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En el marco del Día Internacional de la clase obrera, convoquemos un Encuentro Nacional de Trabajadores y Despedidos



Que acuerde un Plan de Lucha y un Programa de Emergencia ante la crisis sanitaria, económica y social



¡Por una solución clasista y revolucionaria a la crisis del capitalismo!

Ft: Agrupación de Lucha Socialista



¡Por una solución clasista y revolucionaria a la crisis del capitalismo!

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Third Depression, State Repression, COVID-19: Organize and Fight!

- * Solidarity Initiative by African Socialists
- * Nigeria: The Iron Curtain Of Hunger
- * Popular Uprising in Lebanon and Iraq
- * Hong Kong: Dangerous Security Law
- * Venezuela: A Failed Imperialist Plot
- * Mexico: No to the Maya Train
- * Cold War between the Great Powers
- * Britain: Incompetent Government

English-Language Journal of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), No. 106, June 2020

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Picture on the Cover: Posters dealing with the current CIVID-19 crisis, created by ALS (Mexican section of the RCIT)

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

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An Important Initiative of Progressive African Organizations!

Report of the African Revolutionary and Progressive Organisations Meeting held on 9th May 2020

Dear comrades, brothers and sisters!
Below you find the link to a report which we have published today in English and Spanish language. This report summarizes the results of a first meeting of African organizations (plus the International Bureau of the RCIT) with 22 participants representing 12 organizations from Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa and other countries.

With some of the participating organizations we had issued joint statements in the past (see e.g. on the COVID-19 lockdown, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/for-a-people-based-approach-to-the-covid-19-crisis-down-with-state-repression/>, as well as on the French military intervention in Mali, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/joint-statement-down-with-french-neo-colonialism-in-west-africa/>)

The meeting was jointly organized by the RSL (Kenya), with which the RCIT has fraternal relations, the RSV (sympathising section of the RCIT in Nigeria) as well as the RCIT's International Bureau.

The participants agreed to set up a Preparatory Committee as well as to discuss a draft joint declaration which has been presented by the organizers. The next meeting will take place on 23 May.

We think this initiative is a very positive first step forward in order to give a joint international and internationalist response to the global counterrevolutionary offensive of the ruling classes under the cover of the COVID-19 crisis.

As you might be aware the RCIT has emphasized from the beginning that it is urgent that revolutionary organizations collaborate in order to advance a fight back against the imperialist and capitalist rulers. (See e.g. the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive, 21.3.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>)

and our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>; see also several dozen documents which the RCIT has published on the COVID-19 crisis and which are all collected at a special sub-page in our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>)

A support of the lockdown policy of the ruling classes is a slap in the face of the workers and oppressed, especially in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa. This makes it all the more urgent that authentic revolutionaries closely work together!

We appeal to all revolutionary organizations and activists to join us in such efforts. If you are interested in working together with us in such a spirit, please contact us!

You can contact us via email at rcit@thecommunists.net or via Telephone/WhatsApp/Telegram/SMS +43-650-4068314.

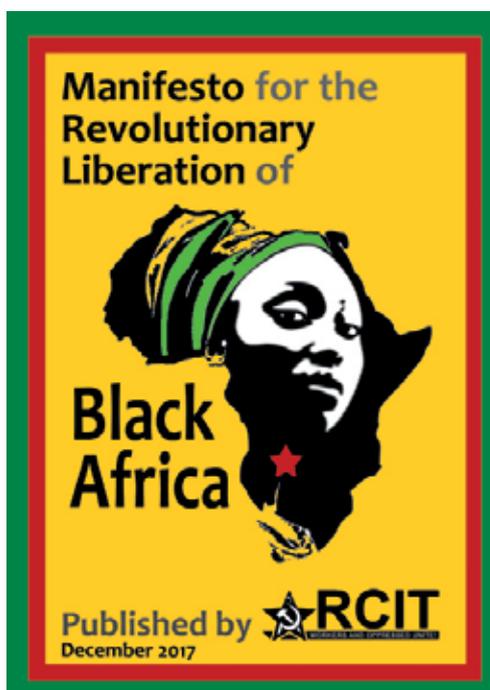
Revolutionary Greetings,

International Bureau of the RCIT

Report of the African Revolutionary and Progressive Organisations Meeting held on 9th May 2020, via Zoom

As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis become more apparent, the need to organise more speedily becomes all the more imperative. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of the current neoliberal system, and the tasks of progressive movements and organisations becomes clear at this moment; agitate, organise and mobilize against the counter-revolution being waged against the people by our regimes.

It is due to this that representatives of various organizations in Africa and beyond held a meeting via zoom on the



RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

Adopted at the 2nd 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

9th of May from 12pm to 2pm GMT.

The agenda of the meeting was;

- 1) Reports from organizations about their assessment of the present situation and activities;
- 2) Planning of joint activities in the present situation and International coordination of those;
- 3) Discussion of a short political platform;
- 4) Nominating of one representative of each organization for coordination of joint activities.

The attendants of the meeting were representatives from;

- 1) Revolutionary Socialist League (Kenya)
- 2) Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (Nigeria)
- 3) All-African People's Revolutionary Party
- 4) Social Justice Centres Working Group (Kenya)
- 5) Tanzania Socialist Forum (JULAWATA)
- 6) Kenya-Palestine Solidarity Movement
- 7) Socialist Youth League (Zambia)
- 8) International League of People's Struggle.
- 9) Pan-Afrikan Consciousness Renaissance (Nigeria)
- 10) Amilcar Cabral Ideological School Movement
- 11) Federation of Informal Workers of Nigeria
- 12) Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

Having heard reflections from the participants regarding the state of the COVID-19 pandemic and the tasks at hand, the meeting resolved to;

- 1) Adopt a joint platform through which we can conduct a joint campaign as revolutionary and progressive African organisations.
- 2) Set up a Preparatory Committee comprising of representatives from the organizations to finalize the platform and present it at the next meeting. The committee can also discuss further campaigns to conduct.
- 3) Hold our next meeting on the 23rd of May, 2020, via zoom from 12pm GMT.

The draft platform was shared at the meeting, pending any additions/editions by the preparatory Committee before adoption by the organisations. The draft is shared below;

YES to Jobs, Food and Health! NO to Lockdown, State Repression and Poverty!

People in Africa and around the world are experiencing a gigantic wave of attacks. The crisis of global capitalism throws many millions of people into poverty, the lockdown and expansion of state repression threatens the limited democratic rights which have existed in parts of the world and the COVID-19 pandemic endangers the health and lives of many people.

As a matter of fact, the ruling classes all over the world utilize the COVID-19 pandemic in order to cover their economic and political attacks against the popular masses.

We say:

**** No capitalist way out of the economic crisis at the expense of the working people!***

- No sackings, no wage cuts, no undermining of labour rights, etc!

- Food for those in need!

- Cancellation of all public and household debts!

- Immediate and unconditional economic aid from the rich for the poor countries!

**** No to chauvinism and authoritarianism!***

- Against mass lockdown and suppression of democratic rights (like public assemblies and demonstrations), against the expansion of the police and surveillance state, no army on the streets!

- No to racism and xenophobic nationalism against migrants and refugees!

- Against the Great Power rivalry between the U.S. and China!

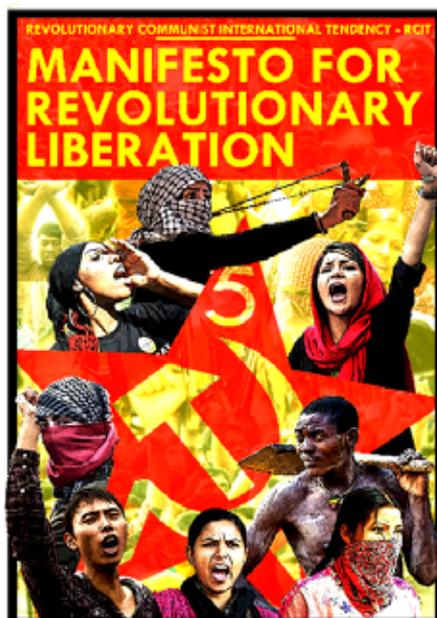
**** No to the incompetent and pro-elite handling of COVID-19 pandemic!***

- For free mass testing! Quarantine of those infected with adequate and free supply of medical products! Free treatment for all and free hospitalization of serious cases!

- Upgrade and expansion of the public health sector!

None of these demands will be given to us! In order to achieve them, the workers and poor people have to unite and fight! We need to build Solidarity Action Committees in workplaces, neighbourhoods and villages with the view of building regional and national coordination between them.

Divided we fall – united we win!



Program of the RCIT

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

Adopted at the 1st 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

Nigeria: Down With The Iron Curtain Of Hunger!

Workers & Oppressed: Don't Trust The State Of The Rich And Powerful, Trust Only Yourselves!

Mayday Statement of the Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (RSV) [RCIT Nigeria] 29th April, 2020

For us in the RSV, the continual lock downs in the light of the present chaotic economy is a disarmament of the workers and oppressed especially given the fact that since the onset of this state repressive measures the cases of infection has seen more than an 800 per cent rise while the number of deaths has spiked upward in like manner.[1] We can already see the stark incompetence of the Buhari regime in handling the pandemic with the death of the president's Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari, around which a lot of government cum establishment mistrust has festered.[2]

A more severe sign of this obvious gross incompetence is the contraction of the corona virus by 40 health workers whose precarious working conditions and dismal pay has worsened since the outbreak of the pandemic.[3] This is without forgetting that this same government has failed to contain the spread of Lassa fever across the Federation and have done equally awfully in saving the lives of those infected by the disease as about 200 Nigerians have died from Lassa fever this year alone.[4] It is crystal clear now that even the call for palliatives, stimulus packages and what not have fallen on deaf ears as usual at least they have been reduced to cheap self aggrandizement projects of corrupt politicians.

The bane of this can already be seen in riots against the lock downs and the brutish response of the state security forces which has amounted to several brutality of innocent civilians and at least 18 reported cases of extrajudicial

killings.[5] More than 600 mysterious deaths have been recorded in Kano state where authorities have continued to prevaricate over the cause.[6] In short, the Buhari regime and ruling capitalist elite is neither willing nor capable to bring any solution to the health crises or any other crises confronting the country.

Thus, the extreme anti-democratic measures now being implemented can only find meaning in the current triple catastrophe of capitalism— the worst economic slump since 1929 (The Third Depression), the global counterrevolutionary offensive against democratic rights as well as the dangerous health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those who deny the current of counter-revolutionary offensive launched by the capitalist elite fail to correctly evaluate the pre-revolutionary nature of the previous year, we think it is sufficient to note that just last year apart from the wave of popular uprisings that shattered six out of seven continents of the world, two dictators— Abdul-Aziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, who have held the people to ransom for more than 20 years were brought down in North Africa alone.

Contrary to the prevalent ploy to make the COVID-19 pandemic the culprit for the economic slump, though the extreme measures taken by world governments has further exacerbated its effects, the stakes for a third depression were already visible by mid-2019.[7] We should not forget that early in January this year 1,000 workers were laid off by the United Bank of Africa (UBA).[8] These

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution

What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle

In *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* Michael Pröbsting analyses the dramatic events in spring 2020 which have opened a new historic era. A triple crisis has shocked the world. The Third Depression has begun, characterized by a devastating economic slump of the capitalist world economy which is certainly no less dramatic than the crisis which started in 1929.

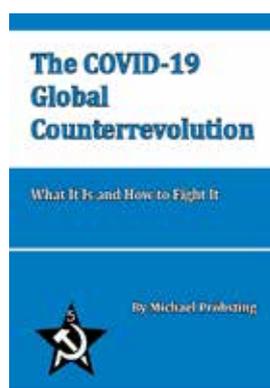
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

And finally, the world faces COVID-19 – a pandemic which endangers many lives and which is exploited by the ruling classes in order to spread fear, to deflect attention from the capitalist causes of the economic crisis and to justify the turn towards chauvinist state bonapartism.

The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution also shows that large sectors of the reformist workers movement and the

so-called left fail to understand the meaning of this triple crisis. Similar to the situation in 1914 after the beginning of World War I we can observe a gigantic wave of opportunist capitulation by many self-proclaimed socialists as they support or at least do not denounce the global lock-down and the suppression of democratic rights which the ruling classes are imposing in the name of combat against the pandemic. *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* offers a Marxist analysis of this historic crisis and elaborates a revolutionary perspective for the struggles ahead.

The book contains an introduction and 6 chapters plus an appendix (176 pages) and includes 5 figures and a diagram.



served as an harbinger to transform the uprisings of last year to full blown revolutions capable of causing colossal distortions to the capitalist order.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) already gave certain gloomy predictions concerning the unemployment rates this economic recession will birth. The ILO expects a "significant rise in unemployment and under-employment (...) preliminary ILO estimates indicate a rise in global unemployment of 24.7 million ("high" scenario) from a base level of 188 million in 2019. The "mid" scenario suggests an increase of 13 million (7.4 million in high-income countries)...there will be between 20.1 million and 35.0 million more people in working poverty than before the pre-COVID-19 estimate for 2020." "Overall losses in labour income are expected in the range of between 860 and 3,440 billion USD." [9]

An example of this how one of Nigeria's biggest airline carriers, Arik Air, has put 90% of its staff on unpaid leave and an 80% pay cut on the remaining staff effective next month. [10]

No progressive should have a hard time understanding that such prognosis portend more heightened levels of civic unrest than the previous year and a commensurate pre-emptive counter-revolutionary strike from the ruling elite, only now COVID-19 offers the best platter to execute these measures. What is trite is that the devastating effects of this Third depression will cost more lives than the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 90 million Nigerians already live below the poverty line the economic slump will further worsen the paucity of resources for the average Nigerian especially now that the unnecessary extreme measures of travel bans and lock downs have deepened the chaos.

We note in passing also the global fall in oil prices which could serve as a veritable excuse by the Buhari Administration to roll back public services, input hikes in tariffs and increase tuition fees across tertiary institutions etc.

Those who wait for the COVID-19 storm to subside before taking action have spawn themselves a web of illusion; first what signs will indicate that it has subsided enough for them to act. Second, if the only solution to such a health crises lies in the expansion and upgrading of the health sector which includes mass testing, employment of more medical staff; funding of education and providing hygienic living conditions for the masses; how then can they expect the pandemic to be arrested if the Buhari regime is clearly unwilling and unable to do this. How will these changes be realized if they refuse to mobilize the forces that will forge it? This lot are saying one of two things; that they do not want the pandemic to end or that they have capitulated in the struggle.

All authentic revolutionaries, progressive trade unionists, civil society organizations, progressive non-governmental organizations must take to the following now:

Begin a relentless struggle against the lock downs, the ban on democratic rights such as freedom of assembly; freedom of movement and demonstration for this is central to weathering the storm of economic attacks which must follow the worst global economic crisis since the great depression of 1929.

Workers and community action committees now! Begin a campaign for workers and locally controlled free mass testing and isolation of confirmed cases through increased test kits via protests, strikes and serious trade union work with the slogan "Open up Nigeria, Mass testing is the key", "Down with the

Iron Curtain of Hunger"

Fight for the expansion and upgrade of the health sector! Don't let COVID-19 leave the health sector in a worse state than it already is! For proper funding of the education sector! No hike in tuition fees across tertiary institutions! For the reinstatement of all proscribed students' unions!

Fight austerity attacks! Resist all forms of lay-offs, pay cuts, etc. Those who stay at home, call for or support the lock downs betray the workers who now suffer from mass sackings and pay cuts, more so, those health workers whose lives has been put at great risk and the many who are either dead or will die due to the Third depression and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oust the corrupt and compromised leaders of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Commission (TUC) and smash their bureaucracies! Wrest the Oil and Mining sector with the refineries into the democratic control of workers through protests, strikes and popular actions! Form workplace and communal self-defense committees now!

For an international solidarity campaign in words and deeds to surmount the current triple crises of capitalism under the slogans: Convert the State of Emergency into a Popular Uprising! Cancel Africa's Debt Now! Corona is the Virus, Capitalism is the Pandemic!

Footnotes

[1] <https://ncdc.gov.ng/> Check for number of infected and death cases from March 30th till date.

[2] <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/388499-breaking-abba-kyari-president-buharis-chief-of-staff-is-dead.html>

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/388667-coronavirus-lagos-govt-speaks-on-hospital-where-abba-kyari-died.html>

[3] <https://towncrierlives.com/2020/04/23/breaking-in-nigeria-40-health-workers-test-positive-for-coronavirus-minister-of-health/> <https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.guardian.ng/news/panic-as-40-health-workers-test-positive-for-coronavirus/amp>

[4] see An outbreak of Lassa Fever in Nigeria for week 16 <https://ncdc.gov.ng/diseases/sitreps/?cat=5&name=An%20update%20of%20Lassa%20fever%20outbreak%20in%20Nigeria>

[5] <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-africa-52317196> <https://www.thecable.ng/security-agencies-kill-18-nigerians-during-lockdown-more-than-covid-19>

[6] <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-africa-52454259>, See the Whistler.ng

[7] see Michael Pröbsting: Another Great Recession of the Capitalist World Economy Has Begun, 19 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/another-great-recession-of-the-capitalist-world-economy-has-begun/>; see also chapter "Another Great Recession has begun" in RCIT: World Perspectives 2020: A Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation, 8 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2020/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Next Looming Great Recession. Observations on the Latest Stock Market Slump and the Structural Crisis of the Capitalist World Economy, 12 October 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-next-looming-great-recession/>

[8] <https://dailypost.ng/2020/01/07/nigerians-kick-as-uba-allegedly-sacks-2000-workers-in-january/amp/>

<https://www.itrealms.com.ng/2020/01/employees-insist-uba-sacked-over-4000.html?m=1>

[9] see Michael Pröbsting: 3.4 Trillion Reasons. An ILO study shows the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis for the international working class and popular masses. 25 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-crisis-3-4-trillion-reasons/>

[10] <https://towncrierlives.com/2020/04/24/covid-19-arik-suspends-90-of-workforce-implements-80-pay-cut/>

Lebanon and Iraq: Forward with the Popular Uprising!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12 May 2020

1. In the context of the global counter-revolutionary offensive under the cover of COVID-19 starting in March, the ruling classes in Lebanon and Iraq had succeeded for some time to impose draconic lockdowns and to suppress the mass protests which have shaken both countries since autumn 2019. However, hunger and repression are driving the workers and youth to revive their uprising.

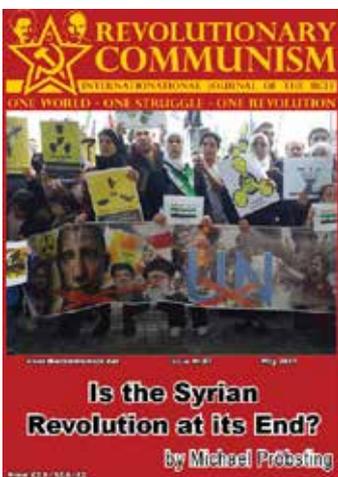
2. In Lebanon, inflation has risen dramatically, resulting in the increase of food prices by two to four times. According to the local daily *Annahar* unemployment is now at 40%. While the top 10% of Lebanese citizens receive 55% of national income, three quarter of the population live in poverty. The situation will worsen much more as the neoliberal government, hoping for a \$10 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, has adopted a brutal five-year austerity plan. It is noteworthy that this government is supported by Hizbollah which is hailed by many opportunist leftists around the world as "anti-imperialist" but which, in reality, acts in Syria as an ally of Russian imperialism in helping the tyrannical Assad regime to butcher the people.

3. In reaction, workers and youth have taken the streets again. Since 25 April, protesters have attacked banks and clashed with the Lebanese army. While Tripoli, the country's second-largest city and one of the most deprived areas, is the center of the renewed uprising, protests have spread to Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, and the Bekaa Valley. They met brutal repression by the security forces which killed one demonstrator, 26-year-old Fawaz Fouad

al-Samman, and injured many others. However, the army has not succeeded in suppressing the protests until now.

4. It is a characteristic feature of the uprising that many young activists have lost their illusions of last year that a peaceful change is possible. People are now determined to fight till the bitter end. A popular slogan at the demonstrations is: "This is the Hunger Revolution" and Fawaz Fouad al-Samman has been dubbed at his funeral as a "Martyr of the Hunger Revolution." A young female demonstrator told the media: "When the city's residents began to rise up again, they were saying 'we'd rather take to the streets and die from a virus than stay quiet at home and die from hunger.'" Another protestor said: "Of course we don't want violence with the army. However when we are angry, when the hungry people are angry, especially against the political situation and against the rule of the banks, it is our right to get rid of this kind of rule."

5. Similarly, we see a reemergence of the protests in Iraq after the regime managed to stop the mass demonstrations by imposing a reactionary lockdown under the cover of COVID-19. On 6 May, a majority in the parliament voted for a new parliament led by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. The country's former spy chief has been known as Washington's man in Baghdad, but he has also forged close ties with America's arch-foe Iran. The new Prime Minister promised that all pensions would be paid out in the coming days. He also said that he would release demonstrators arrested during the mass protests that erupted in October 2019. Furthermore, he pledged justice



Publications of the RCIT

Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified?

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2017

An essay on the organs of popular power in the liberated area of Syria, on the character of the different sectors of the Syrian rebels, and on the failure of those leftists who deserted the Syrian Revolution

Introduction * The Nature of the Local Coordination Councils in Syria * The Contradictory Nature of the Petty-Bourgeois Rebel Factions * A note on the adjectival juxtaposition of "progressive" to liberal democrats versus "reactionary" to Islamists * Hayyat Tahrir al-Sham and Other Islamist Militias * The Role of Religion in Democratic and National Liberation Struggles * Some Arguments on the Ongoing Progressive Character of the Syrian Revolution * Have the Rebels Become Agents of US Imperialism and Regional Powers? * On Foreign Powers' Support for Liberation Movements p* Lenin and Trotsky on Liberation Struggles and Imperialist Interference * What Did Lenin and Trotsky Say about Getting Support from Imperialists? * Imagining Two Different Scenarios of the Revolution's Success & Failure * A Period of Defeats and Retreats: What Are the Reasons? * Some Thoughts on the Future Prospects of the Arab Revolution * The Urgent Need for a Revolutionary Party * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

and compensation to relatives of more than 550 people killed since the start of the popular demonstrations.

6. However, the revolutionary process of last year has created a new generation of activists who have learned to mistrust the ruling class. Hence, just days after the new government came to power, mass protests started in Baghdad, Babel, Wasit and other southern cities. They called for the downfall of the regime, which they accuse of being part of the same “corrupt” former government. In Wasit, protesters burned down the headquarters of the Badr Organisation’s party, an important pro-Iranian force.

7. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) enthusiastically welcomes the new wave of protests of the heroic workers and youth in Lebanon and Iraq! Together with food riots in Africa and renewed pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, these struggles show that the global counter-revolutionary offensive of the ruling classes meets resistance. The past weeks have demonstrated, as the RCIT has repeatedly warned, that the ruling classes utilize the COVID-19 pandemic as a cover to suppress the mass protests. Furthermore, the events of the last days confirm that any struggle of the masses must confront and demolish the rules of the reactionary lockdown regime. While the ruling classes claim that such lockdowns would be in the interest of public health, they serve in reality only their political power interests.

8. It is urgent that the workers and popular masses organize themselves in *action councils at work places, neighborhoods, universities and villages*. Likewise it is important to build *self-defense committees* defending the masses against the police and army. The people should overthrow the whole ruling elite by staging a *nation-wide, indefinite, general strike* leading to a popular insurrection. The goal must be the creation of a *workers and poor peasants government* based on popular committees of action. The insurgent masses should convoke a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*.

9. It is the view of the RCIT that an authentic govern-

ment of the workers and popular masses should *nationalize the oil industry, banks and big companies under workers control and without any compensation of the capitalists!* It should organize a *public employment program* under control of the workers and popular organization. Such a program could abolish unemployment and poverty and help reconstructing the country.

10. The renewed popular uprisings should be linked to other protests around the globe and help to revive the Great Arab Revolution which started in 2011. Supporting the ongoing liberation struggles of the Syrian people against the tyrant Assad is a particularly important task. The goal should be, as we said in past RCIT statements, to work towards a *single Intifada of the entire Middle East* – from Baghdad and Beirut, Idlib, Tripoli, Sanaa, Gaza, Cairo, Algiers, Khartoum to Teheran!

11. In order to implement such a perspective, revolutionaries need to unite in building *revolutionary parties* – in combination with building a *Revolutionary World Party!* We urge activists to unite on the basis of a program of socialist liberation and solidarity with the struggles of workers and oppressed in other countries. Join the RCIT in tackling this great task!

* *Nationalize the banks and key industries!*

* *For a public employment program!*

* *Down with the reactionary lockdown regime!*

* *Build popular councils at work places, neighborhoods, universities and villages!*

* *Create self-defense committees!*

* *Organize a general strike! Victory to the popular insurrection!*

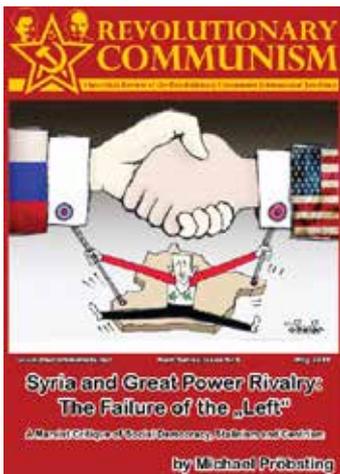
* *For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!*

* *For a workers and poor peasants government!*

* *Forward to the second wave of the Arab Revolution! Long live the socialist world revolution!*

* *Defeat the global counter-revolutionary offensive under the cover of COVID-19!*

* *Forward in building a revolutionary party in each country! For a revolutionary world party!*



Publications of the RCIT

Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018

*The bleeding Syrian Revolution and the recent Escalation
of Inter-Imperialist Rivalry between the US and Russia –
A Marxist Critique of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Centrism*

Introduction * The liberation struggle of the Syrian people against Assad retains its just character * Against all imperialist aggressors! * Old and new Great Powers * The Ex-Stalinist turned social democrats: “God save the United Nations” * The Stalinists (and some caricatures in Trotskyist camouflage): social-imperialist servants of Assad and Putin * The Morenoite LIT, UIT and FLTI: the heart on the right place but not their brains * CWI and FT: failure to understand the imperialist nature of China and Russia * CWI / SWP(UK) / FT: refusing to support the Syrian Revolution * Conclusion * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

China / Hong Kong: Down with the National Security Law!

Organize and mobilize against the looming counter-revolutionary onslaught by the Stalinist-Capitalist regime!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23 May 2020

1. The Stalinist-Capitalist regime in Beijing submitted a bill on the opening day of China's national legislative session to "change the long-lasting situation of defenselessness in the national security affairs in Hong Kong." (Wang Chen, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress [NPC]). This law, which is expected to be adopted at the end of the Congress's session next week, will authorize its Standing Committee to make relevant laws in order to "prevent, frustrate and punish any secessionist or subversive activity, the organising of terrorist acts, and other acts that seriously threaten national security, as well as activities of foreign and external interference in Hong Kong." To enact this law, "relevant national security organs of the Central People's Government will set up agencies" in Hong Kong.

2. There can be no doubts about the real meaning of this bill. The whole purpose of it is to provide a legal basis for the regime's repression apparatus to invade Hong Kong and to brutally crush the pro-democracy popular movement. Throughout the second half of 2019, the workers and youth of Hong Kong have staged regular mass demonstrations and the occupation of universities, provoking a kind of local dual power situation. The Stalinist-Capitalist dictatorship is determined to launch a bloody crackdown against this mass movement which it had repeatedly denounced in recent months as "subversive", "terrorist", and "directed by foreign forces".

3. In fact, the ruling class does not attempt to disguise their plans. An editorial article of *Global Times* – the English-language mouthpiece of the regime in Beijing – stated: "Take a look at what the internal and external opposition forces have done to HK by manipulating security loopholes. For the year of 2019, HK did not enjoy a single peaceful day. It was like a city in an undeveloped country engulfed in turmoil. Stores and subway stations were damaged, roads were blocked, and innocent people were attacked and burned. College students were prevented from attending classes. Due to the chaos, HK fell sharply in the global rankings. Now is the time to put an end to it all." The editorial goes on to explain that such a

counter-revolutionary assault is in the interest of capitalism: "The extra layer of protection would also make it increasingly difficult for some "ambitious" HK politicians to poison the city's atmosphere. HK capitalism would begin to reveal the common traits it shares with developed societies rather than underdeveloped ones. Therein lies is the main interest of all Hong Kong people." (Global Times: National security legislation offers overdue remedy for HK, 22 May 2020) And another article of *Global Times* laments: "The unrest seriously damaged the unification of the country and harbored separatist activities. Radical protesters bluntly desecrated the national flag, defaced national emblem, and ignited anti-mainland, anti-Party sentiments in Hong Kong." (Chen Qingqing: Draft decision on HK national security law submitted to top legislature, stresses zero tolerance to secessionism, foreign interference, *Global Times*, 22 May 2020)

4. Unsurprisingly, the proposed bill has provoked wide-spread outcry among the opposition forces in Hong Kong. Local pro-democracy lawmakers denounced the plans as "the end of Hong Kong". Lee Cheuk-yan, a former opposition lawmaker, said at a news briefing by opposition parties and activists that the move shows Beijing is "directly taking control. (...) Xi Jinping has torn away the whole pretense of 'one country, two systems.' (...) They're trying to ban every organization in Hong Kong who dares to speak out against the Communist Party." Numerous groups have already called for a large protest rally on 24 May.

5. This demonstration will necessarily break the so-called "social distancing rules" of the regime which allow only gatherings of up to eight people in public places. This demonstrates once more that the whole lockdown policy – in Hong Kong as well as globally – represents a counter-revolutionary offensive of the ruling class, aimed at suppressing democratic rights under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since late March, 547 protestors had been fined in Hong Kong for violation of such "social distancing rules".

6. The Revolutionary Communist International Ten-

China's transformation into an imperialist power

A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power

By Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

Order the pamphlet via our contact address: rcit@thecommunists.net

gency (RCIT) reiterates its condemnation of the reactionary lockdown policy of the global capitalist class. Forcing people to stay home and suppressing the right to assemble and demonstrate does not serve the interests of public health but rather the purpose of consolidating the power of the bourgeoisie in the midst of a *Triple Crisis*. As we have elaborated, this crisis is characterized by the worst economic slump since 1929, the acceleration of Great Power rivalry, a shift of the ruling class towards expanding state bonapartism as it faced a global wave of popular uprisings in late 2019, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Equally unsurprising is the fact that the U.S., China's main great-power rival, hypercritically denounces the new bill. Already in the past, it has expressed verbal sympathy for the pro-democracy movement. Throughout history, Great Powers have always tried to exploit unrest within the spheres of influence of their rivals. Today, the U.S. "supports" (in words) the people in Hong Kong as well as the Muslim Uyghurs against Beijing, while China lends tacit support to the regimes of Iran and Venezuela which are facing Western aggression. The RCIT calls pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong to place no trust whatsoever in the corrupt and reactionary Trump Administration. Any statement in sympathy for the U.S. or any call for support can only discredit the opposition in the eyes of the popular masses in China and other countries. Socialists denounce *both* imperialist Great Powers – the U.S. as well as China – and refuse to side with either.

8. The RCIT unreservedly supports the struggle of the popular movement in Hong Kong for democratic rights. The National Security Law represents a massive counter-revolutionary danger which could open the path to a bloody annihilation of the popular resistance. It is crucial to organize mass demonstration and, in particular, a general strike. Likewise, we call to organize mass democratic assemblies in the workplaces, neighborhoods, and universities to allow for a discussion of the demands and tactics of the struggle and to elect delegates for a coordinating body of the entire movement. Furthermore, workers and youth need an independent political body, i.e. a Workers Party, that is independent of the native as well as any foreign capitalist class. This is all the more urgent, since the official opposition forces are dominated by pro-capitalist bourgeois democrats.

9. The way forward is neither to look for an institutional solution within the pro-regime "one country, two systems" arrangement nor to advocate independent statehood of Hong Kong. The RCIT calls activists in Hong Kong to link the defense of local democratic rights with the struggle for the interests of the workers and poor peasants in mainland China. These brothers and sisters face oppression and exploitation by the Beijing regime and its capitalist corporations. The protests in Wuhan city in summer 2019 and the mass riots in late March 2020 in Hubei show that the Chinese workers and poor peasants are not the "patriotic admirers of President Xi", as the regime media like to present them. As we stated in the RCIT Call to revolutionary activists in China: *"The goal must be to organize for the overthrow of the pseudo-"communist" capitalist dictatorship via a socialist revolution of the workers and oppressed!"*

10. Furthermore, we urge the international workers and popular organizations to show solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Hong Kong! We strongly denounce

the Stalinists and fake-leftists who side with Chinese imperialism and slander the protests in Hong Kong as "CIA plots". Naturally, any international solidarity movement must also oppose the anti-Chinese chauvinism of Western rivals.

11. The RCIT calls on activists to join us in building a revolutionary party, both in China and globally, based on an international and socialist perspective!

** Defeat the National Security Law!*

** Down with the Pseudo-"Communist" Capitalist Dictatorship in Beijing!*

** Neither Washington nor Beijing! Against all imperialist Great Powers!*

** For a Workers and Poor Peasants Republic in China! For a Socialist Federation in East Asia as a first step to a socialist world!*

** Long live the international solidarity of the working class and the oppressed!*

International Bureau of the RCIT

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The RCIT has published a number of booklets, statements, and articles on China that can be accessed on our website at <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/> as well as at <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. In particular we refer to:

RCIT statements: China: Solidarity with the General Strike in Hong Kong! For an international solidarity movement as the Stalinist-Capitalist regime in Beijing prepares a brutal crackdown! 01 August 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/solidarity-with-the-general-strike-in-hong-kong/>

RCIT: China: Solidarity with the Mass Protests in Hubei! Thousands of Chinese workers clash with the police in protest against the state repression under the cover of COVID-19, 28 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-solidarity-with-the-mass-protests-in-hubei/>

RCIT: China: Down with the Pseudo-"Communist" Capitalist Dictatorship! No to any imperialist Great Power – U.S., China, Japan, Russia or the European Union! For a Workers and Poor Peasants Republic! <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/call-to-revolutionary-activists-in-china/>

Michael Pröbsting: 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/>

Venezuela: A Failed Imperialist Plot

**Defeat the U.S. aggression! Lift the sanctions against Venezuela now!
But no political support for the Maduro government!**

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 12 May 2020

1. Venezuela experienced another failed military incursion by a group of mercenaries attempting to overthrow the Bolivarian government of President Nicolas Maduro. The plan of the conspirators was that some 300 heavily armed fighters would sneak into Venezuela via boats from Colombia, raid military bases, ignite a rebellion and, finally, arrest Maduro and fly him to the U.S. However, the incursion failed already in its early stages as local fishermen became suspicious and warned Venezuela's armed forces. The following clashes resulted in 8 people dead and 13 mercenaries, including two former U.S. Green Berets, arrested.

2. The Trump Administration, Colombia's President Ivan Duque and the reactionary pro-U.S. opposition in Venezuela led by Juan Guaido deny any involvement in this plot. However, this is almost certainly a lie. One of the arrested U.S. mercenaries already admitted that the organizer of the enterprise, a Florida-based U.S. security firm called Silvercorp USA, had signed a contract with Guaido. While the latter initially denied any involvement, Juan Rendon, a Guaido advisor and member of his strategic committee, had to admit in an interview with CNN that he had signed an "exploratory agreement" with Silvercorp to seek the capture of members of Maduro's government "to deliver them to justice."

3. In fact, the Trump Administration, Columbia's government as well as Juan Guaido have never made a secret that they are determined to overthrow the Maduro government by any means necessary so that they can replace it with a marionette regime in the service of U.S. imperialism. Gaido has proclaimed himself as "interim president" and was recognized by U.S. and EU imperialism and their Latin American allies. For years, Washington has imposed harsh sanctions both against companies as well as individuals. This aggression has hurt, in particular, Venezuela's oil exports which account for more than 95% of the country's export revenue. Already in April 2019, Gaido called the military to overthrow Maduro. However, as this call was followed by no more than two dozen soldiers, this coup attempt unceremoniously collapsed.

4. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) condemns the military incursion as an imperialist plot. We reiterate our position that socialists in Venezuela and internationally have to defend the country against the imperialist aggression as well as against the reactionary opposition led by Gaido. The best way to achieve this is the independent struggle of the workers and poor in Venezuela as well as the international mobilization of workers and popular organizations against the imperialist sanctions. Lift all sanctions against Venezuela now!

5. As we have elaborated in past RCIT statements, our defense of Venezuela against any reactionary conspiracy does not imply any political support for the Maduro government. Contrary to its self-styled image, it is neither socialist nor anti-imperialist. Despite being in power for more than two decades the Bolivarian government has

refused to expropriate the capitalist class of Venezuela. Today, 70% of the country's economy remains in private hands. Instead it has (unsuccessfully) tried to appease the domestic bourgeoisie. It has helped to create a regime-friendly sector of capitalists ("*Boliburguesía*") that is comingled with a corrupt state-capitalist bureaucracy and the army command. As a result, its policy of limited social reforms (the so-called "*Misiones*") has proven unable to overcome poverty and joblessness. Furthermore, the Maduro government is becoming increasingly dependent on Chinese and Russian imperialism. (It is noteworthy that Russian Special Forces played a role in uncovering the latest military incursion.)

6. While intransigently opposing any pro-imperialist aggression, socialists in Venezuela have to side with the workers and poor wherever they face oppression by the regime. We demand the release of political prisoners like the union leader Rubén González or the working class activist Rodney Álvarez. The way forward is the struggle for an authentic workers and popular government based on popular assemblies and militias. Such a government would expropriate the capitalist class (including the *Boliburguesía*) and introduce a socialist plan for the economy. It would remain independent of *all* imperialist Great Powers – the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. Furthermore, such a workers and popular government would strive to internationalize the revolution and link up with the class struggles and popular uprisings in Latin America, the Arab world, Africa, Asia and Europe.

7. Such a perspective is only possible if socialists succeed in building an authentic revolutionary party in Venezuela which fights for such a perspective. Such a party must be constructed in combination with building a *Revolutionary World Party*. The RCIT calls revolutionaries in Venezuela and intentionally to join forces in tackling this great task!

* *Down with the U.S. aggression!*

* *Lift all sanctions against Venezuela now!*

* *No political support for the Maduro government!*

* *For a workers and popular government!*

International Bureau of the RCIT

The RCIT has published a number of documents on Venezuela which can be read on the sub-section on Latin America on this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/>. Our latest statements are: RCIT: Attempted Coup D'état in Venezuela: Defeat Guaidó and Trump! 5 May 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/attempted-coup-d-etat-in-venezuela-defeat-guaido-trump/>

Social-Bonapartism in Argentina

The Partido Obrero (Tendencia) of Jorge Altamira supports the State of Emergency

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 29 April 2020

The world is under the spell of a global counter-revolutionary offensive marked by a draconic lockdown policy and the suppression of democratic rights. Shattered by the Third Depression of the capitalist world economy¹ as well as the global wave of class struggles in late 2019, the ruling class has launched massive attacks against the worker and popular masses under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Large sectors of the trade unions, popular organizations and the so-called left have capitulated to this offensive and support the lockdown policy. Shamefully this includes also a number of self-proclaimed "Trotskyist" organizations.

In this article we will not repeat our analysis which we have elaborated in our new book on the COVID-19 crisis as well as in many other documents.² We will rather focus on another example of such "Trotskyists" who have become social-bonapartists, i.e. "socialists" who support the current bourgeois policy of expanding the bonapartist state apparatus.

We talk about the *Partido Obrero (Tendencia)* in Argentina, an organization which split last year from the *Partido Obrero* and which is led by Marcelo Ramal and PO's historical leader Jorge Altamira.³ Like many countries all over the world, Argentina currently faces a lockdown imposed by the bourgeois government of President Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. In order to enforce this lockdown, the government has mobilized massive numbers of police and military controlling the streets. The result has been many arrests and the suppression of any public assemblies and demonstrations. Already in the first week since the beginning of the state of emergency more than 6.100 people were arrested.⁴

"Apply state coercion consistently"

The official declaration of the PO(T) leadership on the state of emergency contains some, let us put it in diplomatic terms, extraordinary statements.⁵ The real essence of the PO(T) statement is the following. After criticizing the government for not closing down consistently the economy, not paying wages, etc., the PO(T) concludes: *"We must demand that they (the government, Ed.) do not abolish the state coercion but apply it consistently."*⁶

The statement also refers to the people's "lack of discipline" which, according to the PO(T) leadership, would justify the brutal intervention of the police and army: *"The necessity to apply this coercion is seen in the numerous cases of violation of the restriction of public presence by many people."*⁷

Likewise the PO(T) leadership denounces those revolutionaries who call for driving off the police and the army. *"The Kirchnerists and Macrists say: 'We are with the gendarmerie, the police and the army.' Left-wing infantilism says: out with all of them."*⁸

Of course, these messages are coated with wordy denunciations of capitalism, criticism of bourgeois governments and promises what a future workers government would do. All this is nothing but hot air which only serves as cover of the social-bonapartist essence of the PO(T) statement.

What does it mean, what can it mean to demand *"consistent state coercion"*?! What does it mean, what can it mean to defend the *"necessity to apply this coercion"* against the people?! What does it mean, what can it mean to denounce the call to kick the police and army out as *"left-wing infantilism"*?! It can only mean that the Altamira and the PO(T) leadership fully supports the actions of police and army to enforce the state of emergency with all the consequential

Mexico: NO TO THE MAYA TRAIN!

The Mexican government wants to create a railway loop to link Mayan archaeological sites and seaside resorts in eastern Mexico.

The indigenous populations have been struggling for several years against this deadly project and have already succeeded in suspending it. Today, May 14, the Supreme Court of Justice of the Mexican Nation is due to rule on the final cancellation of the Maya Train and the mining operation.

Let's support the struggle of the indigenous people of Chiapas, Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Tabasco and Campeche and show the Supreme Court and the Mexican state that the opposition against the Maya Train goes beyond the borders of Mexico!

It is by mobilizing all over the world that we will defeat this project. The destruction of the environment, the exploitation and plundering of land and people and the corruption concern us all: whether it takes place near us or millions miles from our country.

Why am I saying no to the Maya Train?

1. It's an ECOCIDE: it would devastate the environment of eastern Mexico.

2. It is an ETHNOCIDE: it would disrupt relations between indigenous communities.

3. It is an IMPOSED project. The Mexican State carried out consultations with the populations, but they were rigged, partial and biased.

4. It is a BAGGAGE in order to implement THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE.

5. It UNDERMINES Mexican NATIONAL GOVERNANCE because it will benefit foreign capitalists.

6. It promotes CORRUPTION of the government, PILLAGING for the benefit of big capitalists and VIOLENCE of organized crime, as other mega-projects have already shown.

7. The work will mobilize thousands of workers in spite of the health measures needed in the current COVID-19 crisis.

#NoAITrenMaya #Mexique #Mexico

repression – in fact they even demand more, “consistent” repression! If can only mean that Altamira and the PO(T) leadership defends the presence of the police and army on the streets!

Such a position is politically criminal in the extreme! Socialists, not to speak about Trotskyists, can never support the state of emergency of a capitalist government! This is even more the case in a country like Argentina which has a long and painful history of military dictatorship with tens of thousands people killed and many more disappeared!

However, such a social-bonapartist capitulation does not come as a surprise. As the RCIT has shown somewhere else, the whole current of the *Partido Obrero* – both the majority as well as the minority – has a shameful history of opportunist adaption to Stalinism and Chinese and Russian imperialism.⁹ They claim that China and Russia still have not become capitalist states and, hence, call to support them against the Western Great Powers.¹⁰ Consequently, they hope to build a new International together with Stalinists like the Russia OKP. Such a social-imperialist policy is covered by “ultra-radical” rhetoric about the imminent collapse of capitalism – since more than 20 years!¹¹ In short, the PO(T) is a telling example that social-bonapartism and social-imperialism are twins.

Correct criticism but ...

We are not the first who denounce the shameful capitulation of Altamira and the PO(T) leadership to social-bonapartism. Others, like the comrades from the PTS/FT, the

PO and the FLTI, have also criticised the PO(T) statement.¹² PTS and PO are major components of the electoral alliance FIT(U) which has won some deputies in national and regional parliaments in recent years.¹³

However, we want to use this opportunity to draw the attention of the comrades in FIT(U) to the following problem. While they correctly denounce the outrageous PO(T) statement, they themselves run into danger of making concessions to social-bonapartism. In the recently published May Day statement of FIT(U), the comrades correctly call for the defence of democratic rights. But at the same time the statement lacks an unambiguous denunciation of the lockdown as well as a call for mass mobilizations to defeat the current state of emergency.¹⁴

The FIT(U) statement even contains a potential dangerous formulation: “For a quarantine without layoffs, suspensions and salary cuts.”¹⁵ This can be interpreted as a call to maintain the present lockdown. True the comrades also demand to have such a lockdown without wage cuts, sacking, etc. But, as the RCIT has emphasized repeatedly, this is a utopian demand. As long as the workers are forced to stay at home, they have no rights and no possibilities for public assemblies and demonstrations. But the working class can only fight, can only put pressure on governments and the bosses, if it has such democratic rights. How shall it enforce *any* demand if it forced to stay at home?! By launching an online petition?! This will hardly impress the ruling class!

Probably, the parties in FIT(U) currently have not sufficient strength to enforce such a overthrow of the state-bon-



May Day Rally 2020 in Mexico City, initiated by ALS (Mexican Section of the RCIT) and other organizations

apartist regime. But our criticism is not that they comrades are not already strong enough. The problem is rather that they don't clearly denounce the lockdown, that they don't explain to the workers and oppressed that it necessary to prepare and to organize for such a struggle to bring down the regime, that they don't explain that the pandemic must not be an argument to halt the mass struggle.

We hope that the comrades in the FIT(U) parties will correct this major mistake. This is all the more urgent since it is obvious that the government in Argentina, like those in many other countries in the world, will continue to utilize the COVID-19 pandemic (or another pandemic) in the future as a cover to suppress democratic rights. If socialists accept the logic in principle, i.e. a lockdown and the suppression of democratic rights is justified in the case of a pandemic, they are disarmed in the struggle against the capitalist government. In such a case they would adapt to social-bonapartism.

Footnotes

1 See on this e.g. chapter I of the book by Michael Pröbsting: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle*, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>; Michael Pröbsting: *No, the Corona Virus is not the Main Cause of the Global Economic Slump! Bourgeois Media Officially Recognize the Beginning of another Great Recession*, 3 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/corona-virus-is-not-the-main-cause-of-global-economic-slump/>; Michael Pröbsting: *Another Great Recession of the Capitalist World Economy Has Begun. The economic crisis is an important factor in the current dramatic shift in the world situation*, 19 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/another-great-recession-of-the-capitalist-world-economy-has-begun/>; see also Michael Pröbsting: *The Next Looming Great Recession. Observations on the Latest Stock Market Slump and the Structural Crisis of the Capitalist World Economy*, 12 October 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-next-looming-great-recession/>

2 Michael Pröbsting: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle*, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>; see also the RCIT Manifesto: *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*, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. The RCIT has published several dozen documents on the COVID-19 crisis which are all collected at a special sub-page in our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>

3 On our assessment of this split see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *Some Thoughts on the Split in the Argentinean "Partido Obrero"*, 10 July 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/split-in-argentinean-partido-obrero/>

4 RCIT: *Argentina: No to Repression and Militarization under the Cover of COVID-19! Nearly 6,200 people arrested since the government imposed a state of emergency*, 27 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/argentina-no-to-repression-and-militarization-under-the-cover-of-covid-19/>

5 Un gran equívoco político. Acerca de la izquierda y la pandemia política, Mesa Ejecutiva PO (T), 03/04/2020, <https://politicoabrer.com/debate/820-un-gran-equivoco-politico>

6 The translation is ours. Here is the original formulation in Spanish: *"Debemos exigirles, no que anulen la coerción estatal, sino que la apliquen en forma consecuyente."*

7 The translation is ours. Here is the original formulation in Spanish: *"La necesidad de aplicar esa coerción se ve en los casos numerosos de violación de la restricción de la circulación pública por parte de mucha gente."*

8 The translation is ours. Here is the original formulation in Spanish: *"Los kirchneristas y macristas dicen: "vamos con la gendarmería, la policía y el ejército". El infantilismo de izquierda dice: fuera todos ellos."*

9 See on this Michael Pröbsting: *Russia and China: Neither Capitalist nor Great Powers? A Reply to the PO/CRFI and their Revisionist Whitewashing of Chinese and Russian imperialism*, 28 November 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/russia-and-china-neither-capitalist-nor-great-powers-reply-to-po-crfi/>

10 On the RCIT's analysis of the Great Power rivalry and China's and Russia's rise as emerging imperialist powers see the literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. In particular we refer to the book by Michael Pröbsting: *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 the numerous RCIT's documents on the Global Trade War which have been collected at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/>

11 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of "Catastrophism". On the Marxist Theory of Capitalist Breakdown and its Misinterpretation by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its "Coordinating Committee for the Re-foundation of the Fourth International"*, RCIT Pamphlet, May 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-catastrophic-failure-of-the-theory-of-catastrophism/>

12 See e.g. Christian Castillo: *Coronavirus y coerción estatal: el derrape de Altamira*, 9.4.2020, <http://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Coronavirus-y-coercion-estatal-el-derrape-de-Altamira>; Juan García: *Altamira, apología de la militarización y apoyo a la "unidad nacional"*, 6.4.2020, <https://prensaobrer.com/politicas/68760-altamira-apologia-de-la-militarizacion-y-apoyo-a-la-unidad-nacional>; Paula Medrano and Julián Juárez: *Un nuevo derrape de Altamira: ¿Frente único y militar con las fuerzas armadas genocidas contra el coronavirus?* 22.4.2020, <http://fhti-ci.org/argentina/2020/abril/polemica-altam-ffaa-22abril2020.html>

13 For a critical discussion of the politics of PTS/FT and PO see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *The New Global Wave of Class Struggles and the Slogan of the Constituent Assembly. How to apply a crucial revolutionary democratic tactic (and how not) – a critique of the opportunist deviations of the Argentine-based PTS/FT and PO/CRFI*, 26 November 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/new-global-wave-of-class-struggles-and-slogan-of-constituent-assembly/>

14 *Declaración del FIT-U por el Día Internacional de los Trabajadores*, 24.4.2020, <http://www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar/2020/index.php/blog/elsocialista/item/17452-declaracion-del-fit-u-por-el-dia-internacional-de-los-trabajadores>

15 The translation is ours. Here is the original formulation in Spanish: *"Por una cuarentena sin despidos, suspensiones y rebajas salariales."*

Escalating Cold War between the Great Powers amid the COVID-19 Crisis

Workers and oppressed must oppose both U.S. and Chinese imperialism!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14.05.2020

1. The Cold War between the two largest imperialist powers – the U.S. and China – experiences a new stage of escalation. This is reflected in a number of developments. The Trump Administration has increased its political and diplomatic attacks against Beijing. It is instrumentalizing the pandemic for its anti-China chauvinistic propaganda by designating the Corona Virus SARS-CoV-2 as the “Chinese Virus” or “Wuhan Virus”. It also cut its financial contributions to the WHO, accusing it of being “pro-Chinese”. Washington “does not exclude” that the virus could be a kind of planned aggression by China against the U.S. Trump even compared the COVID-19 crisis with “Pearl Harbor” and “9/11”, i.e. with a foreign military attack. In this spirit, Fox News host Lou Dobbs has called for the US to declare war on China. In addition, Trump and his Republican Party have launched a campaign of demanding financial compensation from China. The US state of Missouri already sued China’s leadership over COVID-19, seeking damages over what it described as “deliberate deception and insufficient action to stop the pandemic”. There has been also speculation if the U.S. might try to seize parts of the accumulated U.S. Treasury securities owned by China. (Currently, Beijing owns \$1.07 trillion, or about 5%, of the \$23 trillion U.S. national debt, which is more than any other foreign country except Japan.)

2. Likewise, Beijing has started to publicly speculate that the virus might have been brought to China by a U.S. delegate who attended the Military World Games in Wuhan in October 2019. A number of Chinese commentators and retired military commanders have called for Beijing to attack and occupy Taiwan, citing the current weakness of the U.S. military due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the retreat of the U.S. strategic bomber fleet from Guam. Beijing has also created two new administrative districts in the South China Sea, against the protest of the Philippines and Vietnam. It also increased the presence of its navy. In early April, a serious incident took place near the Paracel Islands when, according to the Vietnamese foreign ministry, one of its fishing vessel had been rammed and sunk by the Chinese navy.

3. Hawkish forces both in Washington as well as in Beijing are pushing for the cancellation of the so-called “phase one” trade agreement which both sides concluded on 15 January. This treaty was a kind of truce that temporarily ended the Global Trade War which had started nearly two years before. Furthermore, it is highly noteworthy that commentators both in the U.S. as well as in China are now increasingly discussing the possibility of a major war between the two Great Powers.

4. The reasons for this escalation are pretty clear. As

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: 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**

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting analyses the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – the U.S., China, EU, Russia, and Japan. He shows that the diplomatic rows, sanctions, trade wars, and military tensions between these Great Powers are not accidental or caused by a mad man in the White House. They are rather rooted in the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system. This rivalry is a key feature of the current historic period and could, ultimately, result in major wars between these Great Powers.

Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is crucial for assessing the character of the current inter-imperialist rivalry.

In *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry* Michael Pröbsting critically discusses the analysis of modern imperialism by a number of left-wing parties (left social democrats, Stalinists, Trotskyists and others). He demon-

strates that most of these organizations fail to understand the nature of the Great Power rivalry and, consequently, are not able to take an internationalist and revolutionary stance.

The author elaborates the approach of leading Marxist figures like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg to the problems of Great Power rivalry and imperialist aggression against oppressed peoples. He outlines a Marxist program for the current period which is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

The book contains an introduction and 29 chapters plus an appendix (412 pages) and includes 61 figures and tables. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

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

By Michael Pröbsting



Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

the RCIT has explained in numerous documents in the past months, we are in the midst of a *historic crisis of capitalism*. The Third Depression, starting in late 2019, has thrown the capitalist world economy into bedlam similar to the collapse in 1929. As a result, both the U.S. as well as China have experienced their worst economic development since decades. Roughly 33.5 million people in the U.S. have applied for unemployment benefits in early May. Likewise, unemployment in China has increased to unprecedented levels. It is hardly surprising that both governments are increasingly worried about the domestic political situation. The Trump Administration, which has been under fire since its inauguration due to its mix of clownesque behavior, utter incompetence and rabid right-wing chauvinism, faces crucial elections in November. The COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated the political instability. Loosing this election would not only end the Trump presidency but could also open a process of court proceedings for many of his associates. Likewise, the Xi-led Stalinist-capitalist dictatorship fears that the economic crisis could result in social and political unrest, even more so as the half-year long mass protests in Hong Kong in late 2019 seem to have revived in the past weeks.

5. The RCIT has warned since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis that this will be utilized by the Great Powers as a pretext to drum up chauvinism and to accelerate the inter-imperialist rivalry. Already in our statement of 5 February, we warned: *"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. They also utilize this hysteria in order to wipe up patriotism and suspicion against "foreigners", people "from outside" or simple "others". 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 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 Powers."*

6. The current crisis has also opened a new stage in the global relation of forces. It is now becoming evident and visible for the whole world that the U.S. has lost its

leading status and that China is seriously challenging its long-time hegemony. The ruling circles in the U.S. are obviously aware of this process and try to reverse it by any means necessary. As we explained in our recently published book *"The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution – What It Is and How to Fight It"*, the consequences will be a massive acceleration of rivalry and increasing geopolitical instability: *"In fact, it seems to us that the future course of development of world politics will be characterized by a lack of any hegemon. The U.S. is no longer capable of putting its mark on world politics. And China (and even less so any other Great Power) is not strong enough to do so. What will be the result of such equilibrium of the Great Powers? It will be a further acceleration of the inter-imperialist rivalry – mainly between the U.S. and China. In fact, we are entering a period which can be characterized as a prelude for World War III."*

7. These developments are a powerful confirmation of the RCIT's analysis of imperialism in the 21st century. As we have elaborated in several books and pamphlets, capitalism has entered a historic period of decay since the Great Recession in 2008/09. Against the backdrop of this historic crisis, the decline of the long-time absolute hegemon has hastened while new imperialist powers like China and Russia emerged. The result has been an acceleration of the rivalry between the Great Powers, making it a key political feature of the current period.

8. Does this mean that we expect a major war between the U.S. and China in the near future? We think that this is rather unlikely albeit one can not exclude the possibility of a confrontation which both sides enter "sleepwalking". However, what is a much more likely is a substantial escalation of the Cold War, resulting in a devastating tariff war and a so-called de-coupling of the two economies. Such a development would create two large imperialist blocs relatively independent of and in constant conflict with each other. Any attempt of the U.S. Administration to seize parts of the Chinese-held T-Bonds could provoke a major capital flight from the U.S. and a collapse of the global financial and currency order comparable to the 1931 devaluation of UK sterling.

9. Furthermore, the acceleration of the inter-imperi-

The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power

*** Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire**

*** Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and Russia's Rise as a Great Power**

Two Pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

Order the pamphlets via our contact address: rcit@thecommunists.net

alist rivalry will inevitably increase the military tensions and the arms race between all Great Powers (U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan). It will also result in more proxy wars in the Global South in which local governments fight against each other in the service of their imperialist patrons. It is also not excluded that minor military clashes between the U.S. and Chinese armed forces could take place. Such conflicts could also involve Russia, Japan and India. The South and East China Sea as well as the Indian Ocean are likely areas for such military clashes between the imperialist rivals. Another possible war scenario is a military invasion of Taiwan by the Chinese forces.

10. It is a major failure of many left-wing forces that they lack any understanding of these developments. This is hardly surprising in the case of the Stalinist and Bolivarian parties as they are undisguised cheerleaders of Russian and Chinese imperialism. Many of them even claim that China would not be a capitalist but rather a “socialist” country! A number of Trotskyist organizations believe that China and Russia are “semi-colonial” or “sub-imperialist” states. Such a misconception opens the door to view these two emerging powers as a somehow “lesser evil” and, hence, siding with them in a conflict with the old imperialist powers U.S., EU or Japan.

11. The pro-Western social-imperialists are equally bad. U.S. Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, who has been hailed by numerous progressive organizations, attacked Trump and Joe Biden for being “too soft on China”. SYRIZA in Greece as well as PODEMOS and the PCE in Spain are examples for “socialist” parties serving EU imperialism as part of coalition governments. Following the Marxist principles as outlined by Lenin and Trotsky, the RCIT strongly condemns any support for one imperialist power against another as *social-imperialism*, i.e. as pro-imperialist policy under the cover of “socialism”.

12. The only possible and revolutionary tactic is unconditionally refusing support for *any* imperialist Great Power. Socialists must denounce all forms of chauvinism (under the cover of COVID-19 or any other). Likewise, they must oppose sanctions and punitive tariffs. Those “progressive” forces which support such chauvinist acts must be unreservedly condemned and their influence within the workers and popular mass organizations must be fought against as they act as social-imperialist lackeys. The RCIT advocates the program of *revolutionary defeatism* as it has been developed by the Marxist movement. This means that socialists must oppose *all* Great Powers and act in each imperialist country on the basis of “*the main enemy is at home*”. They should utilize any conflict in order to weaken and eventually overthrow the ruling class.

13. In cases of conflicts between one of these Great Powers against a semi-colonial proxy of an imperialist rival, the RCIT also advocates a revolutionary defeatist position on both sides, i.e. refusing to support either of the two camps. A war between China and Taiwan – a long-time proxy of U.S. imperialism – would be an example for such a scenario. A conflict between China and India – as it was already the case at the Sikkim border region in summer 2017 – is another example.

14. In cases of imperialist wars in semi-colonial countries, the RCIT advocates the defense of the oppressed people and the defeat of the imperialist enemy. Examples for this case are the U.S. occupation in Afghanistan or the Russian aggression in Syria supporting the tyrannical regime of Assad against the popular uprising.

15. The RCIT calls on organizations and activists around the world to fight for such a revolutionary strategy. We urge all those who share our programmatic principles in the general outline to get into contact with us and to join us in building a Revolutionary World Party!

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

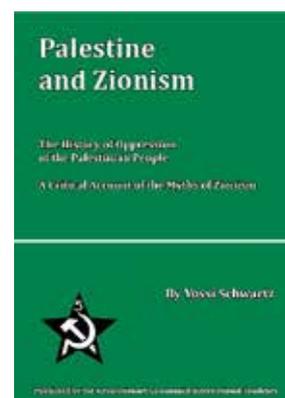
The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People. A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz provides a critical analysis of numerous Zionist myths about the Jews as well as about the Palestinians. He demonstrates that the Zionist claim that Palestine is the historic homeland of the Jews lacks any serious basis. *Palestine and Zionism* shows that the history of Zionism in the 20th century is a history of colonialism in the service of the Great Powers and directed against the native population – the Arabs. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz deals with key events – the “Nakba” in 1948, the wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973, more recent events like the Lebanon War, etc. – which were decisive for the expulsion of most Palestinians from their homeland. Yossi Schwartz also shows that the Palestinian people have heroically resisted against the occupation resulting in two Intifadas as well as the successful defense of Gaza against the Israeli aggression in three wars (2008/09, 2012, 2014). The author also analysis the shameful betrayal by the PLO leadership by signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993. In *Palestine and Zionism* Yossi Schwartz defends the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian people and outlines

a socialist perspective. He emphasizes that the only solution is the right of millions of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland and to replace the Zionist entity with one democratic state from the river to the sea – a *Free Red Palestine* with equal civil rights to the Arabs and the Israeli Jews.

The book contains an introduction and 7 chapters (112 pages) and includes 7 Tables and 3 Maps. The author of the book is Yossi Schwartz, a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and its section in Israel / Occupied Palestine..

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



Britain: Johnson Government is the most incompetent in dealing with COVID-19 in Europe

Act now – for demonstrations and strikes to remove this hated government

Article by Joseph Adams, RCIT Britain, May 2020

Boris Johnson, who has now just recovered from an attack of Coronavirus himself has stated that the epidemic is past its worst stage with over 20,000 dead. This is nearly the worst loss of life in numbers for the whole of Europe and he bleats that his government's actions are a success. Nothing further could be from the truth. This reactionary, racist and chauvinist government has presented lies and evasions to cover up their total ineptitude during the epidemic. Many bourgeois commentators are extremely critical of Johnson, pointing out how dilatory and slow his government has been to respond to this crisis compared to other European countries like Germany which counts 6,000 dead so far.

"It is hard to know what news the prime minister has been watching or listening to. Johnson's language was opaque to the point of waffle. The British people are in the dark, more so than any in Europe. Though statistics are still desperately unreliable, all we do know is that Britain has not performed well during the coronavirus pandemic. It is now among the most dilatory nations in securing recovery. Britons must listen in agony as leaders in Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Brussels and Rome articulate their routes out of this mess. Johnson and his colleagues have articulated nothing" [1].

The Government has just continued to lie and evade their responsibility of telling people what the real situation is, also during Johnson's stay in St. Thomas Hospital. The World Health Organization (WHO) had said that the virus must be faced early enough to stop an epidemic respectively the pandemic. Many Capitalist governments were aware of the contagious possibilities of the virus, but the Johnson Government did...nothing. There was no mass testing and in consequence no quarantine of affected people, instead so-called scientific advisers were quoted that the goal will be to form 'Herd Immunity'. They argue that it will eventually kill a certain amount of people. *Let that happen, it will reach a peak and then die off* – that was the original idea. This criminal policy was advocated by an openly racist and chauvinist government whose only political direction was Brexit.

Faced with the pandemic and the pressure of other imperialist governments, they were forced to act and decided a sudden lockdown. So the government had first decided to let the people die without doing anything and then it took dramatic measures that let people die out of many more reasons than the virus alone.

In the meantime, many doctors and front line NHS staff are bearing the brunt and dying from the coronavirus pandemic. Incredible negligence with Ministers who showed their incompetence daily and are unable to answer people's concerns. Their reaction was the general lockdown and enforced social distancing, which has not stopped people dying. In addition there are still no consistent mass testings. South Korea on the other hand tested massively, quarantined the known cases consequently and avoided general lockdown. Respiratory kits and basic personal

protective equipment for doctors and nurses was organized in no time. The result of these combined measures is a COVID-19 death toll of 258 since January in South Korea.

Bourgeois commentators once again expose Johnson's deputies like Dominic Raab, the Foreign secretary who clearly is not up to the job. *"Mr. Johnson's absence can be felt as drift and incoherence, expressed most potently in confusion over coronavirus testing and supplies of vital medical equipment. Meanwhile, the episode reinforces the impression of a government that was ill prepared for a crisis that demanded competence more than rhetorical bluster, and is failing now to get sufficient grip and undo damage done. Partly that is a symptom of over-centralization and reliance on the individual authority of the prime minister, whose focus is necessarily elsewhere. But capable ministers and a resilient administration would be compensating better for Mr. Johnson's absence. That they are not, that the whole system seems obviously adrift, running on bluster and improvisation, testifies to flaws. Mr. Raab is obviously out of his depth. Sadly, it seems his painfully shrunken stature is an accurate measure of the government he currently leads" [2].*

This further incompetence of the Johnson administration is costing people's lives and the final nail in the coffin for Johnson and his government is mentioned by another commentator. *"What makes Johnson supremely unsuited to this particular darkest hour is his natural antipathy towards the state. In a speech mainly on Brexit in Greenwich on 3 February, he attacked Wuhan-style lockdowns: "We are starting to hear some bizarre autarkic rhetoric, when barriers are going up, and when there is a risk that new diseases such as coronavirus will trigger a panic and a desire for market segregation." He went on: "Humanity needs some government somewhere that is willing at least to make the case powerfully for freedom of exchange." He was that government, along with Donald Trump. "Herd immunity" was Johnson's policy until it became politically unsustainable. Thereafter, incompetence" But this we know: our government is singularly unsuited to the task and unfit for purpose. In his absence, Johnson's lack of seriousness is reflected in his abysmal choice of cabinet, selected for all the wrong reasons. Dominic Raab, Priti Patel, Elizabeth Truss and the rest were chosen for Brexitry and hatred of the state" [3].*

No fundamental Testing has been carried out

The maybe worst aspect of this government's attitude to the Covid-19 Pandemic is ignoring sound medical advice which is to test, to test and to test. Claims that up to 100,000 people are being tested has been discovered to be untrue. In daily press conferences Dominic Raab and Matt Hancock make excuses for their inability to reduce the number of deaths. To find a vaccine sounds hollow every day and epidemiologists, academics and doctors are seeing through this sham.

"Indeed, as the fatal consequences of Britain's slow response become clear, combining with a decade of Conservative-imposed austerity all this has left the entire population, including

NHS staff, exposed. According to the Doctors' Association UK (DAUK), nearly three-quarters of doctors say they cannot access a mask when they need one, and nearly half of clinicians attending to the highest-risk cases say they cannot access the correct gowns. In one hospital, shortages of gowns forced a team of nurses to wear bin bags instead: all of them contracted the virus. At the time of writing 80 NHS workers have died so far, most of them people of colour. To bring up the 10 years of Conservative austerity - leaving a record shortage of nurses, a record shortage of beds and an exhausted, underpaid staff in its wake - is deemed unpatriotic, even blasphemous. In fact, at the same time as the Conservative government extols the virtues of the NHS, staff themselves are banned /threatened against sharing negative stories with the press or on social media". [4]

"The true extent of Britain's COVID-19 death toll was more than 40 percent higher than the government's daily figures indicated as of April 10, according to data that put the country on track to become among the worst-hit in Europe.

The Office for National Statistics said it recorded 13,121 deaths by April 10 in England and Wales, which account for the vast majority of Britain's population, compared with 9,288 in the government's daily toll for those who died in hospital. The ONS figures include deaths in care homes and hospices as well as in hospitals.

Britain, which scientists say is probably now experiencing the peak of the outbreak, has reported the world's fifth-highest national death toll from COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

The global death toll from COVID-19 now stands at around 170,000" [5]

Lack of Personal Protective Equipment for frontline NHS Staff

The Lockdown procedures which show the role of the Bonapartist state can not stop people from dying from the virus and other diseases. The major casualty however was unsurprisingly front line NHS staff like doctors and Nurses who did not have adequate equipment. After 10 years of Tory Austerity under Cameron, May and Johnson, the NHS has been completely shorn of any basic materials in the light of this pandemic. It has been established that the Coronavirus is mainly passed in hospitals, not by people

visiting supermarkets or going for a run. As long as basic hygiene requirements are in place, the Coronavirus is unlikely to be passed on. Doctors and Nurses are the ones at high risk especially without adequate protection. The Johnson Government is an imperialist, capitalist government who have had years of stripping the NHS to the bone and starving it of basic provision and equipment.

"Anger over lack of supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) for NHS workers is growing as a desperately needed consignment of 400,000 gowns was delayed.

The government has been under increasing pressure to ensure the safety of frontline health staff and one leading NHS figure revealed his "bitter experience" of the lack of basic items such as gowns in recent weeks"[6]

Programme for Workers and Oppressed

The health of the people is in deed at risk. While lockdown is enforced, people are rejected to see doctors in person or go to hospital if they have any other pain or illness. Without a real check-up however, many diseases and injuries are not treated properly which causes additional deaths which could have been prevented easily. Many women and children who face domestic violence a trapped during lockdown with the threatening partner respectively parent. Last but not least the neoliberal austerity programs of the past years have ripped the health system completely.

The RCIT has shown in a series of articles on the COVID-19 global pandemic crisis that major imperialist and capitalist governments have been spreading fear and confusion amongst the masses. One is that they assert that it is the health crisis which is responsible for the recession. This pandemic is being used as a cover for Bonapartist measurements in order to smash and prevent the masses right to assemble and demonstrate. The lockdown is a threat, not a cure.

The Bourgeoisie has been aided in these various lockdown procedures by the social-democracy, the trade unions and various pseudo-leftist organisations. We have made this clear in all our statements on COVID-19:

"Why is it the case that there will be so few May Day demonstrations despite such a historic crisis of capitalism and despite such wide-scale attacks on the popular masses?"

Pamphlets on the EU and Brexit

- * **Marxism, EU and Brexit**
- * **The British Left and the EU-Referendum**
- * **The Reformist Pipe Dream of a "Socialist" European Union**

Written by Michael Pröbsting
(International Secretary of the RCIT)



There exist basically two reasons which are connected with each other. First, we are in the midst of a global counterrevolutionary offensive where the ruling classes all over the world impose a reactionary lockdown regime against the workers and oppressed. Under the pretext of combating the COVID-19 pandemic, governments suppress the democratic rights to assembly and to demonstrate and force the people to stay home in isolation.

The second reason is that the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions, popular organizations and the so-called left, in their vast majority, support the global lockdown. These reformist, populist and centrist forces – all opportunists by profession – repeat the lies of the ruling class that the lockdown would be the most effective way to combat the pandemic. As a matter of truth the countries with the highest number of death per head of population are those with lockdown regimes (e.g. Italy, Spain, France, Belgium). Other countries which have not imposed a draconic lockdown have fared much better until now (e.g. South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, and Hong Kong)". [7]

The RCIT in BRITAIN calls on all workers and the oppressed to support the following programme in our fight for Socialism and a Revolutionary Socialist answer to the crisis.

* Expansion of the Health system in Britain under the control of workers and the popular masses! PPE to all Nurses and Doctors in the Front line battle against the Pandemic!

* No to mass lockdowns! Defend the democratic right to assemble and demonstrate! Nobody should take away our right to fight and rally against injustice and oppression!

* No mass surveillance! Stop the police state!

* Open borders for refugees! Oppose any travel bans!

* Systematic and free health screening of people who might have contracted the virus! Free respiratory kits for all patients! Start Medical tests now!

* For an international team of medical experts to develop a cure

and preventive vaccination as soon as possible! They must be under the control of workers, local branches of the trade unions and other organs of the masses!

* Nationalize the pharmaceutical companies under workers control to develop drugs against widespread illnesses like COVID-19, Influenza, HIV/Aids and many more!

* Support our brothers and sisters in the global south! Cancel all public and household debts!

* No sackings, no wage cuts. Nationalization under workers control of large enterprises, which sack workers respectively which shut down production!

* Fight for the building of a New Workers Party

Footnotes

1) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2020/apr/27/boris-johnson-back-to-work-waffling>

2) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2020/apr/22/the-guardian-view-on-dominic-raab-out-of-his-depth>

3) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2020/apr/20/boris-johnson-sunday-times-prime-minister-coronavirus>

4) <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/boris-johnson-hollow-priest-nhs-200421070641302.html>

5) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/uk-coronavirus-death-toll-40-percent-higher-reported-200421125350128.html>

6) <https://www.thecanary.co/discovery/news-discovery/2020/04/20/hospital-workers-angry-at-ppe-delays-as-death-toll-tops-16500/>

7) <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/may-day-2020-unite-in-struggle-against-capitalist-crisis-and-state-bonapartism/>

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Greece - A Modern Semi-Colony

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

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

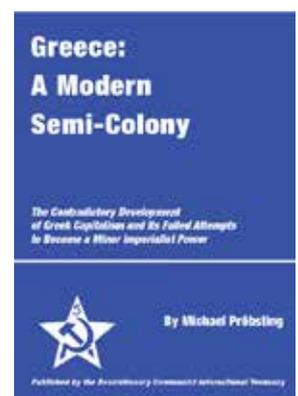
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

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

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

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

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



COVID-19 Crisis: Internal Document Reveals Austrian Government Plan to Spread Fear A telling revelation on the political calculations of the ruling class

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 April 2020

Yesterday, Austria's public broadcaster ORF published the minutes from an internal meeting of the so-called "Taskforce Corona". This is the key institution which currently decides on the COVID-19 policy of the government coalition of the Conservative and the Green party. This meeting, which took place on 12 March (three days before the government declared a state of emergency with a wide-ranging lockdown), was attended by Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, the vice-chancellor, the ministers of the interior and health plus 13 health experts and 8 high-ranking officials.

According to the minutes, Chancellor Kurz lamented that the population "does not take the danger of the virus seriously enough". (Bear in mind that this was shortly before the beginning of the lockdown so the government had to consider ways how the population could accept such a draconic measure.) The Chancellor then said, according to the minutes: "Kurz makes clear that the people should be afraid of being infected respectively should be afraid that their parents or grandparents could die. On the other side, we should allay the fear of the population about food shortage, blackout, etc."

One of the government health advisors, Herwig Kollaritsch, positively referred to the governmental policy in Britain during the measles epidemic in the 1990s. One can learn from this experience how the government "has played with fear" of the population.¹

Based on such a political strategy of deliberately spreading fear and panic, the government launched a campaign of causing bewilderment among the population so that it accepts the lockdown and the suppression of democratic rights. On 30 March, for example, Chancellor Kurz said

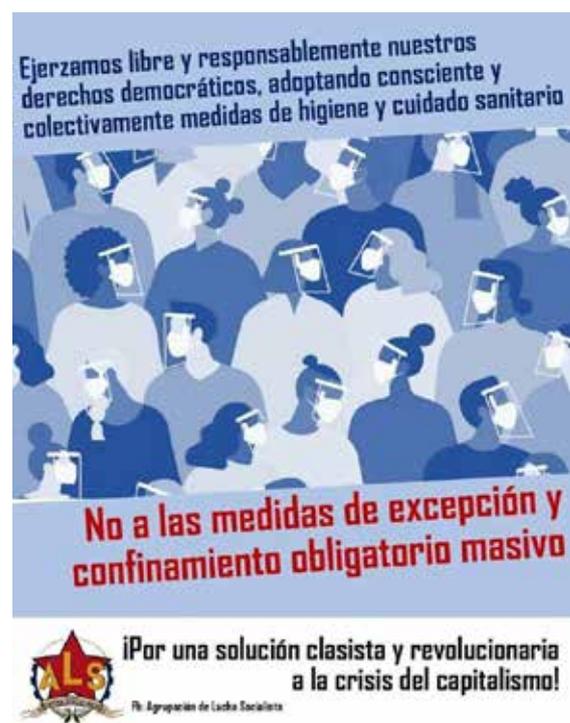
in a public speech: "We will have soon a situation in Austria where everyone will know somebody who has died because of the Corona Virus."²

Meanwhile the existence of this internal minute has been confirmed by the government so there is no doubt about the substance of these quotes. Naturally, the outcry of the opposition parties is huge and the government tries to downplay the significance of these minutes.

The political calculation of the ruling classes

It would be silly to imagine that the Austrian government is an exception in elaborating plans how to spread fear among the population. All capitalist governments must find ways to justify the draconic lockdown policy and the suppression of democratic rights. Surely, there will be many more revelations in the near future about such anti-people conspiracies of the ruling classes.

These revelations do not come as a surprise for Marxists. From our first statements in early February the RCIT has pointed out that the ruling classes – from China to Europe and all other continents – consciously utilizes this pandemic in order to spread fear and panic.³ Their response to the COVID-19 pandemic has not been based on health considerations but on political calculations in order to consolidate its power. As we elaborate in our new book "The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It" and many other documents, the current pandemic is utilized by the capitalist class as a cover for a pre-emptive counterrevolution against the workers and popular masses.⁴



Posters dealing with the current COVID-19 crisis, created by ALS (Mexican section of the RCIT)

Naturally, we never denied the existence of this pandemic. But an increasing number of studies demonstrate that it is much less deadly than the ruling classes and their media claim in order to justify the creation of a chauvinist state bonapartist machinery with an rapidly expanding police and surveillance state and the massive limitation of democratic rights. While the lethality rate of Influenza is about 0.1%, various studies indicate that the lethality rate of the Corona Virus is between 0.2-0.6%.

In short, this is a serious pandemic which must be combated with a program of wide-ranging mass free testing, quarantine of those infected and a massive expansion of the public health service under workers and popular control. It can not and must not be combated with bourgeois state repression and atomization of the popular masses ("stay at home", "social distancing", etc.). It can not and must not serve under any circumstances as justification for the creation of authoritarian regimes and the destruction of democratic rights! ⁵

Social-Bonapartist Lockdown Left

In itself, it is not surprising that the ruling class looks for an excuse to attack democracy in the current situation. As we have explained in a number of works, the capitalist world economy entered its Third Depression in late 2019. ⁶ At the same time, the bourgeois order was shattered by a global wave of class struggles and popular uprisings from Hong Kong to Chile, from Iraq to France and from India to Sudan. ⁷ Another important feature undermining political stability has been the accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – in particular between the U.S. and China. ⁸ In such a situation, the ruling classes desperately needed an excuse to put down the people and to consolidate its power.

It is particularly shameful that the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions, popular organizations and the so-called left, in their vast majority, support the global lockdown. This is equivalent to serving the global counterrevolutionary offensive. These forces have become what we call the social-bonapartist Lockdown Left – an obstacle in the liberation struggle of the workers and oppressed.

The RCIT repeats its call to all authentic revolutionaries around the world to break with such opportunist left and to join forces in advancing the construction of a *World Party of Socialist Revolution!* ⁹

Footnotes

1 All quotes are taken from ORF: Aufregung über kolportierte Angststrategie, 27 April 2020, <https://orf.at/stories/3163480/>; ORF: Regierungsprotokoll: Angst vor Infektion offenbar erwünscht, 27 April 2020, <https://orf.at/stories/3163435/> (our translation)

2 Maria Schaunitzer, Matthias Reif, David Baumgartner: Corona Österreich und Welt. Zwei Supermarkt-Angestellte in Tirol erkrankt, weniger Neuinfizierte in Italien, 30 March 2020, <https://www.kleinezeitung.at/international/corona/5792633/Corona-Oesterreich-und-Welt-Zwei-Supermarkt-Angestellte-in-Tirol>

3 See e.g. RCIT: 2019 Corona Virus: Oppose the Global Wave of Chauvinist Hysteria! Workers and oppressed: Do not trust the ruling class and its media! 5 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/2019-corona-virus-oppose-the-global-wave-of-chauvinist-hysteria/>; Almedina Gunić: Coronavirus: "I am not a Virus"... but WE will be the

Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the "Wuhan Coronavirus" hysteria and the revolutionary answer, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>

4 Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>; see also the RCIT Manifesto: 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, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>.

The RCIT has published several dozen documents on the COVID-19 crisis which are all collected at a special sub-page in our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>

5 See on this e.g. RCIT: A Revolutionary Action Program to fight COVID-19! Workers and Oppressed: Don't trust the State of the Rich and Powerful! Trust only Yourself! April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/health-program-covid19>

6 See on this e.g. the above mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution (chapter I) as well as Michael Pröbsting: No, the Corona Virus is not the Main Cause of the Global Economic Slump! Bourgeois Media Officially Recognize the Beginning of another Great Recession, 3 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/corona-virus-is-not-the-main-cause-of-global-economic-slump/>;

Chapter "Another Great Recession has begun" in RCIT: World Perspectives 2020: A Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, 8 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2020/>; Michael Pröbsting: Another Great Recession of the Capitalist World Economy Has Begun. The economic crisis is an important factor in the current dramatic shift in the world situation, 19 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/another-great-recession-of-the-capitalist-world-economy-has-begun/>; see also Michael Pröbsting: The Next Looming Great Recession. Observations on the Latest Stock Market Slump and the Structural Crisis of the Capitalist World Economy, 12 October 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-next-looming-great-recession/>

7 For an overview and a characterization of these events see, in addition the relevant statements on the individual countries, Michael Pröbsting: Are We Nearing a New "68 Moment"? A massive upsurge of global class struggle in the midst of a dramatic shift in the world situation 22 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/are-we-nearing-a-new-68-moment/>

8 On the RCIT's analysis of the Great Power rivalry and China's and Russia's rise as emerging imperialist powers see the literature mentioned in the special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. In particular we refer to the book by Michael Pröbsting: *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 the numerous RCIT's documents on the Global Trade War which have been collected at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-global-trade-war/>.

9 See on this e.g. our Open Letter: Act Now because History is Happening Now! A call to all revolutionary organizations and activists to join forces against the global counter-revolutionary offensive under the cover of COVID-19, 26 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/open-letter-act-now-because-history-is-happening-now/>

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 5th Workers International on a revolutionary program! Join the RCIT!

No future without socialism!

No socialism without a revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

