



# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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## COVID-19: Cover for a Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive

Marxist Analysis of the Nature of the Pandemic, how the Ruling Classes  
Attempt to Utilize it and what should be the Revolutionary Answer

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# COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive

**We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes**

*Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 21 March 2020*

## Introduction

Any organization claiming to defend the interests of the working class and the oppressed must base its strategy on a correct assessment of the fundamental dynamics in world politics. Without a realistic understanding of the relation of forces between the classes and states, it is impossible to find the correct way forward.

Throughout the history of the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* resp. its predecessor, we have identified on several occasions important developments which we characterized as *major political turning points*. In the past two decades, such turning points were the 9/11 event in 2001, the Great Recession in 2008/09, the long process of the Arab Revolution (with all its ups and downs) or the rise of China as a major imperialist Great Power. Each of these events had important and long-term repercussions in world politics. Hence, these were crucial tests for any Marxist. Those organizations which failed to understand such events correctly were left politically confused and lost as a revolutionary force.

The current global COVID-19 crisis is a major event of similar historic magnitude. The RCIT has understood the political importance of this development from the very first days. In contrast to nearly all self-proclaimed Marxist organizations we immediately recognized the *political counter-revolutionary nature* of these events. We explained in a series of statements and articles since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis that the ruling classes utilize the panic to advance their political goals. We emphasized that the vanguard must respond to these events with a combined program in defense of democratic rights, the expansion of health care and against all austerity attacks. Recent events have fully confirmed our analysis as well as our programmatic response. (See the links to our documents in the appendix.) On the other side of the barricades, intelligent analysts of the ruling classes also recognized soon the meaning of the COVID-19 crisis. Tellingly, a bourgeois commentator of Bloomberg – a mouthpiece of the imperialist bourgeoisie – compared the historic significance of the current developments with World War I which “*inaugurate a turbulent new political and economic era.*”<sup>1</sup>

## The real political nature of COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic is certainly a significant health crisis. However, things have to be seen in context. The influenza epidemics in the past decades have caused 290,000-650,000 death each year, without provoking any major political initiative by the ruling class.<sup>2</sup> The overall all-cause influenza-attributable mortality in the 2017/18 season was estimated to be about 152,000 deaths in Europe alone!<sup>3</sup> The Swine Flu Pandemic in 2009 has killed up to 203,000 people. Since the COVID-19 crisis has caused, until now,

several thousand victims, it is evident that the global shut down which we are currently experiencing must have different causes.

These causes are first and foremost of political nature. As the RCIT has elaborated in its latest *World Perspective* document, global political developments in recent past have resulted in the emergence of a *pre-revolutionary world situation* opening up in autumn 2019.<sup>4</sup> The main features of this new global situation have been:

\* In the second half of last year the capitalist world economy entered the worst slump since 1929;<sup>5</sup>

\* A global wave of mass struggles in numerous countries on all continents;<sup>6</sup>

\* The tensions between the Great Powers have massively accelerated in the past years as the Global Trade War resp. the Cold War between the U.S. and China demonstrate.<sup>7</sup>

These are the conditions which make it necessary for the ruling class to adopt major steps in order to regain the initiative and to enforce its political control over the popular classes via massively expanding its state apparatus. In order to achieve this goal, they create the atmosphere of global panic and a state of emergency. They do so both on a national as well as on a global level.

Naturally, by this we don't suggest any silly conspiracy theory that the global bourgeoisie has “invented” the Corona Virus in order to find a cover for their counterrevolutionary attacks. Furthermore we reject the conspiracy theories about the creation of the virus by a laboratory in China which is a myth spread to fuel chauvinism. No, this health crisis took the global bourgeoisie by surprise and so it stumbled into this process. However, they quickly understood – some quicker than others (just think about the clown trio of Trump, Johnson and Bolsonaro) – that this “*crisis offers an opportunity*”. The Chinese regime started this process and a global chain reaction followed soon.

As mentioned above, we quickly recognized the political nature of the global COVID-19 crisis and developed and updated our analysis in series of articles and statements since the 2 February. Already in the RCIT statement of 5 February we identified as such goals of the bourgeoisie:

“*The RCIT emphasizes that the hysteria around the 2019 Corona Virus objectively serves the following objectives:*

*a) The ruling classes in China as well as in many other countries exploit the hysteria in order to justify the vast expansion of surveillance and control of its population.*

*b) They also utilize this hysteria in order to wipe up patriotism and suspicion against “foreigners”, people “from outside” or simple “others”.*

*c) China's regime utilizes the hysteria also in order to create a climate of fear so that anxious people put all their hopes in the state forces.*

*d) The ruling classes in other imperialist states utilize the global hysteria in order to wipe up anti-Chinese chauvinism and to advance their stakes in the ongoing rivalry between the Great Pow-*

ers. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross cynically suggested that the outbreak of the 2019 Corona Virus is an opportunity for the US.

e) Likewise, reactionary forces outside China exploit the crisis in order to foster suspicion and hatred against Chinese or, more generally, against Asian migrants.

f) The ruling class will exploit the 2019 Corona Virus (and subsequently China) in order to find a culprit for the Great Recession which has recently begun. In fact, while the global measures to supposedly contain the spreading of the virus deepen the slump, the capitalist world economy has entered a recession already in the second half of 2019. The truth is that the reasons for this Great Recession are the same like those for all the others in the past: the frantic drive for profit of the capitalist corporations provokes again and again in economic crashes of the world economy."

Since these lines were published, global events have fully confirmed our warnings. The bourgeoisie all over the world has started a wave of mass sackings and wage cuts. Factories are stopping production and millions of workers either get unemployed or face dramatic worsening of labor conditions. Fundamental democratic rights are under attack, borders are closed and chauvinist attacks against migrants or against other states are rising.

The ruling classes soon understood that the COVID-19 crisis is a huge political opportunity. James Boughton, a well-known economist and historian who has served for decades at the International Monetary Fund, explicitly said so when he refers to past crises in South Korea and Indonesia which were catalysts for dramatic neoliberal attacks on the rights of the working class and the popular masses. Referring to the COVID-19 crisis, he said a few days ago: "Only in a crisis are governments able to rally people to accept necessary but painful reforms. Every crisis is also an opportunity." <sup>8</sup>

While it is difficult to predict the course of the next events, it is likely that the ruling classes will keep the global state of emergency for weeks if not months. Their goal is to advance their counterrevolutionary attacks as much as possible in this time so that they can present the popular masses after this period with the implementation of radical political and economic changes as a fait accompli.

### **Chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes: the new Leviathan**

Characteristically, several state leaders compare the COVID-19 crisis with a state of war. China's President Xi called for a "people's war" against the virus. <sup>9</sup> And France's President Macron declared in a major speech on 16 March "we are at war", adding: "We're not up against another army or another nation. But the enemy is right there: invisible, elusive, but it is making progress." <sup>10</sup> Various bourgeois media create a climate that "we are under attack."

Such belligerent rhetoric is necessary to justify drastic measures of the capitalist state to impose a lock down on millions of people and to massively increase the executive powers of the police and army. This is exactly what we are currently experiencing in China, Italy, France, Spain, Austria and now the whole of Europe. Similar developments have already begun in Latin America as well as the U.S. Macron sends 100,000 police to patrol the streets in France. In various countries governments mobilize the army to

take over civilian tasks. "Suddenly", governments take it as granted to monitor the movements of its population via telecommunication. The Chinese Stalinist-capitalist regime boasts about its abilities to use Artificial Intelligence for surveillance of its population. <sup>11</sup> It deploys small mobile robots on the streets of Shenzhen which measure the temperature of pedestrians and warn them via loudspeaker to wear face masks and to follow the instructions of the authorities. It also deploys drones for such surveillance measures. <sup>12</sup> With one stroke, "Big Brother" is here, openly and without any attempt by the capitalist state to conceal it. The massive surveillance techniques will soon be the new normal worldwide.

Currently, these regimes pretend to focus on fighting a pandemic. Soon they will fight against various "internal security threats" as well as against other states. The war of words between the U.S. and China is a foretaste for future developments. President Trump and other officials of his Administration have repeatedly called the coronavirus the "Wuhan virus", the "Chinese virus" or simply the "foreign virus". In turn, China's foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Twitter that "it might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan". <sup>13</sup>

In other words, what is currently taking place is the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes – of an "all-powerful state", to put it in the words of a Bloomberg commentator. <sup>14</sup>

The current developments confirm with full clarity important theses which have been elaborated by Marxist theoreticians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Such for example Lenin pointed out that "imperialism is the negation of democracy" – a statement which has been proven correct as the bloody history of the past century demonstrated. Today, the correctness of this statement is confirmed again as monopoly capital in all imperialist states becomes increasingly anti-democratic in light of the advancing decay of capitalism. The acceleration of the capitalist crisis leads to an acceleration of anti-democratic reaction – a fundamental dynamic which has been already in place for some time, as we have pointed out repeatedly. <sup>15</sup>

The current events confirm also another statement of Lenin. He emphasized that in the epoch of imperialism the capitalist state and the monopolies increasingly fuse which each other and characterized this as "process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism." <sup>16</sup> This goes hand in hand with a "an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries." <sup>17</sup> And Nikolai Bukharin, a leading theoretician of the Bolshevik Party, concluded his analysis of the development of the capitalist state and its increasing role in the era of imperialism: "This is the New Leviathan, beside which the fantasy of Thomas Hobbes looks like a child's toy." <sup>18</sup> Indeed, such an imperialist Leviathan is now being built-up by the ruling class in full force – under the pretext of fighting a pandemic. The era of relatively extensive bourgeois democracy in the imperialist states will soon be over.

As the RCIT has explained repeatedly, all this takes place against the background of the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers, marked by the historic decline of long-time hegemon like the U.S. and the European

Union and the rise of China.<sup>19</sup> It becomes now obvious that these decadent bourgeois, pro-austerity pseudo-democracies of the West have caused a decline of their national healthcare systems which prove now to be unable to deal with the current epidemic. Furthermore, it has now become even more obvious that they are incapable to handle global crisis. Even the EU has failed to collectively respond to the epidemic and its member states rather close their national borders against each other. As a result of these developments it is indicative that many imperialist governments no longer look to the U.S. as a model but rather to China and its Stalinist-capitalist regime. They ask Beijing and not Washington for aid and advice.<sup>20</sup> This confirms once more the RCIT's long-standing analysis that China has become a leading imperialist Great Power. There can be also no doubt that such a decline of the old Great Powers will sooner or later encourage the oppressed people in the Global South to rebel against their imperialist long-time masters (similar to the wave of anti-colonial struggles against Britain and France after World War II).

### South Korea: a certain exception

The situation in South Korea has been somewhat different to other countries. The government of President Moon Jae-in reacted differently to the COVID-19 crisis in so far as it imposed much less state repression than China, Europe and now other countries. Most importantly, there was no large lock down of the population. At the same time they imposed mass testing for free as well as health care for free for those affected. These have been crucial measures in order to substantially limit the impact of the virus. As a result, South Korea has been much more successful in combating the Corona Virus than all other states which have been largely affected. This is a powerful confirmation of the RCIT's analysis that the mass lock down of the population in other countries is not a necessary instrument to fight against the COVID-19 epidemic but is rather politically motivated.

There have been several reasons for this different response. First, the people of South Korea have a strong memory about the horrendous time of the decades of military dictatorships before 1987. Hence, people are sensitive and not willing to accept reactionary measures like mass lock downs. In addition, there is a strong tradition of militant class struggle albeit it has lost its dynamic since the early 2000s. For these reasons it would have been also pretty difficult to impose such measures, in particular given the fact that the Administration of President Moon is part of the bourgeois-liberal/"progressive" camp and state repression like mass lock downs would have provoked resistance among his basis. At the same time, the South Korean population behaves disciplined in its social behavior which is also a result of its sensitivity to such epidemics given the country's experience with SARS and MERS in recent times. In addition to all this, South Korea as a new imperialist state has the economic resources necessary for an adequate response to the COVID-19 epidemic.<sup>21</sup>

### Consequences for the global class struggle and for the workers movement

As we said above, the global COVID-19 crisis is a major turning point in the world situation. It has already resulted in a massive decline of the class struggles and popular uprisings which started in 2019. This does not mean an end of such struggles as various bold demonstrations of workers and youth in Chile, Iraq, Algeria, France and Hong Kong showed. The ongoing heroic liberation struggle of the Syrian people in Idlib against the Russian-Iranian-Assadist occupation forces is another example. But in general we have seen a massive decrease of these protests in the past weeks as the all-powerful capitalist state Leviathan is building up its forces.

This means that the pre-revolutionary world situation has ended for now and a *global counter-revolutionary situation* has opened up. However, it is clear that such a situation unfolds in an uneven way around the globe. In some countries the counter-revolutionary offensive with fundamental attacks on democratic rights has assumed a much more aggressive form (e.g. China, Europe, parts of North, Central and South America, Malaysia) than in others.

Of course, there are different types of counter-revolutionary situations. There can be a situation where the bourgeoisie smashes the workers and popular organizations and destroys whole layers of militants. Such was the case, for example, in Russia after the Stolypin coup in June 1907, in Germany 1933, in Chile 1973 or in Egypt after the military coup on 3 July 2013. These were counter-revolutionary attacks resulting in strategic or even historic defeats of the working class.

The current situation is very different. What we see is a major counter-revolutionary offensive which confuses large sectors of the workers and popular movements since it is masked as a response to a pandemic. It is characterized by a massive strengthening of the repressive state apparatus as well as a temporary decline of the global wave of the mass struggles. Hence, it is highly likely that this is a temporary setback of the class struggle resulting in the accumulation of massive contradictions which will sooner or later result in massive political explosions.

It is not possible to predict how long this situation will last. It might be a matter of only a few months. However, what is clear is that the counter-revolutionary offensive of the ruling classes will create explosive political contradictions. Sooner or later, it will be difficult for the state-bonapartist regimes to justify their massive attacks on democratic rights. It will become soon obvious that while they give billions of dollars to the big capitalists, many workers face unemployment and wage cuts. Some strikes in Italy or people under lockdown clapping and singing on the balconies are examples of promising albeit limited developments. Likewise, a massive increase of global tensions between the Great Powers is inevitable. In other words, the global counter-revolutionary offensive can only temporarily cover up the accelerating political and economic contradictions between the classes and the states. Sooner or later, this will result inevitable in new and massive political explosions, probably in the form of major domestic crisis, wars as well as revolutionary uprisings – in the Global South as well as in the imperialist states of the West and the East.

Why is it inevitable that the massive contradictions – which, for the moment, seem to have been pushed to the background by the overlaying everything COVID-19 crisis – will result in massive political explosions? The fundamental reason for this is that these developments take place within a *historic revolutionary period*. As the RCIT has elaborated extensively in a number of documents, this period opened up in 2008 and is characterized by the decay of capitalism. Such decay inevitable provokes economic crises, political instability and the incessant danger of war. Such conditions continually generate mass protests, popular uprisings and revolutionary situations as well as counterrevolutionary dangers. This fundamental lack of equilibrium on a world scale is the reason why the RCIT characterizes this historic period as “*revolutionary*.”<sup>22</sup>

These fundamental contradictions have not and can not disappear because of an epidemic, public hysteria and state of emergency. The ruling classes have launched their counter-revolutionary offensive not because they are strong but rather because of desperation given the devastating crisis of their system. The harder the bourgeoisie strikes now, the stronger will be the reaction and the greater the response from the workers and popular masses.

Another highly likely political consequence will be major splits and regroupement within the parties of the bourgeoisie. A new era characterized by a “strong state” will plunge old parties into ruin and create new forces.

Likewise, the current global events will provoke major shifts within the workers movement. The parallels to war-situations, which the ruling classes have drawn in past weeks, contain an element of truth. Indeed, they create a hysterical atmosphere of patriotic unity and chauvinism. Naturally, as it was the case in past major wars, such shift to chauvinism reinforces the social-patriotic nature of the reformist bureaucracy in the trade unions and in social democratic and Stalinist parties. We can assume – in fact we see it already – that these forces will jump on the bandwagon and support calls for “national unity” and “patriotic” sacrifices. They will agree to wage cuts and worsening of labor conditions. And all this will happen in the name of the struggle against the COVID-19 pandemic. It is quite likely that in some countries this will result in splits of reformist parties and fusion of its right wing – or maybe of the whole party – with open bourgeois forces (as it was the case in Italy after 1991).

It is also likely that the new era will provoke further crisis and divisions within the self-proclaimed Marxist milieu. Since these left-reformist and centrist organizations usually opportunistically adapt to the labor bureaucracy – and this bureaucracy is now massively shifting to the right – we can expect political capitulations and organizational splits and collapses. In short, the thorough crisis of the so-called left which could be already observed in the past years will accelerate. It is already clear by now that significant part of these organizations fail to oppose the counter-revolutionary offensive as they don’t oppose the massive lock down in many countries. In fact, some even wholeheartedly support such anti-democratic attacks! Some have cancelled public meetings and rallies even before the state banned such gatherings. Some call people to stay at home and stop close interaction with others, praising the so-called “*social distancing*”. Their criticism is directed against individual capitalists who do not imple-

ment the lockdown measures in their companies but not against the anti-democratic lockdown policy of state, i.e. the ideal total capitalist. They often limit their criticism on insufficient measures by the governments in public health care. While such criticism is obviously correct, it ignores the fundamental *political* aspects of the COVID-19 crisis: the *anti-democratic and chauvinist offensive* of the ruling classes! Clearly such a pro-lockdown left is completely useless for the class struggle. It is part of the problem, not of the solution!

Effectively, these sectors of the left have joined the social-patriotic wave and support the most important instruments of the ruling class in the current situation of a brutal counterrevolutionary offensive. Objectively they are proponents of a policy of *class truce*, similar to the notorious “Burgfrieden”-policy of the opportunist social democrats in 1914.

In fact, an important characteristic of the specific current counter-revolutionary situation is that it is exactly the bourgeois-liberal, reformist and left-wing forces which constitute the whips of the state repression and lockdown policy. This is an important reason why many militants in the vanguard are confused and can’t recognize the counter-revolutionary nature of the bourgeoisies’ political offensive.

At the same time, the militant vanguard – particularly those new layers which have emerged in the global wave of class struggles last year – will make new experiences. True, in the short term, the global counter-revolutionary situation will mean a temporary setback. The activists will need some time to reconsider and discuss the new situation. Some might be confused for a certain period. But others will look for explanations and answers to the new political challenges. It is also likely that the crisis and regroupement within the centrist milieu will provoke splits and result in a progressive development of some sectors.

It is the task of revolutionaries to patiently explain the causes of the recent turns in world politics and to present a programmatic way forward. It is also our task to aid activists in understanding the authentic revolutionary spirit of Marxism. We will demonstrate that genuine Marxism has nothing to do with the pro-capitalist state policy of the Leviathan Left. The RCIT has offered since years a thorough analysis of the major global developments and outlined a revolutionary program. We will continue to do so in order to advance a process of unification of authentic revolutionary forces.

It is the task of revolutionaries all over the world to sharply denounce the Lockdown Left. Those, who support the suppression of fundamental rights in a period of gigantic political and economic attacks of the bourgeoisie, are nothing but supporters of class truce and, hence, they are objectively enemies of the working class struggle. The RCIT calls all revolutionaries who share our opposition to the Lockdown Left and who agree on the urgent necessity of a coordinated international response to the counter-revolutionary offensive to enter with us in serious discussion and collaboration.

### Pillars of a revolutionary program against the global counter-revolutionary offensive

The RCIT proposes the vanguard of the workers and popular masses to organize on the basis of a program of struggle for the current phase. This means a fighting program in order to oppose the current global counter-revolutionary offensive. Clearly any fundamental solution of the crisis is only possible via a world socialist revolution which expropriates the bourgeoisie and establishes a planned economy in the interest of the workers and popular masses.

However, in the short term, the vanguard will have to focus on organizing a defensive struggle against the counter-revolutionary attacks which take place under the cover of COVID-19. This means that the struggle has to focus on five pillars:

- \* Revolutionary democracy against the capitalist state *Leviathan*;
- \* Anti-chauvinism against "patriotic unity" and xenophobia;
- \* Radical expansion of the public health system – not under the control of the capitalist state but under workers and popular control;
- \* Massive international aid for people of the Global South;
- \* Stop the austerity offensive.

These are the central five pillars on which the vanguard must prepare for the future mass struggles. Concretely, the RCIT propose and action program with the following central slogans:

- \* No to the mass lockdown of people! Defend the democratic right to assembly and to demonstrate!
- \* Down with mass surveillance and police state! No deployment

of the military in civilian service!

\* Oppose travel ban and immigration control! Open borders for refugees!

\* Down with chauvinism against migrants as well as against other states! No to anti-Chinese chauvinism!

\* For systematic and complete health screening of all people who might have had contact with the virus. This screening must be free for all people but should be mandatory. The same is necessary for any potential treatment which should include quarantine if necessary.

\* For health screens for all travelers and for immediate health care for free if any case of infection is detected.

\* Create international teams of experts and medical staff in order to develop cure and preventive vaccination as soon as possible! All developments in this field must be accessible to the global public and have to be monitored and controlled by workers and popular organizations.

\* Build additional public health care facilities and hospitals!

\* Nationalization of the private health sector (hospitals, laboratories, etc.)!

\* Put the whole health sector under the control of the workers and oppressed as well as health experts!

\* All necessary projects in the struggle to protect public health must be financed by taxes of the rich!

\* Nationalize the pharmaceutical corporations under workers control and utilize the resources in a centralized and effective way to develop drugs against widespread illnesses like corona virus, influenza, cholera, HIV/AIDS, etc.!

\* For the immediate building of an international solidarity campaign to support semi-colonial countries to cope with the virus via free supply of medicine, medical equipment, food and hygiene products! For an international mobilization of volunteers,

## Books of the RCIT

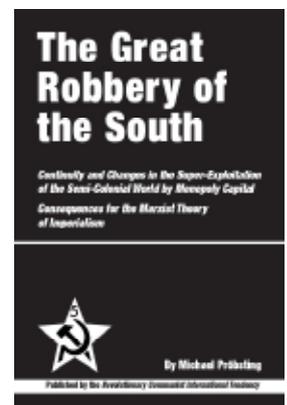
### Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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)



organized by the labor movement in order to support our brothers and sisters in these times!

\* Formation of workers and popular committees for the control and supply of basic necessities (food, cleaning, medicine)!

\* Cancel all public and household debts!

\* No sacking, no wage cuts, no attacks on labor rights!

\* Nationalization under workers control of all enterprises which shut down production!

Comrades, brothers and sisters! Let us not lose time, let us act now! In the biblical myth God eventually smashed the monster Leviathan. In the world today, the working class and oppressed under the banner of a revolutionary world party will defeat the modern Leviathan. Join the RCIT in preparing for the further struggles on the basis of a revolutionary program!

International Secretariat of the RCIT

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We refer readers to our articles and statement on the COVID-19 crisis:

RCIT: 2019 Corona Virus: Oppose the Global Wave of Chauvinist Hysteria! Workers and oppressed: Do not trust the ruling class and its media! 5.2.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/2019-corona-virus-oppose-the-global-wave-of-chauvinist-hysteria/>

2019 Corona Virus: No to the Anti-Chinese Chauvinism in South Korea! Joint Statement of the Revolutionary Communists (RCIT Section in South Korea) and the International Bureau of the RCIT, 6.2.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/2019-corona-virus-no-to-the-anti-chinese-chauvinism-in-south-korea/>

Almedina Gunić: No, most likely it is not COVID-19 that is going to kill you. A manageable epidemic became public enemy number one distracting from the real killers, 16 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/no-most-likely-it-is-not-covid-19-that-is-going-to-kill-you/>

Almedina Gunić: The chauvinist campaign behind the "Wuhan Coronavirus" hysteria & the revolutionary answer, 2.2.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>

Almedina Gunic: 2019-nCoV and the Virus of Chauvinism. A comparison with measles and the reactionary Anti-Vaxx campaigners, 6.2.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/2019-ncov-and-the-virus-of-chauvinism/>

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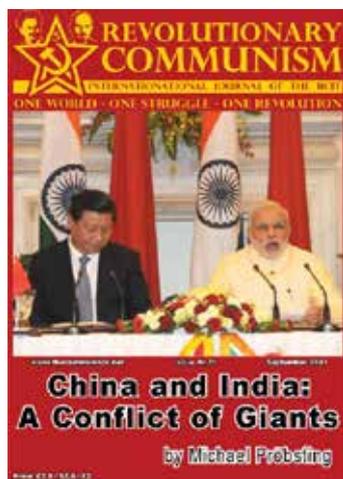
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## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

# The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences

*What are the background and the nature of the tensions between China and India in the Sikkim border region? What should be the tactical conclusions for Socialists and Activists of the Liberation Movements?*

*A Pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)*

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A4 Format*

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## RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

# Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

*Adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of the RCIT in November 2017*

**Introduction \* Foreign Exploiters – Out of Africa! \* The Wealth to Those Who Create It! Economic Freedom Now! \* Down with the Capitalist Dictatorships and Corrupt Pseudo-Democracies! \* Organize the Workers and Oppressed for the Mass Struggle! \* For a Government of Workers and Poor Peasants! For a Socialist Revolution! \* For Pan-African Unity! For the United Socialist States of Africa! \* For a United Front of Struggle! Overcome the Crisis of Leadership – Build a Revolutionary Party Nationally and Internationally! \* Appendix**

*A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format*

# No, most likely it is not COVID-19 that is going to kill you

## A manageable epidemic became public enemy number one distracting from the real killers

Article by Almedina Gunić, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 16 March 2020

**A**n anonymous NHS doctor in Britain formulated the situation in the following way: *“It is not exaggerated – in fact, it is proportionate – to think of this as a war, a national crisis with a huge potential loss of life. Our army is poorly provisioned after years of neglect, our leaders are woefully underprepared.”* (1)

The truth in these words is reflected when you look at the situation in Italy. Within few weeks doctors and nurses reached the point where they have to neglect intensive care treatment of patients and let them die because the facilities are used preferably for the younger ones. (2) However, it is more than ridiculous that the terminology of war is also used by bourgeois politicians for the epidemic respectively pandemic that we face now.

While the NHS doctor quoted above points out that it is the neglect of the healthcare system that will lead to a high number of deaths, bourgeois politicians use the comparison with war in order to justify massive attacks on democratic rights under the cover of pandemic control. But how effective is a lockdown anyway? Do we really need to accept curfews and quarantines in order to stop the pandemic? Spoiler alert: No. But let us have a closer look on the case.

### You don't need to give up your democratic rights

Italy has now reached more than 24,700 infections and a death toll of 1,809 people, which makes 7-8%. (3) The lockdown in Italy was first implemented in the North but is now effective for the whole country which has a population of nearly 60.5 Million people. Still, the ratio of new infections is increasing instead of shrinking and the death tolls reach new highs each day. Interestingly enough, the numbers worldwide are less dramatic compared to Italy. 156,000 people were infected and 5,800 died worldwide until now which means 3-4% instead of Italy's 7-8%. (4) One could argue that the reason for this is the fact that worldwide many countries have just started to face their first infections and that it will take some time before the death rate increases like it did in Italy. However, the first infection in Italy was reported on the 30<sup>th</sup> January when two tourists were tested positive on the virus. (5)

South Korea with a population of nearly 51.5 Million people on the other hand has more than 8,162 infections with a death toll of 75, which makes 0.9%. (6) It had its first reported case on the 20<sup>th</sup> January, ten days earlier than Italy. Today it is reported that the daily number of those who recovered from the virus in South Korea exceeded that of new cases. (7) It reflects that the epidemic is under control although South Korea has not implemented a lockdown respectively a general quarantine. The reason for that high degree of control over the epidemic is that South Korea started free screening for the virus very soon. It even has Drive-Throughs for testing people and tests in average 20,000 each day. The results are ready within 7 hours and measures like quarantine are only applied in a given case

respectively for certain apartment blocks in the worst case. (8) This pro-active approach was the key to limit the outbreak of the virus without draconic limitations of democratic rights.

We as RCIT have stated already in our first article on the Coronavirus from 2<sup>nd</sup> February: *“(…) the general quarantine for all people in Wuhan and other places has to be lifted and replaced by systematic and complete health screening of all people who might have had contact with the virus. This screening must be free for all people but should be mandatory. The same is necessary for any potential treatment which should include quarantine if necessary. The results however, should only be accessible for the health staff and the patients. All information must be protected by the workers movement in order to prevent any outrage against infected people.”* (9)

The concrete experience with the epidemic in South Korea has fully confirmed our approach. To repeat the important lesson in these times of hysteria: No, you really don't need to obey to a limitation of your democratic rights in order to stop the virus. Just wash your hands properly, do the screening if you suspect an infection and stay away from others if your results are positive on the virus. People will still die from the infection but it will be a walk in the park (and you will be allowed to actually walk in the park) compared to a situation like Italy today.

### Actually, Capitalism kills you – the virus, not so much

South Korea is an emerging imperialist power that has invested in its healthcare system since decades. (10) The number of hospital beds, doctors and nurses has increased systematically irrespective of the worldwide capitalist crisis that started in 2008. (11) Italy is an excellent example for a western imperialist country in decay, highly effected by the economic crisis and brutal in its healthcare cuts. This doesn't mean that the healthcare system in South Korea would not be overwhelmed with the numbers of infections and intense care patients that Italy is facing. It just hasn't come to this point because prevention respectively early screening was possible in the case of this specific virus. The concrete experience South Korea made with the so-called *Middle East Respiratory Syndrom (MERS)* was an important lesson in the necessity of epidemic control for the eastern imperialist states, so it invested in test kits. This coincidence saved the country from making the same mistakes like Italy.

However, in the case of a more complex disease than COVID-19 every healthcare system in the capitalist world would be overwhelmed because not a single one is prepared to deal with tens of thousands of newly infected intense care patients. A new virus which is similar in its aggressiveness and danger to *Orthopoxvirus variolae*, or the poxes – an illness we know since millennia and are able to prevent via vaccines – would be a severe threat to the existence of mankind as long as we live in a capitalist society. Mutations of viruses which became that dangerous

are a permanent threat and, although medical knowledge is on its peak in history, it is the class system that limits its effectiveness.

The exploitation of the working class and the super-exploitation of the people in the semi-colonial countries have already killed billions of people, far more than a virus like COVID-19 could. In average 9 million people die of hunger each year, 36 million have died from HIV/AIDS between 2005 and 2012, the two world wars have killed more than 115 million people and the list goes on and on. Even climate change (also a result of capitalism) kills at least 300,000 people every (!) year.

If there is a single lesson to learn from COVID-19, it is that the rule of profit makes every new virus more lethal than it has to be and that as long as we have not smashed capitalism, humanity can not survive. In the end, it might be even worse than Rosa Luxemburg's famous quote states. It might not be "Socialism or Barbarism" but rather "Socialism...or Extinction".

#### Footnotes

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## Books of the RCIT

### Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018 - A World Pregnant With Wars And Popular Uprisings

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – WORLD PERSPECTIVES 2018: A WORLD PREGNANT WITH WARS AND POPULAR UPRISINGS. The book's subtitle is: Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries.

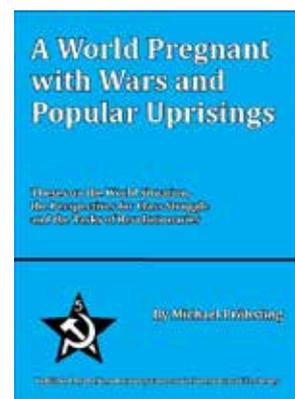
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists' analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic period. Without such an understanding it is impossible for socialists, indeed for all liberation fighters, to possess the necessary political compass on which they can base their program, strategy and tactics.

Since several years does the RCIT publish annual studies on the world situation in which it analysis its most important developments and changes. This book updates the Marxist analysis of the state of the world economy, of the relations between the Great Powers, of the struggle between the classes and the tactics of revolutionaries. We also deal in depth with new issues respectively extend our theoretical analysis on several questions. In particular we have deepened in this book,

among others, our understanding of the nature respectively the transitional character of the present world political phase, of the nature of different types of wars and the tactical conclusions arriving from this, of the complex nature of the conflicts in the Middle East, of the capitalist restoration in North Korea and, finally, we have elaborated a new proposal for an international platform for the unification of revolutionary forces in the present phase.

The book contains a preface, introduction and seven eight chapters plus an appendix (118 pages) and includes 23 figures, 9 tables and 2 maps. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

You can find the contents and download the book for free at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>



## The 2019 Corona Virus and the Decay of Capitalism

by Yossi Schwartz, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), February 2020

By February 23, the number of deaths from the Corona virus was 2,465 worldwide. There are 78,800 cases globally, and 23 deaths outside mainland China.<sup>1</sup> In South Korea, around 600 were infected. Around half of the total cases are associated with a branch of a religious group.<sup>2</sup> The total number of confirmed cases in Italy has risen from three to 132. In Iran 43, were infected, including eight deaths. Lebanon and Israel have reported their first cases.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible that we face a new epidemic but it is too early to be sure. We should recall that SARS, which stands for "Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome", first infected people in late 2002 in China. Within weeks it spread to 37 countries through air travel. The virus infected 8,000 people worldwide, 744 of whom died.

Thus at this time it seems that the Corona virus is more powerful than the SARS one but at the same time we witness hysterical reactions blown out of any proportion pushed by the capitalist mass media. For example in Israel, Prof. Reches on a popular TV show of Simma Matsliah predicted that 1 milliard people are going to be infected.

Most probably the hysteria spread by the capitalist mass media is used as a weapon in the trade war between the old and the new imperialist powers like China. Because of the virus many companies are leaving China to other countries with cheap labor which is going to accelerate the economic crisis in China leading to a worse world economic crisis. On the other hand it is possible that the Corona virus will become an epidemic because of the effect of the deepening economic crisis that will weaken the conditions of many people around the world. It also remains to be seen what will be the effect of the warmer seasons that may stop the virus, but while part of the world will enjoy warmer seasons other parts will face a cold season.

Meantime day after day we hear of the tragic misfortune of the 2,666 passengers on board the Diamond Princess, a luxury cruise around East Asia, that are sick or may catch the Corona virus. By now the number of confirmed cases on the ship grew to 132 after the health ministry of Japan said on Saturday it had confirmed 27 new cases of the flu-like illness. Yet we never hear about the millions of poor people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America who die every year from airborne contaminants.

There are many speculations about the source of the epidemic and there are ugly verbal racist Anti-Chinese expressions and even physical attacks on Asians in the USA.

Christian evangelist Pastor Rick Wiles told his TruNews web show<sup>4</sup> viewers: "do not "get into crazy, whacked-out theories" about what he warned could be a "global pandemic" that kills "hundreds of millions of people." He then suggested the virus started in China because of the "godless communist government that persecutes Christians" and "forced abortions" - and said the "death angel" could have eyes on the US.<sup>5</sup>

Another article published by the Washington Post reports: "The virus of racism was manifested in 2003 during the SARS. Media outlets writing about SARS frequently illustrated their stories with images of Chinatown buildings or Asian people wearing face masks. For example, a 2003 Globe and Mail article titled "Settlers Quarantined to Contain Disease" that

highlighted historic quarantines in late-19th and early-20th-century Canada was illustrated in the paper's print edition with an image of primary-aged school children in Hong Kong wearing face masks... Some journalists linked the SARS outbreak to sensationalized accounts of Chinese open-air wet markets, Chinese consumption of "weird" meat and China's "unsanitary" practices. Health officials concerned with preventing the virus's spread focused their attention on Asian ethnic enclaves.

The Canadian and American general public adopted their own informal avoidance measures that led to acute stigmatization of Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans and other Asian Americans overnight. Subway riders refused to sit next to Asian passengers. Businesses turned away Asian customers. Asian workers found their hours scaled back. Shoppers avoided Asian-owned restaurants and small businesses, or steered clear of Chinatowns altogether. Some Asian-facing organizations received a deluge of racist hate mail blaming them for SARS.

The racialization of disease is not new. History is rife with examples of nonwhite groups serving as scapegoats during public health scares. In the late 1800s, for example, racial anxiety over the nation's growing nonwhite populations drove Yellow Peril fears of Asian immigrants as threats to the white social order. Asians were quickly stereotyped as immoral, unsanitary, prone to consuming "foul" meats like rats, and carriers of diseases like leprosy or smallpox. Historic ethnic enclaves — such as San Francisco's Chinatown — arose out of white city settlers' disdain for Asian bodies sharing white people's gathering spaces, and from efforts to quarantine Chinese people and their "unwholesome" practices in slums far away from city centers. Nevertheless,

The current racist backlash against Chinese wet markets as coronavirus's source ignores the growing science that challenges this premise. Meanwhile, scientists point out that the general public's most effective protection against contracting SARS, coronavirus, or even the flu virus is frequent hand-washing — not racism.

Nevertheless, racist vitriol has already permeated online conversation about the coronavirus. An uncanny echo of historic anti-Asian stereotypes dating back to more than a century ago, tweets about the coronavirus have been awash with complaints of Chinese people as "backward," "disgusting," "dirty" and having "gross" eating practices. Some call the death of Chinese people by coronavirus "karma." Online comments sections for Chinese restaurants are being bombarded with racist remarks. In a suburb north of Toronto, 8,000 people signed a petition demanding that a local school board bar any child with a family member who had recently traveled to China from attending school. Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter have taken that suggestion a step further and have called for the United States to ban all Chinese travelers, regardless of whether they have traveled to a region with an active coronavirus outbreak.

York University Professor of Environmental Studies Roger Keil, who studied the racialization of SARS, tweeted last week a plea that we challenge racialization in the coronavirus outbreak, saying: "Racism is a weapon of mass infection."<sup>6</sup>

The Corona virus is used by China to attack the freedom of speech and by other states to bring down the regime in Iran, "On Sunday Pakistan and Turkey closed their borders with Iran on the ground of the rapid spread of coronavirus in the

*Islamic Republic and the unwillingness of Iranian leaders to announce the extent of the threat. Iraq had already conducted some border closures and bans on Iranians traveling to the country. Afghanistan and Armenia also closed their borders with Iran.”*<sup>7</sup>

The US has imposed a ban on foreigners with a recent travel history to China but at the same time flew home 14 Americans who tested positive for the virus while aboard the cruise ship off Japan. History has shown that border closures protected some farming villages during Spanish Influenza in 1918 and 1919<sup>8</sup>, but they also kept countries like Portugal from obtaining health resources.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the primary spreaders of the disease – soldiers in World War I – crossed the borders and spread the Spanish Influenza. Israel also brought back passengers from the cruise ship.

### Epidemics in Time of Decay

Albert Camus published his novel *“The Plague”* in 1947 after the cholera visited Algeria during World War II. Thousands of people were dying on the streets of Oran. The main character Dr. Rieux struggled to save his patients. The book deals with the “fake news” by the mass media serving the government. At first the people of the city are quarantined. No one is allowed in or out. Then the government announced that the plague is over. The people are happy believing it. He knows what the crowd did not from historical books that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears forever and that it can lie dormant for years and years and can reappear in the future.

Any person who knows history knows that epochs of social decay are accompanied by epidemics. Some historians like Bryan Ward-Perkins have pointed out that late antiquity – the time of the decay of Rome – was characterized above all by violence, death, and economic collapse.<sup>10</sup>

In his book Ward-Perkins wrote that there was a close connection between the fall of the Roman Empire and the disintegration of the ancient economy. This link between economic and political decline has been explored by many other historians who concentrated on the period before the fall of the empire, in order to explore whether declining prosperity weakened the Roman capacity to resist the invasion of the Germanic tribes which the Romans called “barbarians”.

Ward-Perkins also wrote that there were other problems that played a subsidiary role. For instance flu-like bubonic plague reached the Mediterranean from Egypt, and spread inexorably through the former Roman world, reoccurring on several occasions over subsequent decades.

There was also the famous *Justinian’s Plague* about which John Horgan reports: *“During the reign of the emperor Justinian I (527-565 CE), one of the worst outbreaks of a plague took place, killing millions of people. The plague arrived in Constantinople in 542 CE, almost a year after the disease first appeared in the outer provinces of the empire. The outbreak continued throughout the Mediterranean world for another 225 years until 750 CE It originating in China and northeast India, the plague (Yersinia pestis - bubonic plague) was carried to the Great Lakes region of Africa via overland and sea trade route.”*<sup>11</sup>

During the *Yersinia pestis* plague the pagans were accused of spreading the virus in order to destroy Christianity.

At the end of the feudal system plagues killed many peo-

ple. It is estimated that the “*Black Death*” killed 75-200 million people – around 30% of Europe’s population. It spread from central Asia on rat fleas living on the black rats that were regular passengers on merchant ships, and traveled towards Europe as people fled from one area to another. This is probably the reason many people are afraid of rats. Yet what is missing in this explanation is why it happened at the time of the decay of Feudalism.

The historian Rodney Hilton wrote: *“My view has been that conflict between landlords and peasants, however muted or however intense, over the appropriation of the surplus product of the peasant holding, was a prime mover in the evolution of medieval society. I also think that the social and political crises of the late medieval feudal order cannot be understood if what Marc Bloch called “the crisis of seigniorial fortunes” is not seen as the consequence of a failure by the ruling aristocracies to keep up the level of appropriation. From the outset, I have tried to understand and to explain the considerable variations in the size, composition and management of landed estates. I have also (and particularly recently) attempted to investigate the nature of medieval urbanisation, a consequence of the development of both simple, local commodity production and long distance trade in especially-luxury goods. This has been associated, of course, with an interest in the vexed problem of the medieval origins of capitalism. (...) The European population, no doubt, increased considerably during the 12th and 13th centuries, but in the 14th century, before the Black Death, it was beginning to diminish. At the same time that is before the Black Death indications of crisis and decline appear in the most important sector of the economy, agriculture. Land went out of cultivation and that which was still tilled yielded less. There could be no more revealing indications of the crisis of a social order than the inability of its ruling class, demonstrated over a long period of time, to profit in a situation over which they seemed to have complete control. And yet, both the accounts of the great estates in England and the terms of contracts of tenure in France reveal, in the first half of the 14th century, the beginnings of a contraction of seigniorial revenues which lasted for at least a century.”*<sup>12</sup>

It is well-known that already the Great Famine of 1315-17 and subsequent malnutrition in the population caused weakened immunity and susceptibility to disease, thus allowing the plague to have such devastating effects.<sup>13</sup>

Like in other times of crisis the ruling class sought to blame scapegoats In this case the Jews.

*“In 1348 there appeared in Europe a devastating plague which is reported to have killed off ultimately twenty-five million people. By the fall of that year the rumor was current that these deaths were due to an international conspiracy of Jewry to poison Christendom. It was reported that the leaders in the Jewish metropolis of Toledo had initiated the plot and that one of the chief conspirators was a Rabbi Peyret who had his headquarters in Chambéry, Savoy, whence he dispatched his poisoners to France, Switzerland, and Italy. By authority of Amadeus VI, Count of Savoy, a number of the Jews who lived on the shores of Lake Geneva, having been arrested and put to the torture, naturally confessed anything their inquisitors suggested. These Jews, under torture, incriminated others. Records of their confessions were sent from one town to another in Switzerland and down the Rhine River into Germany, and as a result, thousands of Jews, in at least two hundred towns and hamlets, were butchered and burnt. The sheer loss of numbers, the disappearance of their wealth, and the growing hatred of the Christians brought German Jewry to a catastrophic downfall. It now began to decline*

and did not again play an important part in German life till the seventeenth century.”<sup>14</sup>

During the industrial revolution, disease accounted for many deaths in industrial cities. With a chronic lack of hygiene, little knowledge of sanitary care and no knowledge as to what caused, diseases such as cholera, typhoid and typhus were devastating. As the cities became more populated, so did the problems got worse.

“Cholera was caused by contaminated water. Industrial Britain was hit by an outbreak of cholera in 1831-32, 1848-49, 1854 and 1867. The sewage contacted the drinking water and contaminating it. As many people used river water as their source of drinking water, the disease spread.”<sup>15</sup>

One of the worst cases of epidemic was in India from 1898 to 1908, which experienced some 13 million deaths from the bubonic plague. The British colonial power engineered poverty, famine and decay for most Indians that created the conditions for the spread of the plague. British policies in India during the plague served as models. Isolation, internment and racial categorization were effective tools of political control. Acts of omission like the ‘rational alternation’ can only be viewed against the larger canvas of mega death, mahamari. Meanwhile, the Bombay plague established the pattern of domination that would lead elsewhere to death camps, genocide and ethnic cleansing.<sup>16</sup>

The bourgeois’ scientists who serve the colonialist rule claimed that the cause was the rats. What they ignore is the creation of the social conditions that allowed the rats to spread the disease. Bombay’s population grew dramatically over the 19th and 20th centuries, famines pushed people into the city and the need for housing drove rats out of their natural habitat and into people’s homes.

The epoch of the declining of the capitalist system began at the end of the 19th century and WWI, as Lenin pointed out, was the manifestation of the rebellion of the forces of production against the relationship of production. Capitalism was by the end of the 19th century a world system and each imperial power wanted to grab a larger part of the world economy. This led to the First World War.

At the end of WWI the so called “Spanish flu” killed millions of people around the world. It began in January 1918. From Kansas the illness spread quickly, not only through-

out the U.S. but across the world. The epidemic lasted two years from its outbreak in the U.S. Between 50 million and 100 million people across the globe died—around 3% of the world’s population.<sup>17</sup> The soldiers who lived in horrible conditions brought with them the disease. Since 1914, there have been a few epidemics causing suffering and killing of people and domesticated animals.

Polio, poliomyelitis, or infantile paralysis, is an infectious disease caused by the poliovirus. World War II and the early years after the war saw high numbers of polio cases affecting both civilians and military.

“HIV/AIDS: Since its emergence in the 1980s, HIV has infected 60 million people and caused an estimated 30 million deaths.

Malaria: In 2010, an estimated 219 million people worldwide were infected by the disease and 660,000 died. The disease is widespread in tropical regions such as Africa, Asia and the Americas, with about 90 percent of cases occurring in the African region.

Tuberculosis (TB) caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, is second only to HIV/AIDS as the greatest killer worldwide due to a single infectious agent.

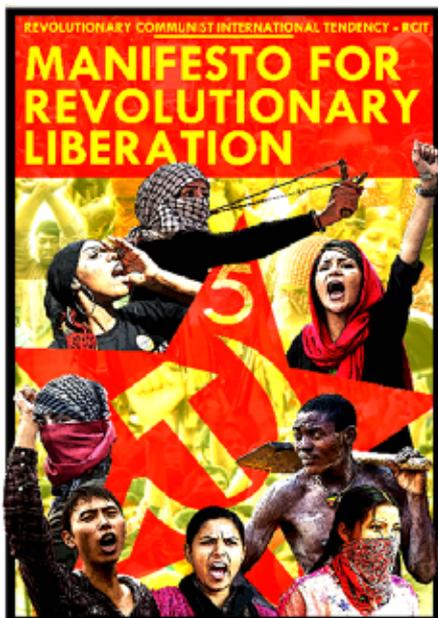
In 2012, 8.6 million people fell ill with TB, and 1.3 million died.”<sup>18</sup>

Most victims of TB occur in the semi-colonies. “Lethal smog that covered the city of London for five days (December 5–9) in 1952 was caused by a combination of industrial pollution and high-pressure weather conditions. This combination of smoke and fog brought the city to a near standstill and resulted in thousands of deaths.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus it is clear that there is a strong connection between wars and in particular imperialist world wars, poor environmental conditions, weak immunity system result of age and poor diet, evolution of viruses, crowded cities and epidemics.

Marx and Engels writings on the capitalist destruction of the ecology is very relevant to the appearance of epidemics.

“Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the laborer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country starts its development on the foundation of



## PROGRAM OF THE RCIT

# Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

Adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress of the RCIT in October 2016

Introduction \* I. Decaying Capitalism \* II. Today’s Worldwide Historic Revolutionary Period \* III. The Reactionary Offensive of the Ruling Class \* IV. A Program for Socialist Revolution to Halt Humanity’s Collapse into Barbarism \* V. The Crisis of Leadership and the Construction of a Revolutionary World Party \* VI. Work in Mass Organizations and the United Front Tactic \* VII. The Semi-Colonial South \* VIII. The Emerging Imperialist Great Powers of the East: China and Russia \* IX. The Old Imperialist Great Powers: The EU, North America and Japan \* X. Conclusion

A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A5 Format

modern industry, like the United States, for example, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the laborer.”<sup>20</sup>

“Even the need for fresh air ceases to be a need for the worker. Man reverts once more to living in a cave, but the cave is now polluted by the mephitic and pestilential breath of civilization. Moreover, the worker ... actually has to pay for this mortuary. A dwelling in the light, which Prometheus describes in Aeschylus as one of the great gifts through which he transformed savages into men, ceases to exist for the worker. Light, air, etc. — the simplest animal cleanliness — ceases to be a need for man. Dirt — this pollution and putrefaction of man, the sewage (this word is to be understood in its literal sense) of civilization — becomes an element of life for him.”<sup>21</sup>

“Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us. Each of them, it is true, has in the first place the consequences on which we counted, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel out the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor, and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that they were laying the basis for the present devastated condition of these countries, by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture. When, on the southern slopes of the mountains, the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were ... thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, with the effect that these would be able to pour still more furious flood torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that they were at the same time spreading the disease of scrofula. Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature — but that we, with flesh, blood, and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other beings of being able to know and correctly apply its laws.

And, in fact, with every day that passes we are learning to understand these laws more correctly, and getting to know both the more immediate and the more remote consequences of our interference with the traditional course of nature. ... But the more this happens, the more will men not only feel, but also know, their unity with nature, and thus the more impossible will become the senseless and antinatural idea of a contradiction between mind and matter, man and nature, soul and body. ...

But if it has already required the labour of thousands of years for us to learn to some extent to calculate the more remote **natural** consequences of our actions aiming at production, it has been still more difficult in regard to the more remote **social** consequences of these actions. ... When afterwards Columbus discovered America, he did not know that by doing so he was giving new life to slavery, which in Europe had long ago been done away with, and laying the basis for the Negro slave traffic. ... But even in this sphere, by long and often cruel experience and by collecting and analyzing the historical material, we are gradually learning to get a clear view of the indirect, more remote, social effects of our productive activity, and so the possibility is afforded us of mastering and controlling these effects as well.

To carry out this control requires something more than mere

knowledge. It requires a complete revolution in our hitherto existing mode of production, and with it of our whole contemporary social order.”<sup>22</sup>

### The Effect of the Rapid Industrialization of China and Other Countries

The rapid industrialization of China in the process of becoming a new imperialist state created high pollution. “China is the world’s largest source of carbon emissions, and the air quality of many major cities is very poor. Severe water contamination added to land deterioration. China is the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases. In 2014 it was responsible for 27 percent of global emissions. It uses huge quantities of coal that creates prolonged periods of smog so severe that citizens named it an “airpocalypse”; the concentration of hazardous particles was forty times the level deemed safe by the World Health Organization (WHO). China is the world’s largest coal producer and accounts for about half of global consumption.”<sup>23</sup>

It will be a mistake to believe that the situation in India is better. In Delhi levels of dangerous particles in the air - known as PM2.5 - are far higher than recommended and about seven times higher than in the Chinese capital Beijing.<sup>24</sup>

Studies done by the World Health Organization in 2016 found that approximately 98% of cities in middle to low-income countries – i.e. the semi-colonies – have air quality that doesn’t meet the recognized WHO standards.<sup>25</sup>

A great number of the large imperialist corporations have moved factories to the semi-colonies for a larger-scale production. These robbers take advantage of the cheap labor low-priced land and abundant natural resources to reduce the cost greatly; thereby they can chase a higher profit in their attempts to overcome the falling rate of profit. Thus not only they super-exploit the working class and the poor peasants but they also pollute the semi-colonies.

“Inequality between the world’s rich and poor is widening, according to 2018 global data from the World Health Organisation (WHO) which shows that 7 million people – mostly in “developing nations” – die every year from airborne contaminants. Overall, nine in 10 people on the planet live with poor, even dangerous, air, says the WHO report which shows that more than 57% of cities in the Americas and more than 61% of cities in Europe had seen a fall in PM10 and PM2.5 particulate matter between 2010 and 2016. But these gains were set against a worsening trend in other regions. Delhi and Cairo are by far the most polluted mega-cities in the world with average PM10 levels more than 10 times the WHO guidelines. They are followed by Dhaka, Mumbai and Beijing, each with particulate concentrations about five times the recommended level. The Americas, principally the US and Canada, was the only region where a sizable majority of people – 80% – breathe air that meets WHO guidelines on particulates. In Asia and the Middle East, the figure was close to zero.”<sup>26</sup>

The connection between air pollution by microorganisms and human disease from inhaling these organisms was established long ago.<sup>27</sup>

Another way the imperialist states pollute the semi-colonies – especially African states – is selling their waste materials like plastic. “The world generated 242 million tons of plastic waste in 2016 – a figure that’s expected to grow by 70% in the next 30 years. But this same plastic is also a commodity that’s sold and traded in a global industry that generates

US\$200 billion every year. Exporting plastic waste is one way rich countries dispose of their waste. By selling waste to firms that then send it to countries where recycling costs are cheaper, rich countries can avoid the unpleasant task of finding somewhere at home to dispose of it. Unfortunately, most of this waste is shipped to countries that aren't equipped to properly manage it. When wealthy countries export their plastic waste to poorer countries with weaker recycling capacity, those plastics are often dumped, eventually polluting the land and sea."<sup>28</sup>

In conclusion: We do not know whether the Corona virus will be an epidemic but it is already affecting the world economy and pushing for a crisis that may be the worst in the history of capitalism. Racism against Chinese is on the rise and many people are hysterical. Like in other similar situations the capitalist mass media contributes greatly to this hysteria and racism. We know very little about the incubation of the virus. At first the speculation was that the incubation is of 14 days. Now it appears that it is longer. Some affected people were released from isolation after 14 days and they are likely to infect other people. So far there is no medical treatment or vaccine.

We live in an epoch of the decay of capitalism and of a period of economic crisis that began in 2008. In such a revolutionary period, epidemics will hit us unless we will be able to overthrow the decaying capitalist system. As Lenin wrote for humanity to live imperialism must die.

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# Ex-IMF Advisor: “Corona Virus Crisis is also an Opportunity”

## How the ruling classes try to utilize COVID-19 to utilize their crisis

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 16 March 2020

An article published by Bloomberg on 15 March quotes the views of James Boughton. Boughton is a well-known economist and historian who has served for decades at the International Monetary Fund, i.e. one of the key institutions of global imperialism. In other words, we have here an intelligent strategist for the monopoly bourgeoisie.

According to Bloomberg, Boughton cites the collapse in South Korea and Indonesia as catalysts for dramatic neoliberal attacks on the rights of the working class and the popular masses. Referring to the COVID-19 crisis, he says: *“Only in a crisis are governments able to rally people to accept necessary but painful reforms. Every crisis is also an opportunity.”* (1)

These are words which all workers and oppressed should memorize. Since the beginning of February the RCIT has analyzed closely the nature of the COVID-19 crisis in a number of articles and statements. In one of our first statements, we pointed out that the ruling classes are utilizing the global hysteria about COVID-19 for *political calculations*. We explained that the bourgeoisie pursues several political and economic objectives. One of them, we wrote, is to confuse the popular masses about the real causes of the economic slump which began in the second half of 2019 and to accept attacks on their democratic rights:

*“The ruling classes in China as well as in many other countries exploit the hysteria in order to justify the vast expansion of surveillance and control of its population. (...) China’s regime utilizes the hysteria also in order to create a climate of fear so that anxious people put all their hopes in the state forces. (...) The ruling class will exploit the 2019 Corona Virus (and subsequently China) in order to find a culprit for the Great Recession which has recently begun. In fact, while the global measures to supposedly contain the spreading of the virus deepen the slump, the capitalist world economy has entered a recession already in the second half of 2019. The truth is that the reasons for this Great Recession are the same like those for all the others in the past: the frantic drive for profit of the capitalist corporations provokes again and again in economic crashes of the world economy.”* (2)

The words of Boughton which we quoted above demonstrate that the smarter strategists of the ruling class are indeed thinking how they can politically exploit the COVID-19 crisis for their goals. They know that only a shock – like the Corona Virus crisis – can create the political conditions to paralyze the working class and oppressed so that they accept monstrous attacks on their social and democratic rights.

The RCIT repeats once more that all revolutionary activists must aid the vanguard to counter the current reactionary offensive of the bourgeoisie which has launched a shock-and-awe attack against the working class and the popular masses. Revolutionaries must explain that the global hysteria about COVID-19 is politically motivated and that only a proper health program, instead of lockdown police state tactics, can help. They must also explain that the workers and popular organizations must not ac-

cept the suppression of democratic rights and that they must fight against all attempts of the capitalists to put the burden of the crisis on the their shoulders.

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# COVID-19 and the cruel Double Standard of Imperialism

## What agreement with measures like social distancing and lockdowns really means

Article by Almedina Gunić, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 20th March 2020

There is a substance that kills 3 million people per year. It's called alcohol (1). Tobacco leads to the death of 8 million people per year (2). Overconsumption of sugar resulting in diabetes causes 1.5 million deaths per year. In addition 2.2 million people die from negative health impacts caused by higher blood sugar (3). COVID-19 has killed 10,041 people so far. Now, why are there whole industries even making profit by selling substances that are killing nearly 15 million people (alcohol, tobacco and added sugar) every year while a virus which has killed 10,041 people until today should be reason enough to stop social interactions and to accept complete lockdowns?

People who love their drink or cigarette or third piece of cake might argue that they are only a threat to themselves but not to others while a virus is spreading, infecting many people. At least for tobacco this is not true as 1.2 million are killed *only* because they are exposed to second-hand smoke without being a smoker themselves (4). Furthermore, alcoholism is an *illness* that is not caused because people have chosen to become an alcoholic (same is true for diabetes and cancer). It is rather a reflection of the addictive character those substances have on human beings. Last but not least, beds in intense care units which are occupied by patients who have been poisoned by the named substances are beds that are not available for other emergencies. However, alcohol, sugar and tobacco play a vital (or rather deadly) part in the life of enough people.

Today, capitalist governments all around the world implement draconic enforcement measures against COVID-19

like general quarantines up to complete lockdowns. They justify this by arguing that they "protect" the people, especially the seriously ill and the elder. Surveillance is used up to forcing people to use specific apps with face-recognition which check the temperature daily and inform the government about results. Drones are flying, police and military forces are mobilized to keep people at home and a large number of borders are closed. All of this happens in combination with mobilizing huge amounts of money from the state treasury in order to provide the multinational corporations and other capitalist companies to cushion the blow of the recession. The ruling classes around the world demand that we all apply "social distancing", i.e. voluntarily (!) staying away from public places, not gathering in groups, keeping a minimum distance of one meter between each other, and so on.

All of this is a huge mobilization of forces, planned and implemented in an amazingly short period of time, under the motto to counteract the pandemic. We as the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* have dealt with various aspects of COVID-19, demanding the use of medical tests in case of supposed infections, free medical care including quarantines of patients if necessary and rejection of the lockdowns (5). Likewise we explained the real reasons for the economic crisis, which – contrary to the lies of the capitalist governments – has not been caused by the pandemic (6). We opposed all chauvinist reactions and denounced all anti-democratic measures (7) and many more.

## RCIT Publications on Kashmir & India

- \* **“Azadi Kashmir”: Marxists and the independence of Kashmir**
- \* **The Kashmir Question and the Indian Left Today**
- \* **India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes**
- \* **India: A Peculiar Semi-Colony in the Role of a Regional Power**

Written by Michael Pröbsting  
(International Secretary of the RCIT)

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### Scratch some Communists...

However, there is another important aspect that we need to deal with in this situation. Not only is there a sudden enormous mobilization of forces possible against a virus which is less deadly than broadly advertised substances like alcohol, tobacco and added sugars are. Such huge effort is done because a contagious virus is *also* threatening the imperialist countries. Our brothers and sisters in the semi-colonial countries are dying by horrible diseases since more than a century. Poverty which was forced on them by imperialist governments and multinational corporations robbing and exploiting them brutally is the basis for one epidemic after the other. This leads to the pervert situation that 4% of worldwide deaths are caused by something as simple as Diarrhoea (8).

Now, the mainstream opinion in the imperialist world is that it is necessary to protect our fellow human beings and that we therefore should voluntarily isolate ourselves and accept every limitation of our democratic rights. 73% of all deaths worldwide are caused by HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis together with maternal deaths, neonatal deaths and deaths from malnutrition. These are 41 million people every year dying in the semi-colonial world by mostly preventable causes (9). All of this happens to our brothers and sisters in the semi-colonial countries without a single imperialist blinking an eye. But if a contagious, new virus hits the imperialist countries the world shall stop spinning. What a disgusting moral this is!

Revolutionaries who live in imperialist countries have to strongly oppose this bigotry, such double standard of valuing the lives of our brothers and sisters in the semi-colonial world much less than lives in the imperialist world. Otherwise they would be like those about whom the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Lenin spoke when he said: *"There are the kind of objections of which I have said: Scratch some Communists and you will find Great-Russian chauvinists."*(10)

To socialists in imperialist countries: Even if you are not sure how dangerous COVID-19 might really be in the medical sense, the pandemic contains a danger politically lethal to all revolutionaries...that is social-imperialism. Be aware that this is exactly happening to you, if you obey to the hysteria.

Reject the COVID-19 hysteria and prepare to fight back against austerity measures, against mass layoffs and against attacks on democratic rights! Reject any lock-

downs, any forced undemocratic measures, any rules to socially isolate yourself from others as long as you are healthy! Keep a clear head in order to organize a broad solidarity campaign for our brothers and sisters in the semi-colonial countries, who have already been hit hard by so many diseases caused by imperialism and who will suffer heavy from the current pandemic!

The future world revolution will not be possible without our comrades from the semi-colonial countries leading the fight. We cannot allow imperialism to kill any more of our brothers and sisters!

### Footnotes

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## No, the Corona Virus is not the Main Cause of the Global Economic Slump!

### Bourgeois Media Officially Recognize the Beginning of another Great Recession

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 3 March 2020

Panic is on the march. Another Great Recession has arrived. The U.S. Stock Market shed 1,190.95 points on 27 February, its largest one-day point drop in history. In barely more than a week, the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index plunged 12.8%— the dizziest such fall since the 2008 financial crisis. <sup>1</sup> According to Bloomberg, U.S. markets experienced “*their worst week since the financial crisis more than a decade ago ... wiping out almost US\$3 trillion in value from American equities.*” <sup>2</sup> The same development has taken place at major exchanges in Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul, Frankfurt, Paris and London. Reuters reports that global markets lost about \$5 trillion last week. <sup>3</sup>

This stock market crash reflects the collapse of capitalist production. China's manufacturing activity index fell to an all-time low of 35.7 in February from 50 in January. <sup>4</sup> China's non-manufacturing PMI – a gauge of sentiment in the services and construction sectors – also dropped, to 29.6 from 54.1 in January. This was also the lowest on record, according to the *South China Morning Post*. <sup>5</sup>

However, the decline in production is not confined to China – the world largest capitalist economy except the U.S. Other major capitalist countries affected by this development are Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Taiwan, South Korea and Australia. Global trade contracted too. According to the latest report of J.P.Morgan, “*global manufacturing sector suffered its steepest contraction since 2009 as demand, international trade and supply chains were severely disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Output fell across the consumer, intermediate and investment goods industries, with the steepest drop at investment goods producers. The J.P.Morgan Global Manufacturing PMI (...) fell to 47.2 in February, down from 50.4 in January and to its lowest level since May 2009.*” <sup>6</sup> This implies, according to analyst Olya Borichevska, a contraction in global industrial production of around a 5%.

Even the OECD, an imperialist institution which has made spreading of official optimism one of its key tasks, is forced to acknowledge the bitter reality. In an emergency interim report published yesterday, it warns “[A]nnual global GDP growth is projected to drop to 2.4% in 2020 as a whole, from an already weak 2.9% in 2019, with growth possibly even being negative in the first quarter of 2020. (...) A longer lasting and more intensive coronavirus outbreak, spreading widely throughout the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and North America, would weaken prospects considerably. In this event, global growth could drop to 1½ per cent in 2020, half the rate projected prior to the virus outbreak.” <sup>7</sup>

Daniel Wagner, a bourgeois analyst, is more outspoken about the prospects of the capitalist world economy: “*In short, we could be witnessing the beginning of a global economic depression similar to, or perhaps even worse than, what the world experienced in 1929. Many aspects of the global economy are, of course, very different from almost 100 years ago, but then, as now, the downfall of major economies had a cumulative impact on the global economy.*” <sup>8</sup>

In other words, we see a sudden change. Not long ago,

most politicians, commentators and journalists in the service of the bourgeoisie, praised the state of the capitalist world economy and only spoke about a “mild softening”. And now, suddenly, the bourgeois media are filled with panic. Suddenly, we can read every day new articles about the great recession of the world economy.

#### The new Great Recession began already in 2019

So, how do the servile heralds of the bourgeoisie explain the sudden collapse of the world economy? It's simple: they claim that this is all because of the 2019 Corona Virus! No one should believe such nonsense! Sure, the spreading of the 2019 Corona Virus has caused panic among the capitalist classes and provoked a disruption of global trade (and cross-border interaction in general). <sup>9</sup> But this epidemic has only *accelerated* a process which has been already in place for at least half a year!

As the RCIT has demonstrated in several documents in the past few months, the Great Recession started already last year – before anyone knew about the 2019 Corona Virus! <sup>10</sup> Global industrial production grew in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2019 only by +0.1%, stagnated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter with 0.0% and shrunk in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter by -0.1%. (See Table 1) Likewise did industrial production in the U.S. decline by -1% between the end of 2018 and the end of 2019. (See Table 2) International merchandise trade of the largest capitalist economies – the so-called G20 – also declined throughout most of the year 2019 (See Table 3)

In short, the capitalist world economy already entered another Great Recession in 2019 – long before the 2019 Corona Virus epidemic (COVID-19) emerged. This is why more clear-sighted bourgeois economists like James Sweeney, chief economist at Credit Suisse, conceded that “*global manufacturing and trade have been in a slump since late 2018.*” <sup>14</sup> Likewise did J.P.Morgan admitted two month ago, i.e. before the COVID-19 crisis started, that in 2019 “*there was an earnings recession in the US, Europe and Japan.*” <sup>15</sup>

#### Creating confusion

In other words, what we currently see is a *deliberate exploitation* of the COVID-19 crisis by the bourgeois propagandists in order to confuse people about the real causes of the collapse of the capitalist world economy. They try to present the crisis of their economic system as something caused by a “supernatural event” for which the capitalists bear no responsibility.

This is why revolutionary activists have the urgent task to explain to the vanguard of the workers and oppressed the real background of the capitalist crisis. They need to explain that the COVID-19 crisis only aggravated the already existing recession. This recession has been caused by the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system with the tendency of the profit rate to fall at its core. <sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, as the RCIT has explained in various documents on the COVID-19 crisis, the cut in global trade and transport was neither a necessary nor a useful reaction to the epidemic. It was rather a political tool to whip up protectionism and chauvinism in order to manipulate the popular masses and to direct their anger and fear against “foreigners”.

### Some conclusions

We conclude by pointing out that it is a crucial task of Marxists to elaborate a scientific analysis of the capitalist world economy in order to combat attempts of the bourgeoisie to confuse the real causes of their crisis.

Secondly, the current economic, ecological and political catastrophes confirm once more the RCIT’s characterization of the historic period opening in 2008 as a “*revolutionary period*” which is hallmarked by a “*decay of humanity’s productive forces*”. The crisis of this system has to be understood as a comprehensive decline of capitalist civilization.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the course of the current recession demonstrates once more the Marxist thesis that China has become a major imperialist Great Power.<sup>18</sup> There is an old saying which goes, “*When America sneezes, the whole world catches cold*”. Today, as the U.S. imperialism experiences a historic decline as the imperialist hegemon and China rises as its most important challenger, one could equally say: “*When China sneezes, the whole world catches cold*”.<sup>19</sup> According to the latest edition of the UNIDO’ *Industrial Development Report*, China’s share in global manufacturing production rose from 3 percent in 1990 to 25 percent in 2018.<sup>20</sup> This massive rise of China is also reflected in its first respective second place in other key areas like the global trade, capital stock, the world’s top corporations, billionaires, etc. In short, what happens in China has massive consequences for the whole capitalist world economy.

As we have emphasized repeatedly, it is impossible to understand the character of the present tensions between the Great Powers without the appreciating the class character of the parties involved. More specifically, the precondition for a correct understanding is recognition of the imperialist nature, not only of the old imperialist powers – the U.S., Western Europe and Japan – but also of the emerging imperialist powers, China and Russia.

The new Great Recession goes hand in hand with profound social crisis (e.g. COVID-19) as well political shifts. In such periods, it is inevitable that we see an increasing number of revolutionary as well as counter-revolutionary developments. Authentic socialists must prepare for such developments and unite in order to build a Revolutionary World Party based on a program for liberation struggle under the present conditions. The RCIT is dedicating its forces to this big, indeed this historic goal. Join us in this struggle!

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long run. For more on this see e.g. chapter I (*"The Historic Crisis of Capitalism"*) in Michael Pröbsting's book: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective*, RCIT Books, January 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>. See also Richard Brenner, Michael Pröbsting, Keith Spencer: *The Credit Crunch – A Marxist Analysis*, London 2008

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**Table 1. Global Industrial Production and Merchandise Trade, 2019 (in Volume, Quarter on Quarter) <sup>11</sup>**

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019
World Industrial Production	0.1	0.0	-0.1
World Merchandise Trade	-0.3	-0.7	0.6

**Table 2. Industrial Production in the U.S., 2019 <sup>12</sup>**

Q2	Q3	Q4	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Dec. 2018
(Annual Rate)			(Monthly Rate)						to Dec. 2019
-2.3%	1.2%	-0.5%	-0.2%	0.8%	-0.5%	-0.5%	0.8%	-0.3%	-1.0%

**Table 3. G20 Total International Merchandise Trade, 2019 <sup>13</sup>**

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Exports:	+0.2%	-1.6%	-0.6%	-0.1%
Imports:	-1.2%	-0.9%	-0.5%	-1.3%

## 2019-nCoV and the Virus of Chauvinism

### A comparison with measles and the reactionary Anti-Vaxx campaigners

by Almedina Gunic, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 6 February 2020

The wave of hysteria on the new Corona Virus (2019-nCoV) with its first known case originated in Wuhan, the capital of the Chinese province Hubei in December 2019, seems to be at its peak. In a very telling article by *The New York Times*, the author describes measures of the Chinese state apparatus against potentially infected people in Wuhan and other parts of the country, including dragnets which are set up as traps and demanding people to report their neighbors if they suspect them to be infected (1).

However, it is not the Stalinist-capitalist regime in Beijing which is treating the Chinese people as pariahs. Also other imperialist states act with undisguised chauvinism against people from China.

The United States have closed the borders for Chinese residents and put their own citizens into quarantine on a military base in Sacramento, after they came back from China. A number of racist outbreaks against people from Asia (including migrants from states like Vietnam, Cambodia and others) have been reported in the U.S. Some official reactions were as racist: for example, the Berkeley University of California characterized in a tweet individual chauvinist attacks in this context as “normal reactions” (2).

The same is true for European countries, where the chauvinist hysteria included banning people from China to enter restaurants in Italy (3). The German journal *Der Spiegel* ran the headline “Made in China” with a picture of a person in protective gear. Similar examples of Anti-Chinese racism took place in Japan, South Korea and even Hong Kong (4).

One has to be clear that nothing of this is a “natural” reaction respectively a common reaction to a disease in our present time. One has also to be clear that the medical threat has absolutely nothing to do with the racist reactions. Let us look at the measles, for example. Based on the infection rate, potential complications and mortality nobody can argue against the fact that measles (aka *rubeola*) are far worse!

#### Deadly Rubeola Virus

The World Health Organization stated 24,554 confirmed cases of infections and 492 confirmed cases of deaths by the 2019-nCoV until 5<sup>th</sup> February this year (5). It seems that one person infected by 2019-nCoV might pass the virus to approximately 3 others (6). This is the first contact for us humans with this new virus. However, in the case of the first outbreak of measles on the island of Fiji in 1875, rubeola killed one third (!) of the whole population within four months. The same happened to the people of Hawaii in 1848 when they first got in touch with the rubeola virus, which also led to the death of one third of the population (7). Measles spread to more than 90% of children and youth without antibodies making it one of the most contagious diseases we know (8).

Our bodies are capable of developing antibodies after

a survived measles infection. For the first year in a newborns life, the antibodies from the mother keep them protected as well. Although this kind of protection developed and became later the basis for the creation of successful vaccination against rubeola, the mortality rate of infected people were still high after dozens of generations.

In 1657 a Boston merchant records the first outbreak of measles. More than 200 years later, in 1861 still 4,000 deaths out of 67,000 infected soldiers from the Union Army during U.S. civil war were counted (9). It was only after 1963, the year of the development of the first vaccination against rubeola, that mankind was able to really limit the infection rate and mortality caused by the measles. Nevertheless, approximately 140,000 deaths caused by rubeola in 2018 have been reported to the World Health Organization (10) with an expected massive increase of deaths for the last year (11). This is the case *although* we know this disease since centuries and have developed generations after generations of antibodies, have developed effective vaccination against it many decades ago and have well informed medical experts on the virus all around the world. Still the death toll for rubeola is so much higher than the 2019-nCoV without causing the same hysterical wave. The opposite is the case as a movement against the rubeola vaccination developed in the last years!

#### Anti-Vaxx Lunatics in Imperialist Countries

The brothers and sisters infected by the 2019-nCoV are treated as a plague irrespective of their reasonable coping with the disease while, at the same time, a crazy bunch of Anti-Vaccination campaigners spread misinformation about measles with little to no consequences. The most prominent argument brought forward by the so-called Anti-Vaxxers is the lie that the MMR vaccination causes autism (12). Aside of the unintelligent conclusion that they rather let children die from measles before they accept a child with autism – an immoral and bigoted worldview at least – the Anti-Vaxxers themselves are a huge health threat.

One can argue that people who refuse vaccination only damage their own respectively their children’s health. However, this is not true as they become a serious risk to public health beyond creating confusion and insecurity. This is due to the so-called herd immunity (13). Most people have no medical counter-indications to a MMR vaccination but some humans are resistant in developing the antibodies although they receive proper vaccination. Not developing the needed antibodies equals lacking of protection against an infection by rubeola. Others have a weak immune system, especially very young children, old people and invalids. They are in the same danger of being infected by rubeola and are additionally under increased danger to develop complications which lead to death. This is where the concept of herd immunity becomes a vital factor for the protection of these people.

All persons who are successfully vaccinated against rube-

ola help to limit the potential of the virus to spread. Normally the number of people who are successfully vaccinated would be so high that measles can be wiped out and by this all are protected against the disease. One can imagine a person not able to develop antibodies respectively too weak to receive the vaccination being circulated by people who are successfully vaccinated. The latter become some sort of protection shield that blocks the virus to reach the person who has no vaccination. Herd immunity however doesn't work if the number of people without proper vaccination becomes too high. Unfortunately, it just needs some thousand Anti-Vaxxers to crash the effective shield of herd immunity and to spread the virus to our brothers and sisters with more vulnerable health conditions, causing their death. This is due to the fact that – contrary to newborns, the elder and invalids – most ideologically convinced unvaccinated people have a higher grade of mobility. The Anti-Vaxxer's campaign was most prominently reported in the U.S. (14).

### Anti-Vaxx sentiments in Semi-Colonies

The Anti-Vaxx movement is obviously totally reactionary in the imperialist countries but the situation is far more complicated for some semi-colonial countries and for a number of oppressed ethnicities. This is due to various and complex reasons. Samoa for example witnessed a massive drop of acceptance for the MMR vaccination after two nurses were sentenced to prison for mixing liquid muscle relaxant instead of water into the vaccination formula causing the death of two infants. In Pakistan, on the other hand, the rejection towards vaccinations for polio

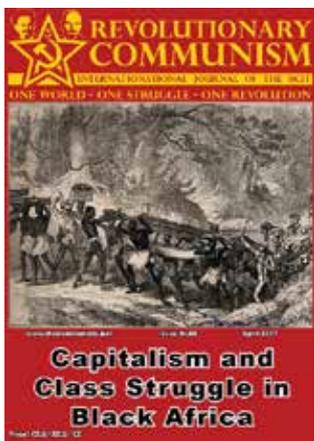
(another harmful but evitable disease) were caused by the CIA tracking down Osama Bin Laden by gaining information via an undercover polio vaccination team (15).

There are also a number of ethnicities like the ultra orthodox Jews and the Roma and Sinti who have very low vaccination rates. This has various reasons including the poverty in which some of the ethnicities still live today. However, there is also a long history of oppression in which medical treatment was a great risk for these ethnicities. An example for this is the forced sterilizations of Roma and Sinti in the time of the fascist regime of the Third Reich (16). While fascism is not at power in these days, people of oppressed ethnicities have a strong historical memory – even more so as they face today racist and even fascist attacks.

### Fight for the Revolutionary Road!

Given the historical experiences of our oppressed brothers and sisters, it is no wonder if they fear vaccinations by those who have oppressed them respectively still oppress them. It is therefore highly important to fight for access to medical education for the oppressed, so that doctors and nurses whom they trust as they are part of the same community can explain and implement treatments. As long as this goal is not reached, revolutionaries should try to convince these ethnicities without putting pressure on them and accept if our oppressed brothers and sisters still reject vaccinations.

The same is true for our brothers and sisters in semi-colonial countries. It is the duty of the international workers movement to develop and implement broad educational



## PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

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advertising together with organizations and individuals of the various oppressed communities. We have to build enough trust in vaccinations and medical treatments as such.

The Anti-Vaxxers in the imperialist countries however are a severe threat *without* any reasonable justification which revolutionaries would have to accept. They are the personification of reactionary ignorance and one of the strongest arguments against the current chauvinist hysteria on the 2019-nCoV! They are consciously threatening the life of thousands with spreading viruses like rubeola which are far more dangerous without full access to vaccination. However, these people are accepted while the Chinese – a population of more than a billion – are demonized!

All revolutionaries have to be clear about the causes behind the chauvinist hysteria and have to take an unambiguous anti-imperialist stance as it has been formulated in the RCIT statement “2019 Corona Virus: Oppose the Global Wave of Chauvinist Hysteria!”. The RCIT correctly says: “There can be no doubt: the reason for the global hysteria of the ruling classes does not lie in health precautions but rather in political calculations.”(17)

Comrades, brothers and sisters: Don't be confused by the seemingly apolitical, medical appearance of the “concerns” around the 2019-nCoV. With the increased inner-imperialist rivalry even *such* events become political. It is our joint task to fight the virus of chauvinism – a virus we can stay immune of as long as we keep our anti-imperialist stance strong and healthy!

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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!*

