Without an international organization, national centeredness and finally nationalist deviations are unavoidable.

In most African countries, there is not only *no* revolutionary workers’ party but not even a reformist, i.e., a bourgeois, workers’ party. In those cases where such a party does exist (e.g., the South African CP) it has become so degenerated that it repels the workers’ vanguard, as we witnessed in the post-Marikana period. In such situations – when the working class has no independent party, but at the same time does not yet understand the necessity of creating a revolutionary party – revolutionaries call for the formation of a new *Workers’ Party* (or “Labour Party”), founded by the workers’ vanguard and mass organizations. This party should advocate an action program outlining the road to the working class’s taking power into its own hands as well as inner-party democracy to avoid bureaucratic degeneration. Otherwise there is a real danger that such a party will degenerate into a reformist force (as was the fate of the Zimbabwean MDC in the early 2000s, for example).

The RCIT is fully aware that the creation of revolutionary parties – nationally and internationally – is not a simple task, given the weakness of revolutionaries in numbers and their insufficient roots in the working class. But great accomplishments in the history of humanity are never gifts from heaven, but rather are achieved by hard and systematic work. Forming an organized international unit of determined revolutionary workers and oppressed, based on a common program and a joint understanding of their practical and organizational methods, is the most important prerequisite to the building of such a new, revolutionary International. It will be instrumental in the winning over of additional, broader sectors of the workers’ vanguard at a later stage. This is the project that the RCIT is dedicated to. We call African revolutionaries to join us in advancing this struggle!

We want to unite with all who can identify with the program presented here and who are willing to seriously dedicate their lives to the liberation struggle of the working class and oppressed. We have no time to loose. We have everything to win. Our struggle against the ruling class will neither be easy nor short-term. It will take years and

it will demand great sacrifices from us all. But can there be a higher purpose for one's life than dedicating it to the struggle for universal emancipation; to save the future of humanity?!

We call African revolutionaries to unite around this Manifesto and its five pillars:

\* *Foreign Exploiters – Out of Africa! Expel All Great Powers (US, China, EU, etc.) from Africa!*

\* *The Wealth to Those Who Create It! Economic Freedom Now! Nationalization of All Big Corporations and Banks under Control of the Workers! Nationalization of Large Estates so that the Poor Peasants Can Decide How Best to Use These Lands! Down with all forms of pollution of the environment and the people by imperialist corporations! Protect the health and the future of the people!*

\* *Down with the Capitalist Dictatorships and Corrupt Pseudo-Democracies! For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!*

\* *For a Government of the Workers and Poor Peasants! For a Socialist Revolution!*

\* *For Pan-African Unity! For the United Socialist States of Africa!*

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

*Long Live the Revolution! Aluta Continua!*

\* \* \* \* \*

*We encourage organizations and activists who share the general outlook of this Manifesto to contact us so that we can discuss joint work for the liberation of the workers and oppressed: [rcit@thecommunists.net](mailto:rcit@thecommunists.net)*

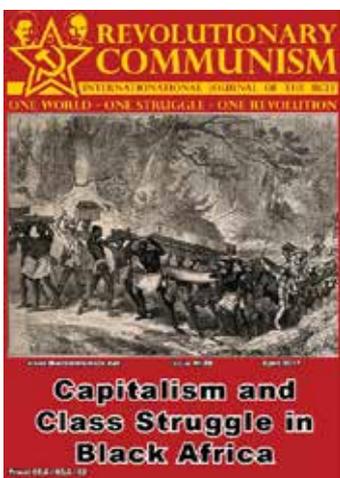
*The RCIT is an international revolutionary organization which unites sections and activists in 14 countries on the basis of a joint program and the organizational principles of democratic centralism (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tunisia, Israel/Occupied Palestine, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and Austria).*

*For a more extensive overview of RCIT viewpoints, we refer those who are interested to our website [www.thecommunists.net](http://www.thecommunists.net). We want to draw particular attention to our programmatic documents:*

*RCIT: Theses on Capitalism and Class Struggle in Black Africa, April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/africa-theses/>*

*RCIT: Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation. The Tasks of the Liberation Struggle against Decaying Capitalism (adopted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the RCIT in October 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/>)*

*RCIT: The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto, April 2012, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto/>*



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## Military Coups and Revolutionary Tactics

### Some Theoretical Thoughts on Different Types of Coups in the Present Period and the Consequential Tasks of Marxist Revolutionaries

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 05.12.2017

The recent military coup in Zimbabwe which resulted in the overthrow of the Mugabe regime and his replacement by the former vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa has been an instructive event in several aspects. <sup>1</sup> In this essay we do not intend to repeat the lessons which we drew in our past articles. At this place we rather want to deal with another aspect as the Zimbabwean coup offers us the opportunity to arrive at some generalizations in the typology of military coups. More concretely, we want to discuss three different types of coups.

For the formal, i.e. mechanistic mode of thinking such a differentiation might seem absurd. A military coup is a military coup, full stop. However, for Marxists who are used to think in a dialectical and therefore materialistic way (as it is the only method to think in a truly dialectical way), things are more complex. When we analyze the character of a coup we recognize not only the formal way of a political rupture but also the class content of this process. Lenin used to ask “*Kto kovo?*” (“*Who – Whom?*”) <sup>2</sup>, when he tried to grasp the class character of a given political process. And this is what we also have to do when we analyze the character of a coup.

Let us move without further ado *in medias res*. Broadly speaking we can differentiate three different types of military coups which consequently demand different approaches and tactics from revolutionaries.

#### 1) Reactionary Coups against Bourgeois Governments leaning on Popular Support

First, there are military coups organized by the most aggressive, reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie against a bourgeois government which reflects – from the standpoint of the capitalist class – too much the pressure from the workers and the popular masses. By definition, such a government is not socialist, i.e. it is no authentic workers government. Usually we have in such cases rather a popular front government (i.e. a coalition of the reformist bureaucracy mass organizations of the working class and other oppressed classes with sectors, or maybe even only a “shadow” as Trotsky once famously formulated it, of the bourgeoisie) or a bourgeois government which rests on mass support amongst sectors of the oppressed.

However, despite their fundamental bourgeois class character, such governments, exactly because their power rests to an important degree on the popular support among the workers, the poor peasants, the urban poor or the lower middle layers, are forced to make various concessions to the expectations of their popular supporters. This will usually result in certain social reforms, state subsidy programs for the urban or rural poor, democratic reforms which limit to a certain degree the power of the reactionary repressive state apparatus, economic or political reforms which reduce the domination of foreign imperialist

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today

#### The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today.

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – MARXISM AND THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC TODAY. The book’s subtitle is: The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today. On the Application of the Marxist United Front Tactic in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the Present Period. It contains eight chapters plus an appendix (172 pages) and includes 9 tables and 5 figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

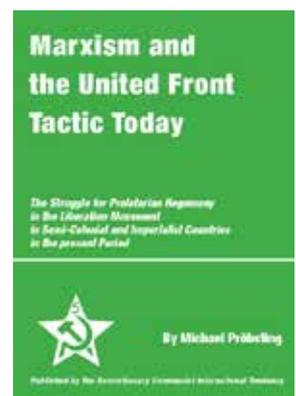
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

The united front tactic is a crucial instrument for revolutionaries under today’s circumstances in which the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed are dominated by social democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois-populist forces.

The purpose of this document is both to summarize the main ideas of the Marxist united front tactic while at the same time explaining its development and modification which have become necessary due to political changes which have transpired in the

working class liberation movement since the tactic’s original formulation.

In this book we initially summarize the main characteristics of the united front tactic and elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics to this issue. We then outline important social developments in the working class and the popular masses as well as in their political formations in recent decades. From there we will discuss how the united front tactic should be applied in light of a number of new developments (the rise of petty-bourgeois populist parties, the decline of the classic reformist parties, the role of national minorities and migrants in imperialist countries, etc.). The eight chapters of the book are accompanied by nine tables and five figures.



powers etc. Naturally, such governments do not endanger the capitalist system and are dangerous for the working class and the oppressed as they demobilize their struggle. Nevertheless they can provoke the aggression of the ruling class as such popular front governments can become a temporary obstacle for the capitalists' ruthless offensive.

Let us give a few examples to illustrate this type of coup. To start with some historical examples we could refer to the failed coup of General Kornilov against the "popular front" government of Kerensky in August 1917 in Russia.<sup>3</sup> Or take the military coup against the peasant party's government of Aleksandur Stamboliyski in Bulgaria in June 1923.<sup>4</sup> Another example is the coup of General Franco against the Spanish popular front government in July 1936.<sup>5</sup> More actual examples are the military coups in Brazil in April 1964 or in Chile in September 1973.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, to give examples from recent years, we refer to the bloody military coup of General Sisi against the Egyptian government of President Morsi on 3 July 2013<sup>7</sup>, the coup of the Thai army against the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in May 2014,<sup>8</sup> or the institutional coup against the government of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil in April 2016.<sup>9</sup>

All these governments had in common that, while having a bourgeois class character, they rested on mass support amongst the popular classes. As a result, the Morsi government – the first and only democratically elected government in the history of Egypt – put some limits to the total domination of the army command and lent some support to the Palestinian people fighting against the terrorist Apartheid regime of Israel. Similarly, the Rousseff

government with its support amongst the organized sectors of the working class and the poor peasants (e.g. CUT, MST, MTST) was under some popular pressure to moderate the neoliberal attacks. And the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra was hated by the bourgeoisie because it gave some subsidy programs to the poor peasants.

As the purpose of this essay is only to generalize the experience of different types of coups we refrain from dealing with these examples in detail and refer readers to the appropriate literature in the respectively footnotes.

To avoid any misunderstandings: all these governments never had a socialist character but were rather bourgeois in their class character. They were not willing to expropriate the capitalist class but only to implement some social and democratic reforms within the limits of capitalism. However, in a period of crisis and decay, the capitalist class can not afford even such reforms but must smash all obstacles which stand in their way to increase its share of the national wealth and to expand its political domination.

In such situations, the tactic of revolutionaries has always been to call for a united front against the immediate threat of the coup in order to defeat it. Such a united front orientation should focus on the workers organization but must also include other popular mass organizations of the poor peasants, the urban poor or the lower middle class which are ready to fight against the putschists. Of course revolutionaries would limit such a united front only to the practical struggle against the coup and for the defense of the democratic rights. At the same time, Marxists have to warn against any illusions against such popular front

## Books of the RCIT

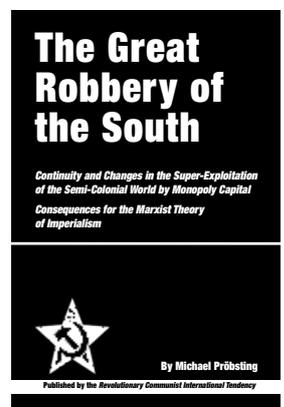
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting analyses the super-exploitation and oppression of the semi-colonial world (often referred to as the "Third World") by the imperialist powers and monopolies. He shows that the relationship between the small minority of rich capitalist countries and the huge majority of mankind living in the semi-colonial world forms one of the most important elements of the imperialist world system we are living in. The Great Robbery of the South shows that the past decades have been a complete confirmation of the validity of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its programmatic conclusions. *The Great Robbery of the South* demonstrates the important changes in the relationship between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Using comprehensive material (including 139 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that never before

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

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future. Order your copy NOW! \$20 / £13 / €15 plus p+p (21\$ for US and international, £9 for UK, €10 for Europe)



governments and must call for political independence of the working class.

Here is not the place to elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics on military coups in detail and we refer readers for this to other works of the RCIT.<sup>10</sup> To give a short summary we quote the position of the leadership of the Communist International which it unanimously took in face of the military coup in Bulgaria in June 1923. Grigory Zinoviev, the chairman of the Communist International, sharply criticized his Bulgarian comrades for their neutrality in this conflict and emphasized: *"In the moment where the fascists were in struggle with the leaders of the Peasant Party, it was (and remains today) the task of the Communist Party to unite with all honest supporters of the Peasant Party to struggle against the Whites. Has Kerensky not been an enemy of the workers in September 1917? But nevertheless did the Bolsheviks march with Kerensky against Kornilov."*<sup>11</sup>

Leon Trotsky generalized such an approach in an essay written in 1937 on the Spanish Revolution: *"Before 1934 we explained to the Stalinists tirelessly that even in the imperialist epoch democracy continued to be preferable to fascism; that is, in all cases where hostile clashes take place between them, the revolutionary proletariat is obliged to support democracy against fascism. However, we always added: We can and must defend bourgeois democracy not by bourgeois democratic means but by the methods of class struggle, which in turn pave the way for the replacement of bourgeois democracy by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This means in particular that in the process of defending bourgeois democracy, even with arms in hand, the party of the proletariat takes no responsibility for bourgeois democracy, does not enter its government, but maintains full freedom of criticism and of action in relation to all parties of the Popular Front, thus preparing the overthrow of bourgeois democracy at the next stage."*<sup>12</sup>

## 2) Military Coups as a Result of an Internal Conflict inside the Ruling Elite

Another type of coups is those which basically reflect a power struggle within the ruling elite. As the existence of authoritarian bourgeois regimes usually reflect a crisis-ridden background of their capitalist economic and social fundament, these regimes are often characterized by numerous internal contradictions. Given the nature of such regimes, neither parliamentary elections nor mass mobilizations are available as instruments to solve these internal contradictions inside the ruling capitalist class. As a result, the rivaling factions have to resort to military coups as an instrument of political change.

History has seen numerous examples of such coups which reflect internal conflicts inside the ruling elite. In order to give just a few examples we refer to the various coups taking place in Greece in the 1920s and 1930s or the coups in Syria and Iraq in the 1960s which replaced one faction of the bourgeois nationalist Baath Party with another.<sup>13</sup> The recent coup in Zimbabwe is more recent example of this type of coup.

In such situations, Marxists will always oppose such a coup. However, they will not defend the regime against the coup as both sides represent qualitatively equally reactionary camps. Hence, the working class has no interest in the victory of any of the two camps. It must

retain a strictly independent position and prepare for future struggles.

## 3) Military Coups as a Part of a Broader Process of Popular Uprising against a Reactionary Regime

In most cases, military coups correspond to the sample of the above mentioned first or second type. This is only natural as the army's officer corps represents the core of the bourgeois state apparatus. Hence, military coups usually represent the attempt of the ruling class (or sectors of it) to settle conflicts between them and/or to suppress the toiling masses by force.

However, as we have already explained in the past, there can be exceptional cases where a coup has a rather different character. Such a case belong to that type of coups which we would call the third category: military coups which are part of a broader process of popular uprising against a reactionary regime.<sup>14</sup>

Marxists, of course, do not advocate a coup as the way forward for the liberation of the working class and the oppressed. The method of the class struggle focuses on the organization of the working class in the struggle for the overthrow of the ruling class via mass mobilizations – demonstrations, strikes, general strikes, and armed insurrection.

However, there can be circumstances where the social contradictions between the ruling class and the middle class and the popular masses lead to sharp conflicts inside the army's officer corps. In such cases it can happen, that lower-ranking officers – coming usually from the middle class – rebel against the ruling regime.

One example for such a "progressive" coup has been an uprising of left-wing officers in summer 1932 which led to the short-lived *"Socialist Republic of Chile"*.<sup>15</sup> While the Stalinists denounced this uprising as *"a fascist coup under a socialist mask"*, the Trotskyists lend critical support to it.<sup>16</sup>

In our essay on the Egypt coup in 2013 and the treacherous pro-Army "socialists" supporting it, we named several other cases of such a kind of military coup. We referred to the rebellion of the *Free Officers* movements in Egypt (1952) or Iraq (1958) against the monarchies which were lackeys of the imperialist Great Powers. Another example is the so-called *Carnation Revolution* on 25th April 1974 in Portugal when low-ranking officers organized in the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* overthrew the reactionary *Estado Novo* dictatorship. The downfall of this regime which ruled Portugal since 1926 opened a revolutionary period in which the masses played a highly active role and only failed in a successful socialist revolution because of the betrayal of social democracy and the Stalinist PCP.

More recent examples are the successful overthrow of the reactionary regime in Burkina Faso in 1983 by a military uprising led by *"Africa's Che Guevara"*, Thomas Sankara. Another example is the failed coup d'état (*"Operation Zamora"*) of Hugo Chávez and his *MBR-200* movement in Venezuela in February 1992.

While Marxists would not participate in such coups as it contradicts our method of class struggle, they certainly would have a different approach to such coups than they have to the coups of the first and second type.

In opposite of the former cases, revolutionaries would not call the working class to mobilize against the coup. They

would rather advocate using the coup in order to mobilize against the old, reactionary regime. They would call for mass mobilizations to bring down the ruling elite and to fraternize with the soldiers who are conducting such a coup against the same enemy. In other words, they would join the struggle on the side of the rebellious soldiers but with their own methods of mass mobilizations and organizing of the workers and oppressed.

#### 4) One is Lost without an Understanding of Dialectics

As the polemics in the above mentioned RCIT documents on the coups in the past years demonstrate, there has always been a lot of confusion among socialists on how to assess such coups and which tactics should be applied. As the purpose of this essay is not a detailed discussion of these past coups but rather arriving at a generalization of the different types of coups, we limit ourselves to some observations which seem to us useful in order to better understand the dialectical nature of our approach.

While we have elaborated the different essence of the three types of military coup, it would be wrong to mechanistically imagine that there would exist a "Chinese Wall" between them. It can be the case, and actually it has happened repeatedly, that a concrete coup of one type contains also certain elements of another type. A reactionary coup against a bourgeois government based on popular support can also have some support among the backward middle class. For example, the coup of General Pinochet in September 1973 could count on the support of Chile's right-wing middle class which increasingly held large demonstrations on the streets at that time. Likewise, the Egypt army command was able to mobilize mass demonstrations for their support in 2013.

The same could be said about the institutional coup against the Rousseff government in Brazil as it became visible in the repeated reactionary mass demonstrations in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The recent coup in Zimbabwe led by General Chiwenga and Emmerson Mnangagwa also had some support among sectors of the population who were fed up of the Mugabe regime.

The German philosopher Hegel liked to say – and the Marxist classics referred to this insight many times – that *"the truth is always concrete"*. Marx himself once remarked in Volume III of *Capital*: *"But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided."*<sup>17</sup> Hence, the task of Marxist is to analyze concretely a given phenomenon and to understand its essence. This includes also the necessity to recognize the *"concrete totality as a unity of universal and particular"* as Abram Deborin, the leading Soviet philosopher of the 1920s before Stalin's clamp down, splendidly worded it.<sup>18</sup> Hence, Marxists have to analyze which elements of a given totality are dominating and which are rather subordinated. As Lenin once remarked in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, one of the fundamental requirements of the materialist dialectic is to *"the deepening of man's knowledge of the thing, of phenomena, processes, etc., from appearance to essence and from less profound to more profound essence."*<sup>19</sup>

#### 5) Can the Coup in Zimbabwe be compared with Egypt Coup?

Let us briefly deal with an example of such a confusion which arises if one does not carefully distinguish the different types of military coups as we outlined it above. The comrades of the South African *"Workers International Vanguard League"* committed, in our opinion, such a

## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today

#### The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today.

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – MARXISM AND THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC TODAY. The book's subtitle is: The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today. On the Application of the Marxist United Front Tactic in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the Present Period. It contains eight chapters plus an appendix (172 pages) and includes 9 tables and 5 figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

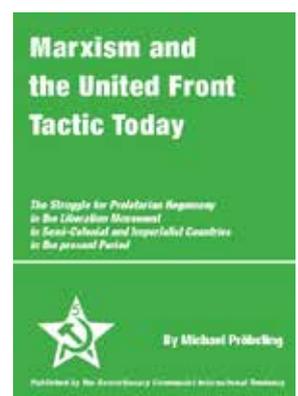
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

The united front tactic is a crucial instrument for revolutionaries under today's circumstances in which the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed are dominated by social democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois-populist forces.

The purpose of this document is both to summarize the main ideas of the Marxist united front tactic while at the same time explaining its development and modification which have become necessary due to political changes which have transpired in the

working class liberation movement since the tactic's original formulation.

In this book we initially summarize the main characteristics of the united front tactic and elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics to this issue. We then outline important social developments in the working class and the popular masses as well as in their political formations in recent decades. From there we will discuss how the united front tactic should be applied in light of a number of new developments (the rise of petty-bourgeois populist parties, the decline of the classic reformist parties, the role of national minorities and migrants in imperialist countries, etc.). The eight chapters of the book are accompanied by nine tables and five figures.



mistake. In their statement on the coup in Zimbabwe, which contains a number of correct conclusions, they also draw *“some parallels with the coup in Egypt when General Sisi deposed elected leader, Morsi. The Generals played on the inability of the democratic regime to meet the needs of the masses. They posed as the friends of the masses. Gradually they cemented their control, declared a state of emergency and brutally suppressed the masses, thousands were imprisoned and many killed. Once they had consolidated their grip they lifted the charges against the deposed dictator, Mubarak and rolled back many of the gains of the Tahrir square uprising.”*<sup>20</sup>

Here is not the place to repeat our detailed analyses of the coups in Egypt in 2013 and in Zimbabwe in 2017 which can be read in the numerous documents which we have produced about these events. It is sufficient to remark that hundreds of thousands of people marched on the streets, occupied central places and faced the most brutal repression in defending the Morsi government against the coup plotters – a government which was elected in the freest bourgeois parliamentary election the country has ever seen. This repression resulted in the killing of thousands of demonstrators and the arrest of tens of thousands of people. More than 1.000 protestors were murdered shortly after the coup on a single day, the 14 August 2013, on Rabaa Square and al-Nahda Square in Cairo – *“one of the world’s largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history”* (Human Rights Watch)!

Compare this with Zimbabwe: not a single demonstration in defense of Mugabe took place – neither during the time of the coup nor since then!

The Egypt coup took place against the background of fundamental clashes between the classes which were reflected in numerous mass demonstrations. The coup in Zimbabwe was an internal affair inside the ruling elite which found expression in a faction struggle inside the ZANU-PF government party.

Consequently, Mohammed Morsi has been in prison since the coup and faces the death penalty. Mugabe and his family, on the other hand, were guaranteed immunity and could retain their multi-million dollar wealth.

Let us repeat, in conclusion, that it is obligatory for any Marxist analysis to separate the primary factors from the secondary and *“to assess, above all, the general direction of the development”* – to put it in the words of Abram Deborin.<sup>21</sup> Such a concrete and correct assessment is crucial for Marxists since without it they are doomed to lack an orientation and to fail in developing the necessary revolutionary tactics.

We hope that this short essay will serve as a contribution for revolutionaries to develop a correct approach to different situations of coups in future class struggles.

#### Footnotes

1 The RCIT has dealt with the recent coup in Zimbabwe in several documents: RCIT and ELA (Zambia): Zimbabwe: The Fall of Mugabe – Victory for the Masses or for the Military-ZANU-PF Alliance? 22.11.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/zimbabwe-after-the-resignation-of-mugabe/>; RCIT: Zimbabwe: Down with the Military Coup! No to the dynastic Mugabe Regime! For Independent Workers’ and Poor Mobilisations! For Action Committees of the Workers, Poor Peasants and Soldiers to Advance the Struggle against All Factions of the Ruling Elite! 15.11.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/against-mugabe-and-military-coup-in-zimbabwe/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Current Political Crisis in Zimbabwe and the Slogan of the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly, 24 November 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/crisis-in-zimbabwe-and-the-slogan-of-the-revolutionary-constituent-assembly/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Military Coup in Zimbabwe and the Role of Chinese Imperialism, 29 November 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/the-military-coup-in-zimbabwe-and-the-role-of-chinese-imperialism/>

2 To be precise, I am translating this formula from the Russian and German language version of Lenin’s Collected Works. The English-language version of the Collected Works uses a less precise formulation – which, by the way, is an often occurring, general weakness of the English language translations of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin: *“The whole question is who will take the lead. We must face this issue squarely—who will come out on top?”* (V.I.Lenin: The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments. Report to the Second All-Russia Congress of Political Education Departments, October 17, 1921, in: Lenin Collected Works Vol.33, p. 66). The English translation of Trotsky’s pamphlet *“Towards Capitalism or Towards Socialism?”*, where Trotsky repeats Lenin’s formula, uses the correct translation (see The Labour Monthly, November 1925, Vol.7 No.11, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1925/11/towards.htm>).

3 There exists a vast amount of Marxist literature on the Kornilov coup. Trotsky dealt with this issue in his famous book on the Russian Revolution: Leon Trotsky: History of the Russian Revolution (1932), Haymarket Books, Chicago 2008, chapter 27-31, pp. 439-519. Another valuable book has been written by the Alexander Rabinowitch: The Bolsheviks Come to Power, New Left Books, London 1979, chapter 6-8, pp. 94-150. We have summarized our analysis in a chapter of a pamphlet published by our predecessor organization Workers Power: The Road to Red October: The Bolsheviks and Working Class Power (Chapter 6), <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/russian-revolution-1917/chapter-6/>

4 As the military coup in Bulgaria is much less known we list some works dealing with it. See e.g. Roumen Daskalov: Debating the Past - Modern Bulgarian History: From Stambolov to Zhivkov, Central European University Press, Budapest, 2011, chapter 1 and 2, pp. 7-143; Frederick B. Chary: The History of Bulgaria, Greenwood, Santa Barbara 2011, pp. 56-71; Joseph Rothschild: The Communist Party of Bulgaria. Origins and Development 1883-1936, New York 1959, pp. 112-116;

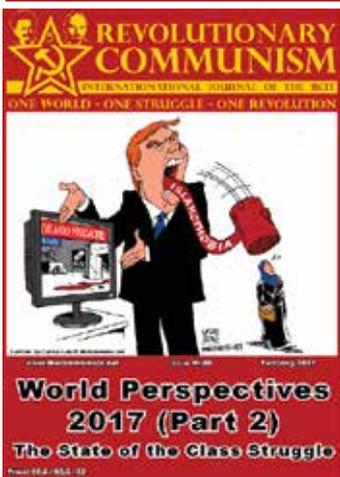
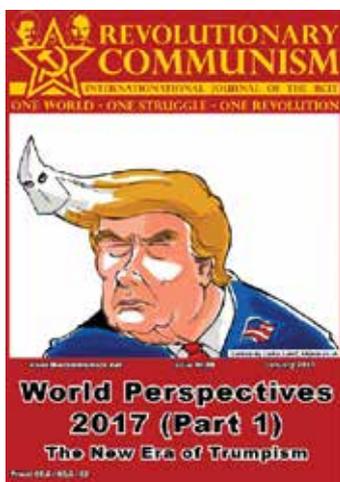
George D. Jackson Jr: Comintern and Peasant in Eastern Europe 1919-1930, New York and London 1966, pp. 172-180; Geschichte der Bulgarischen Kommunistischen Partei, Sofia 1986, pp. 73-100. From a Marxist perspective see e.g. ECCI Appeal to the Workers and Peasants of Bulgaria to Oppose the new Bulgarian Government, 23 June 1923; in: Jane Degras: The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents, Volume II 1923-1928, pp. 47-51; Karl Radek: Der Umsturz in Bulgarien (23.6.1923), in Die Kommunistische Internationale, No. 27 (August 1923), pp. 3-41; Grigori Sinowjew: Die Lehren des bulgarischen Umsturzes, in Die Kommunistische Internationale, No. 27 (August 1923), pp. 41-47.

5 Trotsky's writings on the Spanish Revolution are collected in Leon Trotsky: The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), Pathfinder Press, New York 1973. In addition, we would refer - in place of many works - to the account of the US Trotskyist Felix Morrow who went to Spain as a volunteer to fight the fascists: Felix Morrow: The Civil War in Spain, Pioneer Publisher, New York 1936. See also Pierre Broué and Emile Témime: The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain (1970), Haymarket Books, Chicago 2008; The Spanish Civil War. The View from the Left, Revolutionary History Vol. 4, No. 1/2, London 1992

6 Again, there exists a vast amount of Marxist literature on the Pinochet coup in Chile. To name just a few: Michel Raptis: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Chile, Allison & Busby, London 1973; Tariq Ali: Die Lehren von Chile, Rote Hefte der GIM, Berlin/Hamburg; Widerstand in Chile. Aufrufe, Interviews und Dokumene

des M.I.R., Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, Berlin 1974; Fernando Mires: Die Militärs und die Macht. Thesen zum Fall Chile, Rotbuch Verlag, Berlin 1975. The analysis from our side has been published by our predecessor organization Workers Power: The Lessons of Chile, in: Workers Power No. 45 (September 1983), pp. 4-5

7 The RCIT has published numerous documents on the coup in Egypt which can be read at [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/). The most important documents of those which we have published in the weeks after the coup are the following: Yossi Schwartz: Israel and the Coup in Egypt, 21.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/israel-and-egypt-coup/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/israel-and-egypt-coup/); Michael Pröbsting: The Coup d'État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism". A Balance Sheet of the coup and another Reply to our Critics (LCC, WIVP, SF/LCFI), 8.8.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-and-left-army-socialism/); Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: Mobilize Resistance against the reactionary military regime!, 27.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-no-to-military-regime/); Michael Pröbsting: The Military's Coup d'État in Egypt: Assessment and Tactics, 17.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-meaning-of-coup-d-etat/); Yossi Schwartz: Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left's ignorance. Notes on the role of US imperialism in the military's coup d'état and the failure of the Egypt left, 11.7.2013, [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/)



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8 On the coup in Thailand see the following RCIT documents: RCIT: Thailand: Defeat the looming reactionary Coup D'état! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-looming-coup-d-%C3%A9tat/>; RCIT: Thailand: Smash the Developing Military Coup! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-coup/>; Michael Pröbsting: Thailand: How Should Socialists Fight Against the Coup? <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-coup-critique/>; Michael Pröbsting: Thailand: Ultra-Leftism and the Coup, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-coup-reply/>. All these articles were published in the RCIT's journal Revolutionary Communism No. 23.

9 See e.g. on the coup in Brazil the following RCIT documents: CCR: Brazil: The Only Way Forward: Defeat the Coup with Mass, Independent Class Mobilizations of the Working Class and Oppressed! 22.4.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/statement-on-coup/>; CCR: Brazil: Right-Wing Opposition threatens with a Coup d'État, 18.11.2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/brazil-coup-danger/>

10 For an overview of the approach of the Marxist classics on military coups see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Coup d'État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism", Chapter III. "The Marxist classics on reactionary coups d'états", in: Revolutionary Communism No. 13 (September 2013), pp. 30-33, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/egypt-and-left-army-socialism/>

11 Grigori Sinowjew: Die Lehren des bulgarischen Umsturzes, in Die Kommunistische Internationale, No. 27 (August 1923), p. 45 (our translation)

12 Leon Trotsky: Is Victory Possible in Spain? (1937), in: Leon Trotsky: The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), Pathfinder Press, New York 1973, p. 257

13 As the result of one of these coups, Assad the

father came to power in 1970 and created the dynastic rule of his clan which unfortunately lasts until today.

14 See on this e.g. the sub-chapter „*Can a Military Coup ever reflect an Advance of the Revolution?*“ in: Michael Pröbsting: The Coup d'État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism", Chapter II. "The Marxist classics on reactionary coups d'états", in: Revolutionary Communism No. 13 (September 2013), p. 25, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/egypt-and-left-army-socialism/>

15 See on this e.g. Arno Münster: Chiles friedlicher Weg? Rotbuch Verlag, Berlin 1975, pp. 48-51

16 See on this e.g. Leo Trotzki: Schriften 3.3., Neuer ISP-Verlag, Köln 2001, p. 425

17 Karl Marx: Capital, Vol. III, in: Marx Engels Collected Works Vol. 37, p. 804

18 Abram Deborin: Materialistische Dialektik und Naturwissenschaft (1925); in: Unter dem Banner des Marxismus 1. Jahrgang 1925/26, Verlag für Literatur und Politik, Wien, p. 452 (our translation). Unfortunately while there exist numerous works of this great Marxist philosopher in Russian language and also a considerable amount in German language, the weakness of Marxism in the Anglo-Saxon world in the 1920s has resulted in the situation that hardly anything of his works of the 1920s has been translated into English language. Some useful quotes and summaries of Deborin's views in English language can be found in the following books: David Joravsky: Soviet Marxism and Natural Science 1917-1932, Routledge, New York 1961/2009; David Bakhurst: Consciousness and Revolution in Soviet philosophy: From the Bolsheviks to Evald Ilyenkov, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991; Helena Sheehan: Marxism and the Philosophy of Science, Humanities Press International, New Jersey 1985.

19 V. I. Lenin: Conspectus of Hegel's Science of Logic (1914); in: LCW Vol. 38, p. 221

20 WIVP: On the military coup in Zimbabwe, 18.11.2017, <http://www.workersinternational.org.za/index.php/2-uncategorised/69-zimbabwecoup>

21 Abram Deborin: Lenin als revolutionärer Dialektiker (1925); in: Unter dem Banner des Marxismus, 1. Jahrgang (1925-26), p. 224 (our translation)

# China's transformation into an imperialist power

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# What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

This revolution must be carried out and led by the working class, for she is the only class that has nothing to lose but their chains.

The revolution can not proceed peacefully because never before has a ruling class voluntarily surrendered their power. The road to liberation includes necessarily the armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasant republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in rank and file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods and schools – in councils. These councils elect and control the government and all other authorities and can always replace them.

Real socialism and communism has nothing to do with the so-called "real existing socialism" in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba or Eastern Europe. In these countries, a bureaucracy dominated and oppressed the proletariat.

The RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of workers and the oppressed. We combine this with a perspective of the overthrow of capitalism.

We work inside the trade unions and advocate class struggle, socialism and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is a layer which is connected with the state and capital via jobs and privileges. It is far from the interests and

living circumstances of the members. This bureaucracy's basis rests mainly on the top, privileged layers of the working class - the workers' aristocracy. The struggle for the liberation of the working class must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their upper strata.

The RCIT strives for unity in action with other organizations. However, we are aware that the policy of social democracy and the pseudo-revolutionary groups is dangerous and they ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class.

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

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

In a war between imperialist states (e.g. U.S., China, EU, Russia, Japan) we take a revolutionary defeatist position, i.e. we don't support neither side and advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class. In a war between an imperialist power (or its stooge) and a semi-colonial country we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed country.

The struggle against national and social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) must be led by the working class. We fight for revolutionary movements of the oppressed (women, youth, migrants etc.) based on the working class. We oppose the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism etc.) and strive to replace them by a revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class win. The construction of such a party and the conduct of a successful revolution as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia are a model for the revolutionary parties and revolutions also in the 21 Century.

For new, revolutionary workers' parties in all countries! For a 5<sup>th</sup> Workers International on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

*No future without socialism!*

*No socialism without a revolution!*

*No revolution without a revolutionary party!*

