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Myanmar: A Popular Uprising of International Significance

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Pictures on the cover: Uniformed schoolteachers demonstrate in Hpa-an on 9.2.2021 (Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/07/Protest_against_military_coup_%289_Feb_2021%2C_Hpa-An%2C_Kayin_State%2C_Myanmar%29_%283%29.jpg)

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Is Cuba Socialist? Are the Current Popular Protests Legitimate?

Questions and Answers from a Marxist point of view

Joint Statement of the RCIT and Con-vergencia Socialista (Argentina), 13 July 2021

The current mass protests in Cuba have been met by repression and violence from the Cuban state apparatus. They have also opened a widespread debate among international left-wing forces about the character of the Cuban state and the nature of the popular protests. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and our comrades from *Convergencia Socialista* (Argentina) stand in solidarity with these mass mobilizations and advocate a socialist perspective.¹ In this article, we will explain our approach in more detail in the format of questions and answers.

What are the causes of the current mass protests?

The current protests have been triggered by the dramatic consequences of the recently implemented austerity program of the government. At the beginning of this year, the so-called “*Ordering Task*” became effective. This is an economic reform program of the government of Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel. These reforms mean, in the words of the state media: “*On January 1, the convertible peso ceased to circulate in Cuba and a single exchange rate of 24 Cuban pesos for one dollar was adopted for natural and legal persons, at the same time a wage reform was undertaken, prices were corrected and excessive subsidies and gratuities were eliminated.*”² Furthermore, the regime hopes to “*attract foreign investment*” and to strengthen the private sector.

To translate this in plain language, this is a capitalist austerity program. Prices have increased dramatically while wages stagnated. Hence, there has been a sharp rise in the cost of living for the popular masses. Add to this the “*elimination of excessive subsidies and gratuities*”. It is clear that poverty and hunger have massively increased in recent months.

In early March, the “*Communist*” Party’s central Internet portal, “*CubaDebate*,” asked its readers how they had experienced the first months since the currency reform. “*The feedback was devastating. More than two-thirds of the respondents said that even the increase in wages was not enough to cover their needs, given the sharp rise in prices. In addition to complaints about the shortages and increased costs of living, people also expressed outrage that the dollar stores were dividing Cubans into a de facto two-class society, and that ordinary peso income earners were the losers.*”³

The currency reform has resulted in a decline of imports by 40%. As a consequence, there are shortages in goods and people have to stay in hours-long daily queues for obtaining basic commodities.

What is the background of this austerity program?

The “*Ordering Task*” is just the latest attack in series of measures which are part of capitalist restoration in Cuba. After the collapse of the USSR – a degenerated workers state dictatorially ruled by a bureaucratic caste – in 1991, Cuba entered a dramatic economic crisis. As a result, the Castroite regime – like ruling Stalinist parties in other countries – turned towards pro-capitalist market reforms. After a period of some zigzags, the regime implemented a

series of drastic pro-capitalist measures in 2010-11. Faced with the sanctions by U.S. imperialism, the Cuban regime has looked for closer relations with China and the European Union.

The restoration of capitalism has resulted in a massive increase of exploitation and social inequality. According to academic studies, the Gini coefficient in Cuba – measuring social inequality – was placed between 0.22 and 0.25 in 1986. However, the establishment of capitalist relations of production has dramatically changed this. Today, the Gini coefficient amounts to more than 0.40, denoting a very unequal society.⁴

Another study by a Cuban economist, published in 2018, arrived at the conclusion that “*between 10% and 15% of [Cuba’s] citizens can be considered as “rich”, while between 40% and 51% of the population live in poverty.*”⁵

The existence of capitalist property relations was legally legitimized by the adaption of the new Cuban Constitution in 2019 which formally recognized private property and the role of the “*market*”. In fact, these features have existed already for years.⁶

The effects of capitalist restoration by the ruling party have been worsened by the sanction of U.S. imperialism which could only partly be absorbed by Cuba’s key ally China. This is the case because China itself is dominated by a business-calculating capitalist class. “*China was no longer willing to supply goods on credit on a large scale if the Cuban side continued to default on accumulated trade debts.*”⁷

In addition, Cuba has been affected by the Greater Depression of the capitalist world economy which began in autumn 2019⁸ and which has been worsened by the global Lockdown regime (which Marxists call the COVID-19 Counterrevolution).⁹ As a result, Cuba’s economy shrank by 11% last year and the important tourism sector collapsed.¹⁰

In summary, the current crisis has its main roots in the crisis-ridden character of capitalism, intensified by the specifics of ruling class which is imposing a brutal austerity program as well as by the sanctions of U.S. imperialism.

How do you characterize the Cuban state today?

The RCIT and our comrades of *Convergencia Socialista* consider Cuba as a capitalist state. More precisely, it is a state dominated by a Stalinist-capitalist ruling class. The old Castroite bureaucracy presided over a deformed workers state since the early 1960s. It has successfully kept power (until now) but transformed itself resp. created a new capitalist class. So, the ruling party remained the same while the economic base has changed. While Cuba was a deformed workers state in the past, it has become a capitalist state. It is a close ally of Chinese and Russian imperialism.

Cuba’s ruling party has entered the same road which other Stalinist parties have done after 1989-91. In China¹¹, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea¹², the ruling Stalinist parties were able to keep their political dictatorship while transforming successfully the economic basis of their countries towards capitalism. Cuba has become a capital-

ist semi-colony – similar to Vietnam, Laos and North Korea while China evolved into an imperialist Great Power.

Was Cuba ever socialist state?

Cuba was never a socialist state in the Marxist meaning of the word. It was never led by the working class organized in councils and its armed militias and ruling by the methods of direct democracy. At the time of the revolution in 1959, the Castroite M-26-7 guerilla movement had a petty-bourgeois character. Due to the pressure of class struggle, the threat of invasion of U.S. imperialism and the pressure from the USSR, the Castroite movement transformed itself into a Stalinist party and expropriated the bourgeoisie. However, Cuba was never a healthy workers state like Soviet Russia in the times of Lenin and Trotsky 1917-23 but rather a deformed workers state.¹³

What is your position on the U.S. sanctions?

We strongly denounce these sanctions as economic aggression by an imperialist Great Power. We demand their immediate and unconditional lifting. These sanctions are an instrument of Washington in order to bring back a puppet regime (like Batista before 1959).

We oppose all forms of imperialist interference in Cuba. Hence, we are against any attempt of U.S. imperialism to advance their interests on the island. Likewise, we oppose all forms of interference of Chinese and Russian imperialism which consider Cuba as “their” semi-colony.

We refuse the idea that all problems in Cuba are caused by the U.S. sanctions. Basically, the problems of rising social inequality, poverty and unemployment are caused by capitalism. This is why you see similar developments in many countries all over the world – including in China and Vietnam. Blaming the U.S. sanctions as the main cause of Cuba’s problems is an attempt of the Stalinist-capitalist regime to whitewash its anti-people policy.

How do you view the current popular protests?

For the reasons mentioned above, the popular demonstrations are legitimate protests which we fully support. It is a Stalinist-capitalist slander to denounce them as “*directed by the U.S.*” or as a result of “*provocateurs*”. A wave of mass mobilizations in dozens of cities within 24 hours, many of them youth, is the result of authentic and spontaneous mass anger caused by economic misery. Such spontaneous movements have happened many times all over the world. Just think about the wave of protests in the U.S. after the police killing of Georg Floyd! Or does the regime want to suggest that the “worms” are so strongly rooted among the masses that they could achieve this?! If that would be really the case, it would mean that the regime is so weak and so discredited that the masses listen more to the worms than to the pseudo-“communists”!

As a matter of fact, the current mass mobilizations in Cuba have essentially the same reasons as all the other popular protests which are taking place all over the world. People fight against poverty and unemployment, against the anti-democratic policy of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution, against dictatorships, etc. This is happening in Colombia, Chile, Iraq, Lebanon, India, Burma/Myanmar, Hong Kong, etc. Why should the protests of the Cuban people be less legitimate?!

“But the Cuban government is socialist!”

Well, not the Cuban government which exists on this planet! As we did show above, it is “socialist” in words only and Stalinist-capitalist in deeds. Marxist don’t judge political forces by what they say about themselves. The Catholic Church preaches the 10 commandments and violates nearly each of those. Mohamed bin Salman is a Muslim in words and a corrupt tyrant in deeds. And the “Communist” parties in China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba “serve the people” in words and serve the interests of their capitalist class in deeds. Therefore the workers and oppressed have to overthrow them in order to march forward to authentic socialism.

Do you see the danger that the current regime could be replaced by a pro-Yankee regime?

There does not exist only one danger but several. One danger is that the Stalinist-capitalist dictatorship smashes the popular protests and keeps power. Another danger is that the PCC government could be replaced by a pro-U.S. regime. Socialists fight against both outcomes.

If socialists refuse to join the mass mobilizations, they leave the field to the worms and other reactionaries. If they side with the regime against the people, they will become counterrevolutionaries. The only way forward is to participate in the popular protests, to defend an independent socialist program, to work towards the creation of direct-democratic popular councils, to fight against any reactionary influences for the revolutionary overthrow of the regime and for its replacement by a workers and poor peasant government. In order to advance this process, it is essential for authentic socialists to unite and to build a revolutionary party.

What do you say about the support for the Cuban regime by many left-wing parties?

This is a shame and reflects the massive degeneration of the Stalinist, Bolivarian and pseudo-Trotskyist left. Many of them repeat the slander of the regime in Havana and denounce the protests as a “conspiracy of the CIA”. To give only one example for such reactionary filth. The Greek KKE – a key force in international Stalinism – claims: “*The USA, in cooperation with anti-Cuban mafia operating on its territory as well as forces within Cuba openly supporting their plans, are orchestrating protests in Cuba with anti-communist and anti-revolutionary slogans calling for the overthrow of the government.*”¹⁴

Thus, they repeat essentially the same reactionary slander which these parties spread in the past when they supported the Assad dictatorship against the Syrian Revolution¹⁵, legitimized the military coup in Egypt in July 2013¹⁶ or denounced the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.¹⁷ This is the logical and disastrous conclusion when you turn the reality on its head by considering an imperialist Great Power like China as “socialist”, by considering a capitalist tyranny like Assad as “anti-imperialist” and “progressive”, etc. The rotten methods of Stalinism are inevitable bound to end up in the camp of counterrevolution!¹⁸

Footnotes

1 See our joint statement: Cuba: Support the Popular Masses in Struggle – for a true Socialist Revolution! 12 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/cuba-support-the-popular-masses-in-struggle-for-a-true-socialist-revolution/>

2 Cuban News Agency: Re-ordering task in Cuba, one month in, 1 February, 2021 <https://www.gobiernogranma.gob.cu/en/blog/re-ordering-task-in-cuba-one-month-in/>

3 Bert Hoffmann: Communist party congress in Cuba: After the end of the Castro era, what? April 15, 2021, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2021/04/communist-party-congress-in-cuba-after-the-end-of-the-castro-era-what/>; Encuesta: ¿Cómo ha vivido estos dos meses de ordenamiento monetario? 1 marzo 2021, <http://www.cubadebate.cu/especiales/2021/03/01/encuesta-como-ha-vivido-estos-dos-meses-de-ordenamiento-monetario/>; 'Cubadebate' Removes the Ordering Task Survey From its Website, 7.3.2021, <https://translatingcuba.com/cubadebate-removes-the-ordering-task-survey-from-its-website/>

4 Omar Everleny: Inequality and population at risk of poverty in Cuba, August 17, 2019, <https://oncubanews.com/en/cuba/inequality-and-population-at-risk-of-poverty-in-cuba/>; see also Stephanie Nolen: A new Cuban revolution and the stark divide between rich and poor, January 8, 2016 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/a-new-cuban-revolution-and-the-stark-divide-between-rich-and-poor/article28073917/>

5 Pedro Monreal: Contando "ricos" y "pobres" en Cuba: ¿qué dicen los datos disponibles? August 10, 2018, <https://elestado.com.fo.com/2018/08/10/contando-ricos-y-pobres-en-cuba-que-dicen-los-datos-disponibles/>

6 For an analysis of the process of capitalist restoration in Cuba we refer readers to the book by Michael Pröbsting: Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism, August 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cuba-s-revolution-sold-out/>; see also Juan Giglio y Damián Vekelo: Cuba tiene un gobierno stalinista, que aplica un ajuste capitalista, julio 13, 2021, <https://convergenciadecombate.blogspot.com/2021/07/cuba-tiene-un-gobierno-stalinista-que.html>

7 Bert Hoffmann: Communist party congress in Cuba: After the end of the Castro era, what?

8 The RCIT has analysed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February 2020 we have published nearly 90 pamphlets, essays, articles and statements plus a book which are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to 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/>. In addition, we draw attention to 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, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>. See also our very first article on this issue by 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/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; by the same author: The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>; COVID-19: The Great Barrington Declaration is indeed Great! Numerous medical scientists protest against the reactionary lockdown policy, 11 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-the-great-barrington-declaration-is-indeed-great/>; Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: The Current and Historical Roots of Bourgeois Lockdown "Socialism". Police State and Universal Basic Income are key elements of the new version of reformist "War Socialism" of 1914, 19 December 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/covid-19-the-current-and-historical-roots-of-bourgeois-lockdown-socialism/>.

9 See on this e.g. 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 Revolutions, 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-hasbegun/>; 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/>

10 Economía cubana cae 11% este año y debe crecer alrededor

de 7% en 2021, 17 diciembre 2020, <http://www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2020/12/17/economia-cubana-cae-11-este-ano-y-estima-crecer-alrededor-del-7-en-2021/>

11 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China. See on this e.g. our above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*. See also by the same author an essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1; China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4/>; How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China's State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>. See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

12 On the issue of capitalist restoration in North Korea we refer readers to several essays which we have published recently: Michael Pröbsting: Has Capitalist Restoration in North Korea Crossed the Rubicon or Not? Reply to a Polemic of Władysław Rad (Poland), 15 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/has-capitalist-restoration-in-north-korea-crossed-the-rubicon-or-not/>; Michael Pröbsting: In What Sense Can One Speak of Capitalist Restoration in North Korea? Reply to Several Objections Raised by the Polish Comrades of "Władysław Rad", 21 June 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/north-korea-and-the-marxist-theory-of-capitalist-restoration/>; Michael Pröbsting: Again on Capitalist Restoration in North Korea, 12 June 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/again-on-capitalist-restoration-in-north-korea/>; Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings, pp. 95-105

13 For our analysis of Stalinism see e.g. the book published by our predecessor organization League for the Revolutionary Communist International: *The Degenerated Revolution: The Origin and Nature of the Stalinist States*, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/stalinism-and-the-degeneration-of-the-revolution/>; see also Chapter II in Michael Pröbsting: *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out? The Road from Revolution to the Restoration of Capitalism*, August 2013, RCIT Books, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/cuba-s-revolution-sold-out/>

14 Solidarity with Cuba! Statement by the Press Office of the CC of the KKE, 12/7/2021, <http://www.solidnet.org/article/CP-of-Greece-Solidarity-with-Cuba/>. If one goes to the website of SolidNet – a network of international Stalinist parties – one can find a flood of similar solidarity declarations with the Cuban regime!

15 The RCIT has published a number of booklets, statements, and articles on the Syrian Revolution that can be accessed on a special sub-section of this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT call *Save the Syrian Revolution!*, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/call-save-the-syrian-revolution/>; see also two pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: *Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified?* 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, 5 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>; *Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“*. 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, 21 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syria-great-power-rivalry-and-the-failure-of-the-left/>. See also by the same author: *A Revealing Statistic about Who is Responsible for Killing Civilians in Syria*. The latest findings of the Syrian Network for Human Rights for the period from March 2011 to June 2021, 2 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/revealing-statistic-about-who-is-responsible-for-killing-civilians-in-syria/>

16 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *The Coup d'État in Egypt and the Bankruptcy of the Left's "Army Socialism"*, August 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/egypt-and-left-army-socialism/>; Yossi Schwartz: *Egypt: The U.S. Support for the Military Coup and the Left's Ignorance*, 11.7.2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/egypt-us-support-for-military-coup/>

17 The RCIT has published various documents on the mass protests in Hong Kong. See e.g. *China / Hong Kong: The Beginning of the Counterrevolution*. The new National Security Law represents a full-scale assault on democratic rights by the Stalinist-Capitalist regime! 1 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-hong-kong-the-beginning-of-the-counterrevolution/>. At the end of this statement, readers find references to several other documents on this issue.

18 For an actual critique of the support for Chinese and Russian imperialism by Stalinist parties see our pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: *Servants of Two Masters. Stalinism and the New Cold War between Imperialist Great Powers in East and West*, 10 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/servants-of-two-masters-stalinism-and-new-cold-war/>

Cuba and South Africa: Stalino-Capitalism in Action

Some advice to all socialists: judge parties by their actions, not by their general ideological commitments which do not commit them to anything!

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 17 July 2021

Catastrophic capitalism provokes more and more crisis, explosions, and popular uprising. Among the most important events in the last period are the mass protests in Cuba ¹ and the hunger riots in South Africa. ² Despite the large geographical distance between the two countries, these events have several things in common.

Both events have their deep roots in the misery caused by the system of capitalist exploitation. More concretely, the popular masses in both countries face the consequences of bourgeois austerity policy implemented by the respective governments.

Naturally, such austerity policy against the working class takes place in a global context: the Greater Depression which started in autumn 2019 and which constitutes the backdrop against which the ruling classes in all countries in the world try to offload the consequences of the crisis on the back of the working class and the poor.

In addition, this general background of the capitalist crisis is combined with concrete national conditions. In the case of South Africa, it is the ongoing unofficial Apartheid divisions in the society. And in the case of Cuba, it is the combination of sanctions by U.S. imperialism and the ongoing bureaucratic dictatorship by a Stalinist party. ³

Rule and repress

This brings us to another important parallel between Cuba and South Africa: both countries are ruled by Stalinist-capitalist parties. In Cuba the PCC rules as the only legal party since more than six decades. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the regime – similar to its sister parties in China, Vietnam and North Korea – undermined and finally abolished the post-capitalist planned property relations, i.e. it restored capitalism.

In South Africa, the SACP is an important part of the so-called *Tripartite Alliance* (together with the ANC and COSATU). This alliance runs the country's government since 1994 without interruption and the SACP has always held several ministry positions. ⁴

Furthermore, both governments have reacted with repression against the popular unrest. The Cuban regime sent police and party thugs on the streets to suppress the protests. They killed one and arrested hundreds of demonstrators – including well-known communist dissidents and LGTB activists. In South Africa, the ANC-SACP-COSATU government has ordered 25,000 soldiers on the streets to smash the hunger riots. According to the latest figures, more than 2,500 people have been arrested and 212 people have died in the last days. ⁵

In summary, the Stalinist parties in Cuba as well as in South Africa are ruling parties for decades. They administer a capitalist system resulting in social polarization and increasing misery. When the popular masses revolt, they react with brutal repression and send heavily armed police and army on the streets. ⁶

In addition, both the Cuban as well as the South African Stalinists run governments which are close allies of China – the rising imperialist Great Power which challenges the U.S. as the long-standing hegemon of the capitalist world order. ⁷

In short, the PCC as well as the SACP are *Stalinist-capitalist parties* and part of the *camp dominated by Chinese (and Russian) imperialism*. ⁸

United against the popular masses

It is therefore symbolic but not accidental that the South African CP is among the dozens of Stalinist parties which have published two days ago a joint statement in solidarity with the Cuban regime. Parroting the slander of the regime media that the popular protests are “*provocations orchestrated by U.S. imperialism*”, these parties pledge undying allegiance to the rulers in Havana. “*The Communist and Workers' Parties denounce the orchestrated provocations and undermining acts of counterrevolutionary groups in Cuba and abroad, which attempt to create an image of destabilization to justify the imperialist intervention against Cuba and its people.*” ⁹

A number of Stalinists follow the example of their leaders also concerning the methods of repression. The latest death threats against our comrade Gabriela Capurro – a leading member of *Convergencia Socialista* (Argentina) – because of her support for the popular protests in Cuba demonstrate once more their political nature: these fanatical thugs are determined to silence any opposition against Stalino-capitalism by all available means. ¹⁰

Let us note in passing that such threats reflect not only the rottenness of Stalinism but also the very fact that they are with their back to the wall. It becomes more and more obvious that they do not defend any kind of distorted “socialism” since the bureaucratically degenerated workers states have collapsed long time ago. In contrast, they have become open and undisguised defenders of capitalist regimes and imperialist powers. How can it be otherwise, that their supporters increasingly become demoralized, their members desert them, and the masses hate them?! There are no other means left for Stalinism than threats and violence against their opponents!

Of course, all their administration of capitalism, all the mobilization of the capitalist repression apparatus, all the threats against socialist activists – all this is done in the name of “*socialism*”, of “*Marxism-Leninism*” and maybe even the “*Ten Commandments of Stalinism*” (aka “*Short Course*”). All these words are irrelevant. Such “*Marxism*” is an empty ideological commitment which doesn't commit their advocates to anything in practice.

All these are powerful lessons for socialists today: judge parties by their actions, not by their words! In words, these parties might appear as “*Marxist-Leninists*”. In reality, these are Stalinist-capitalist forces and servants of Chinese and Russian imperialism!

Footnotes

1 The RCIT and CS have published a number of statements and articles on the mass protests in Cuba. They are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/cuba-solidarity-with-mass-protests-against-the-stalinist-capitalist-regime/>

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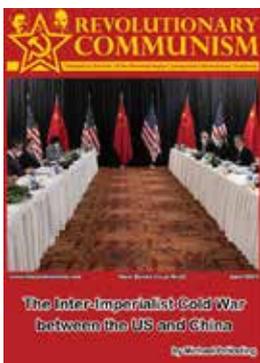
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8 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Russia and China: Neither Capitalist nor Great Powers? A Reply to the PO/CRFI and their Revisionist Whitewashing 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/>; see also several pamphlets by the same author: 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 Refoundation of the Fourth International", 27 May 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-catastrophic-failure-of-the-theory-of-catastrophism/>; Lenin's Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today's Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia's Imperialist Character, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; Russia as a Great Imperialist Power. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>

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Publications of the RCIT

The Inter-Imperialist Cold War between the US and China

By Michael Pröbsting, March 2021

Introduction * A symbolic public row * Two thieves as upholders of moral standards * Escalating the conflict between China and Japan * The Quad Summit * Inter-Imperialist tensions in the Taiwan Strait * Unavoidable continuation and acceleration of inter-imperialist rivalry * Continuing doing business * Towards escalation on the Korean Peninsula? * "Fuck the EU" and Russia, again? * Confirmation of the Marxist analysis * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

Cuba: “Trotskyist” Auxiliaries of the Stalinist-Capitalist Regime

Some comments on Alan Woods’ “International Marxist Tendency” and Jeff Mackler’s “Socialist Action”

by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 15 July 2021

The mass protests against the latest austerity program of Cuba’s misnamed “Communist” government are an event of international significance. This is the case for several reasons. First, these are the largest protests in this country since 1994. Second, they take place in a country which is in the focus of long-standing sanctions by the U.S. and, more generally, of inter-imperialist Great Power rivalry. Furthermore, the issue of Cuba has played an important role in the international workers and popular movement – particularly in Latin America – since more than six decades.

In this article we will not repeat our assessment of the popular protests which have taken place in recent days. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and our Argentinean comrades in *Convergencia Socialista* have explained in a number of documents that we stand in full solidarity with the popular protests, that we oppose the Stalinist-capitalist dictatorship as well as the sanctions by U.S. imperialism and that we view the program of socialist revolution as the only way forward.¹

At this point, we will rather discuss some examples of shameful solidarity of “left-wing” organizations ... not with the popular protests but rather with the Stalinist-capitalist regime.

Before we begin with this article, it is necessary to draw attention to yesterday’s televised speech of Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel in which he offered, for the first time, “some self-criticism while saying that government shortcomings in handling shortages and other problems played a role in this week’s protests”.² Of course, the regime is doing so in order to pacify the protests and to buy time. Nevertheless, it is a powerful confirmation of the position defended by the Marxists that the mass demonstrations in Cuba were legitimate protests and not – as the regime and its Stalinist parrots around the world have claimed – “a conspiracy of U.S. imperialism and the gusanos”! If the protests would have been only reactionary provocations of a small and isolated minority, the regime could have easily smashed it and would not have any reason to make concessions!³

From the Revolution to Castro-Stalinism to Capitalism

In the early 1960s, Cuba was the first (and until now only) country in Latin America which experienced a social revolution, abolishing capitalist property relations. Yet, this was a revolution which has been bureaucratically controlled from the very beginning, i.e. political power was never exercised by the workers and poor peasants, organized in popular councils (soviets) but rather by a dictatorially ruling bureaucratic caste led by Fidel Castro.⁴

As a result, the masses were oppressed and while the Castro regime resisted the efforts of U.S. imperialism to bring back the *gusanos*, it refused to expand the revolution to other countries. Such efforts were left to Che Guevara – an important leader of the revolution in 1959. In fact, the Cas-

tro regime exploited Guevara’s idealistic internationalism in order to get rid of him. The regime had no intention to spread the revolution but rather to consolidate its power and privileges by becoming a close ally of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. Hence, Castro supported Moscow’s counter-revolutionary activities, including sending tanks to Czechoslovakia in 1968 in order to suppress the popular uprising or the military coup in Poland in December 1981 against the anti-Stalinist workers protests.

For these reasons, authentic Marxists always defended Cuba and the social gains of the revolution against all attempts of U.S. imperialism to bring back its lackeys. At the same time, we also defended the gains of the revolution and the rights of the working class against the Castro-Stalinist regime.

This became even more urgent as the bureaucracy – after the collapse of the USSR in 1991 – turned increasingly towards the restoration of capitalism. In the end, the Castro regime entered the same road as did the Stalinist bureaucracy in China, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea: it restored capitalist property relations and transformed itself into a new bourgeoisie.⁵ Hence, Cuba became a capitalist semicolon and close ally Chinese⁶ and Russian imperialism.⁷

Large sectors of the labor bureaucracy and the so-called left all over the world have traditionally been aligned with the Stalinist states. Hence, while they correctly defended these degenerated workers states against the imperialist powers (albeit with reformist methods), they took a counterrevolutionary position against the popular masses which faced draconic oppression by the bureaucratic dictatorships.⁸

However, with the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1989-91 the character of the policy of the Stalinist and semi-Stalinist left changed. Russia was no longer a workers state. China, Cuba and other countries kept the political dictatorship but replaced the planned property relations with the mechanism of capitalist exploitation. Nevertheless, the Stalinist left continued their loyal support for Beijing and Moscow. Hence, the character of their policy transformed from reformist support for Stalinist states (against imperialist aggression as well as against the working class) to counterrevolutionary support for emerging imperialist Great Powers of the East.

For these reasons, the support of the Stalinist, Castro-Chavista and pseudo-Trotskyist left for the Cuban regime is no longer a distorted version of “socialist” and “anti-imperialist” solidarity. It is solidarity with a Stalinist-capitalist regime and with an ally of Chinese and Russian imperialism.

FRSO, WWP, PSL: Loyal Servants of the Cuban Regime

As we have shown in our latest Joint Statement on Cuba, Stalinist parties all over the world rally to the support of the Cuban regime.⁹ As mentioned above, such solidarity

is not particularly surprising. The Stalinists are loyal servants of Chinese and Russian imperialism and their allies.¹⁰

However, there are also several self-proclaimed “Trotskyist” organizations resp. groups which came from such a tradition and which still claim to adhere to the ideas of Marx and Lenin.

An example for such “Marxist” solidarity with the Cuban regime is the “United National Antiwar Coalition” in the U.S. This is an alliance politically dominated by left-liberal and Stalinist forces. Among them are the *Freedom Road Socialist Organization* and the *Workers World Party*. Both organizations split from the Trotskyist *Socialist Workers Party* several decades ago and evolved into semi-Stalinist forces.

Hence, it not surprising to see a statement coming from UNAC which kisses the feet of the regime. It is sufficient to quote the first sentences of its statement. “*The United National Antiwar Coalition stands firmly with the Cuban people and their revolutionary government against any US intervention in Cuba’s affairs. (...) The recent disruptions inside Cuba have all the hallmarks of a coordinated campaign to lay groundwork for US intervention, following the [regime change] playbook used by the United States in nearby Venezuela and Nicaragua, as well as in countries like Libya and Syria to disastrous effect.*”¹¹

The very fact that this “revolutionary government” has introduced various capitalist market reforms since a number of years – this is a fruit belonging to the tree of knowledge which these “Marxists” have never tasted!

Likewise, it is quiet consistent with their approach that these friends of Chinese and Russian imperialism slander the popular uprisings in Libya¹² and Syria¹³ as “U.S. conspiracies” or that they rally in defense of the Ortega dictatorship in Nicaragua.¹⁴

“Trotskyism” as Stalinism light

However, the UNAC coalition also includes the pseudo-Trotskyist group “*Socialist Action*”, led by Jeff Mackler, which constitutes the dominant force of the so-called “*Left Opposition*” in the “*Fourth International*” (in the tradition of Pablo and Mandel).

Again, this is also not so surprising since Mackler’s SA has a long tradition of “critical” – let us better say not so critical! – solidarity with the Cuban regime. Only two years ago, this organization claimed that “*Cuba’s proud revolutionary achievements remain largely intact and a shining example to oppressed people everywhere.*”¹⁵ Well, these “proud revolutionary achievements” do not only fail to shine for the oppressed people in the world – they are not particularly visible even for Cuba’s own population as the current mass protests demonstrate!

Mackler’s cheerleader group is not alone in praising the Stalinist-capitalist regime. The “*International Marxist Tendency*” (IMT), led by Alan Woods, is another sad example for such a perversion of “Trotskyism” as Stalinism light. Its actual statement on the mass protests in Cuba leaves no doubt that the IMT joins the camp of the dictatorship and not of the popular masses. The IMT calls those who support the regime “*revolutionaries*” and claims that the protests – which might have a genuine cause (even the IMT does not dare to deny this) – objectively serve the “*counter-revolution*”.

When “Defend the Revolution” actually means “Defend the Regime”

It is characteristic for the IMT approach that its article describes a clash during one of the demonstrations in the following terms: “...*finally there was also an exchange of stones between local revolutionaries and those protesting. (...) President Díaz-Canel appeared in San Antonio de los Baños, from where he made statements and later addressed the country in a televised address, in which he called on the revolutionaries to take to the streets to defend the revolution.*”¹⁶

The IMT article draws the following conclusions: “*Faced with this situation, what position should we as revolutionaries take? In the first place, it must be clearly explained that the protests called by the Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara and other related elements are openly counter-revolutionary, although they try to capitalise on a sense of malaise that emanates from the very difficult objective conditions. The problems and hardships are real and genuine. But the protests, under the slogan “Homeland and Life” and “Down with the dictatorship”, are counter-revolutionary. There are confused elements participating, to be sure. But in the midst of the confusion, it is inevitable that those who dominate these protests are, from a political point of view, counter-revolutionary. They are organised, motivated and have clear objectives. It is therefore necessary to oppose them and to defend the revolution.*”

The Russian comrades of the IMT are even more explicit and call the popular protests in Cuba a “*color revolution*”. However, the IMT is confident about the future because, thanks God, the Cuban people still believe in their historic leadership as they “*are still loyal to the cause of Fidel Castro*”. “*Without a doubt, people have the right to express dissatisfaction and distrust of their government, but in this case it is nothing more than another attempt at a color revolution, a right-wing anti-communist coup, fueled by a severe economic crisis and supporting the United States. (...) The only good news is that in Cuba, the overwhelming majority of residents are still loyal to the cause of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement.*”¹⁷

Obviously, the basic teachings of Trotskyism are a book of seven seals for the IMT comrades! They seem to be un-

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aware of the fact that the Cuban *July 26 Movement* in general and Castro in particular began as a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement and later became a Stalinist force. But at no time were they a genuinely revolutionary force in the Marxist sense of the word!

This was rather the classic anti-Marxist idea which was emphatically advocated by Pablo, Mandel, Hansen and others in the early 1960. At that time, these leaders of the “*Fourth International*” claimed that Castro and his party were “*objectively revolutionary*”. Hence, they unconditionally supported them, refused the slogan of “*political revolution*” against the new dictatorship and renounced any attempts to build a revolutionary party in Cuba. Let us note in passing that this was not the first time that leaders of the “*Fourth International*” raised such ideas. They did already apply a similar approach to the Yugoslavian Stalinists led by Tito when they broke with Moscow in the last 1940s.¹⁸

Of course, such a position of uncritical support for Castro-Stalinism was wrong in the early 1960s. But, at least, once could say that this was the time of revolution and the U.S. intervention in the Bay of Pigs. But today – 60 years later with decades of Stalinist dictatorship and years of capitalist restoration behind us – it is the height of political stupidity to repeat such reactionary nonsense! No, the IMT is no mole of history but rather blind as a bat!

There was a time – it is long ago – when Alan Woods and Ted Grant made jokes about the Mandelist idea of Castro as a “*objectively revolutionary*”. But times changed. Chavez is dead so Woods needs another President who advocates his books in a TV show. So, Woods needs Díaz-Canel – but does Díaz-Canel need Woods?! We have our doubts!

Let us finish by pointing out that the IMT as well as the Stalinists and Castro-Chavistas cover their statements against the current mass protests with the slogan “*Defend the Cuban Revolution*”. By this, they cynically exploit the sympathy many people still feel for the Cuban Revolution and its achievements. However, one must carefully note *who* raises such slogans. When the ruling party in Havana and their international supporters say “*Defend the Cuban Revolution*”, they mean in reality “*Defend the Cuban Regime*”.

In contrast to them, authentic Marxists understand that defending the gains of the Cuban Revolution can be carried out only *against* the Stalinist-Capitalist regime as well as against all imperialist powers and that the only guarantee for such a defense would be the creation of an authentic workers and poor peasants government based on popular councils and militias!

Clearly, this boggles the mind of the IMT, SA and other Havana heroes! Things should be called by their name: these “*Trotskyists*” act as auxiliaries of the Stalinist-capitalist regime!

Footnotes

1 The statements and articles of the RCIT and CS are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/cuba-solidarity-with-mass-protests-against-the-stalinist-capitalist-regime/>

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7 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. 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/>; see also several pamphlets by the same author: *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 Refoundation of the Fourth International”, 27 May 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-catastrophic-failure-of-the-theory-of-catastrophism/>; *Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism and the Rise of Russia as a Great Power*. On the Understanding and Misunderstanding of Today’s Inter-Imperialist Rivalry in the Light of Lenin’s Theory of Imperialism. Another Reply to Our Critics Who Deny Russia’s Imperialist Character, August 2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialism-theory-and-russia/>; *Russia as a Great Imperialist Power*. The formation of Russian Monopoly Capital and its Empire – A Reply to our Critics, 18 March 2014, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 21, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/imperialist-russia/>. See various other RCIT documents on this issue at a special sub-page on the RCIT’s website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>

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<https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/call-save-the-syrian-revolution/>; see also two pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified? 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, 5 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>; Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“. 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, 21 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syria-great-power-rivalry-and-the-failure-of-the-left/>. See also by the same author: A Revealing Statistic about Who is Responsible for Killing Civilians in Syria. The latest findings of the Syrian Network for Human Rights for the period from March 2011 to June 2021, 2 July 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/revealing-statistic-about-who-is-responsible-for-killing-civilians-in-syria/>

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15 U.S.-backed revolt fails in Venezuela, Socialist Action, 2019-05-30, <https://socialistaction.org/2019/05/30/u-s-backed-revolt-fails-in-venezuela/>

16 Jorge Martín: Protests in Cuba: defend the revolution! 12 July 2021 <https://www.marxist.com/protests-in-cuba-defend-the-revolution.htm>

17 Куба: контрреволюция наступает, 13.7.2021, <https://vk.com/@-27333192-kuba-kontrevoluciya-nastupaet>

18 On the history of the Fourth International and its degeneration see e.g. the book by our predecessor organization: The Death Agony of the Fourth International, London 1983. See also Michael Pröbsting: Healy's Pupils Fail to Break with their Master. The revolutionary tradition of the Fourth International and the centrist tradition of its Epigones Gerry Healy and the "International Committee" – A Reply from the RCIT to "Socialist Fight", October 2013, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 16, November 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/healy-and-fourth-international/>

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.

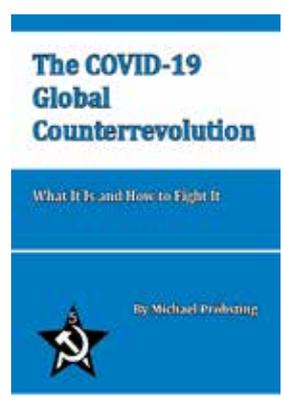
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

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 lockdown 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.



Burma/Myanmar: Some Thoughts on the International Significance of the Popular Uprising

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 1 July 2021

The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) and our comrades of *Convergencia Socialista* (Argentina) have supported the popular uprising against the military dictatorship in Myanmar from the very beginning.¹ We did so not only because we recognize its progressive role for the liberation struggle in the country itself but also because we understand the importance of this insurrection for the international class struggle.

In a joint statement on this uprising we noted two months ago: *“Finally, we ask all those committed to the liberation struggle of the oppressed masses to pay attention to the international significance of the current events in Myanmar. The country is centrally located in the region and a neighbor state of two powers – China and India. It also shares border with two other important countries in the region – Thailand and Malaysia. It is evident that all imperialist Great Powers – the U.S., China, Japan, EU and Russia – try to utilize the civil war in Myanmar for their geopolitical interests. Hence, the revolutionary struggle in Myanmar affects world politics in general and the international class struggle in particular. There are strong indications that the popular uprising could transform Myanmar into the Syria of South-East Asia. As the liberation struggle in Syria has become a key axis of the Arab Revolution, the popular uprising in Myanmar might become a focal point of the revolutionary process in Asia!”*²

A key region for the capitalist world economy as well as for the international working class

In this article we want to explain such a Marxist approach in more detail. Let us start with emphasizing that Myanmar geographically lies in the center of East, South-East and South Asia. As we have pointed out on several occasions, this region plays a key role – one could even say the most important one – in the capitalist world economy.³ Among the 12 leading countries in terms of global manufacturing production, five are from this region (and here we exclude Russia which in fact is also, partially, an Asian country). China is the global leader with a share of 25%. These five countries – China, Japan, South Korea, India and Indonesia – have a combined share of about 43% of global manufacturing production. There is no doubt that if we add the other countries of East, South-East and South Asia, they make up at least half of global industrial production.⁴

We see a similar concentration when we look to the global proletariat. As the RCIT demonstrated in a number of works, the majority of the global proletariat live in East, South-East and South Asia. Today, 866 million – this means 50,1% of all wage laborers on this planet – live in this region. And if we take the international industrial labor force, the share of this region is even higher (60%).⁵

In summary, the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar takes place in the heart of a region which is of highest significance both for world capitalism as well as for the international working class struggle! From this follows the imperative that Marxists and revolutionaries must unreservedly support the popular uprising in Burma/

Myanmar not only because of its legitimate and progressive cause but also because it takes place in a region which is in the focus of the global class struggle.

A region in the crosshair of the Great Powers

Naturally, the gigantic economic significance of the region of East, South-East and South Asia finds its translation into world politics. Except the Middle East, the Asian region is the most important arena where the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers (and also smaller imperialist states like South Korea⁶ or regional powers like India⁷) assumes its most pointed form. If we take the five Great Powers – the U.S., China, EU, Russia and Japan – it is only Western Europe which is not located in or close to this region. While the U.S. is not geographically located in East and South Asia, it has a strong military presence there (several bases, a strong and permanently present naval force, etc.) and it has security treaties with countries like Japan, South Korea or the Philippines. And while the European Great Powers don't have a strong military presence in the region, they increasingly try to overcome this weakness as East and South Asia is of growing importance for their economic interests.

As we have dealt with the issue of Great Power rivalry in many works, we will not go further into detail at this point.⁸ We limit ourselves to refer to the fact the region of East, South-East and South Asia is not only the scene of regular tensions between the U.S. and China, but also between China and Japan⁹, between Japan and South Korea¹⁰, between China and India¹¹, between the U.S. and North Korea¹² or between India and Pakistan.¹³ Add to this the unresolved dispute between Japan and Russia over the Kuril Islands.

In short, Myanmar lies in the center of region which is in the focus of all imperialist Great Powers and which is – again except the Middle East – the region where a major war is most likely to take place in the next years. As we noted in a recent article, various high-ranking commanders in the U.S. expect a war with China in East Asia already as early as 2024 or 2026.¹⁴

It is therefore no accident that the Great Powers try to interfere in the events in Burma-Myanmar. China and Russia unabashedly take the side of the *Tatmadaw* regime.¹⁵ The North American and European imperialists had closer relations with the detained Prime Minister Aung San Suu Kyi and hence they have opposed the military coup d'état. And Japan which has considerable business interests in Burma-Myanmar tries to keep relations with the regime without openly offending its Western partners.¹⁶

In summary, the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar takes place in the heart of a region which is of crucial importance in world politics as all imperialist Great Powers have a stake there. These geopolitical interests result, on one hand, in the direct support of some imperialist powers for the regime of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing (mainly

China and Russia) and, on the other hand, in sanctions and diplomatic protests by other powers (mainly the U.S. and the EU).

It is of crucial importance for the international solidarity movement to fight against the Chinese and Russian support for the *Tatmadaw* regime, to hit the business interests of the latter by their own working class actions, to keep its political independence from any Great Power and to refuse support for imperialist sanctions (by the UN or by any Great Power).

Can the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar be the spark for the revolutionary process in South and East Asia?

Let us briefly deal with the question if the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar can become the spark for the revolutionary process in South and East Asia? To an important degree, as we have pointed out in our statements, the events in this country bear strong resemblances with the Arab Revolution.

Now, there is also an important difference. The Arab Revolution has taken place in countries which have much in common – by their history, culture, language, religion, etc. Hence, it was not much surprising that the uprising in Tunisia in December 2010 / January 2011 soon provoked a revolutionary process in Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and other Arab countries.¹⁷ Add to this that the Arab Revolution affected the global Muslim umma with 1,8 billion people around the world.

There are no such close bonds between Burma/Myanmar and the other countries in the region. While there are sentiments like Pan-Arabism or global Muslim solidarity, there is no such thing as Pan-Asianism. In this respect, the potential for international effects for the revolutionary process are more limited in the case of the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar.

On the other, the region of East and South Asia has already experienced a number of important class struggles in the recent past. Take for example the gigantic peasant movement in India¹⁸, the popular protests in Thailand¹⁹, or the – now nearly defeated – uprising in Hong Kong.²⁰ Add to this the long-standing heroic Intifada in Indian-occupied Kashmir.²¹

In other words, there exist a number of starting points which could help to transform the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar into a region-wide revolutionary process. In fact, there exist already bonds between activists in Thailand, Hong Kong and Burma/Myanmar – the so-called *Milk Tea Alliance*.

It is the task of revolutionaries to explain the necessity and to build for the internationalization of the revolutionary struggle so that the uprising does not remain nationally isolated.

Confusion and betrayal of the reformist left

Finally, the issue of international solidarity with and the internationalization of the popular uprising in Burma/Myanmar poses the question: where is the so-called “left”?! As we have already pointed out on other occasions, it is a matter of fact that large sectors of international workers and popular movement mostly ignore the uprising –

despite its global significance. How can this be explained?

It seems to us that there are basically two reasons for this. First, there is a large degree of what we call *imperialist-aristocratic arrogance* among the progressive and left forces in the imperialist countries. The left in Northern America and Western Europe is to a large degree closely connected with the domestic labor bureaucracy and liberal state institutions and has therefore strongly assimilated a viewpoint of the “superior” imperialist civilization. They can not and they do not put themselves on the standpoint of the international proletariat (which is mostly centered in the South and East).²²

The Russian “left” is not much better – often it is even more unabashed “patriotic” and centered on a reactionary “*Russkij Mir*” outlook.²³ And in China, an independent left is not allowed to exist by the Stalinist-capitalist regime, hence there are only small groups operating in the underground (often under heroic circumstances!).

One could and still can see a similar ignorance of these “leftists” in relation to the Arab Revolution which has already lasted for more than a decade!

Related to this is a widespread failure of many reformist and centrist organizations to oppose *all* imperialist Great Powers. Large sectors of the left refuses to recognize the imperialist character of China and Russia. Hence, if there is a popular uprising directed against a regime with close relations with Beijing and Moscow, these “leftists” refuse to support it. We have seen this already since many years in the case of Assad where these “leftists” have failed to side with the Syrian Revolution.²⁴ As the ruling class of China and Russia support the *Tatmadaw* regime, these “leftists” prefer to leave the popular uprising alone. Such an approach is not only relevant for the reformist and centrist left in the imperialist countries but also in various countries of the South. Just take the Bolivarian or Castro-Chavista forces in Latin America which are strongly pro-Chinese or various proto-Stalinist forces within the Pan-Africanist movement.

In summary, these “leftists” replace Marxist anti-imperialism with bourgeois “geo-politicism”. The concrete result is the betrayal of crucial liberation struggles as those in Syria and now in Burma/Myanmar.

All these political failures demonstrate once more the urgent necessity to overcome the crisis of working class leadership and to replace the reformist and bureaucratic parties with an authentic revolutionary leadership. Hence, building a *Revolutionary World Party* is the most important task of Marxists today. The RCIT is dedicating all its forces to this great, indeed historic task!

Footnotes

1 All our documents on the military coup in Myanmar are compiled on a special sub-page on the RCIT’s website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/collection-of-articles-on-the-military-coup-in-myanmar/>

2 Myanmar: International Solidarity with the Popular Uprising! Arms for the revolutionary masses! Down with the imperialist masters of the *Tatmadaw* – China and Russia! No illusions in US and European imperialism! 6 May 2021, https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/myanmar-international-solidarity-with-popular-uprising/#anker_1

3 In RCIT’s *Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation* – adopted at a World Congress in 2016 – we stated: “Home to 60% of the world’s population and the location of crucial imperialist Great Powers (China, Japan, Russia), smaller imperialist states (South Korea, Australia) as well

as important semi-colonies (e.g., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia), Asia will be the most important single continent in the future world revolutionary process." (p. 28, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-program-2016/>). We repeated this point in our latest Manifesto adopted at the III. World Congress in April 2021: "Asia and the Pacific region are of particular importance as they are home of the bulk of capitalist value production as well as of nearly all Great Powers." (p. 13, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit-fire-manifesto-2021/>). For a more detailed discussion of this issue see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, pp. 382-385, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>.

4 United Nations Industrial Development Organization: *Industrial Development Report 2020. Industrializing in the digital age*, Vienna 2019, p. 145

5 The most comprehensive elaboration of the RCIT's analysis of the changes in the world proletariat and the resulting consequences for the revolutionary strategy can be seen in Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, 2013, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>. See also chapter III in Michael Pröbsting: *Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today. The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the present Period*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/bookunited-front/>. Furthermore we refer to the following articles by the same author: On the Composition of the International Working Class. A new report of the UN's International Labour Office with interesting figures about social developments between 2000 and 2018, 25 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/on-the-composition-of-the-international-working-class/>; Once again on the Composition of the International Working Class. Some additional information which confirm the shift away from the old imperialist countries towards the South as well as China, 10 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-the-composition-of-the-international-working-class/>; Changes in the Composition of the International Working Class. Some interesting findings from a new report of the UN's International Labour Office, 30 June 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/changes-in-composition-of-international-working-class/>;

6 On the RCIT's analysis of South Korea as an imperialist state see e.g. the pamphlet by Michael Pröbsting: *South Korea as an Imperialist Power. On the nature of South Korean monopoly capital and the ensuing programmatic tasks of the workers vanguard*, December 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/study-on-south-korea-as-an-imperialist-power/>; see also Michael Pröbsting: *South Korea's Transformation into an Imperialist Power*, in the academic journal *International Critical Thought* (Volume 11, 2021 - Issue 2), <https://doi.org/10.1080/21598282.2021.1924071>.

7 See e.g. the following essays by Michael Pröbsting: *The Kashmir Question and the Indian Left Today*, 26 September 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/kashmir-question-and-indian-left-today/>; *India: A Prison House of Nations and Lower Castes (On the Reasons for Modi's Coup in Kashmir). Essay on the social and national contradictions of Indian capitalism and the rise of Hindutva chauvinism*, 16 August 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/india-is-a-a-prison-house-of-nations-and-lower-castes/>; See also Michael Pröbsting: *Is India a New Emerging Great Power? In the academic journal Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory* (Volume 48, Issue 1, 2020), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03017605.2019.1706783>; <https://doi.org/10.1080/03017605.2019.1706783>; The same author also published: *India: A Regional Power With Failed Ambitions*, in the academic journal *Problems In Political Economy* (Vol. 4. 2020), <https://yadi.sk/i/kyqjrL4Y74im8A>

8 On the RCIT's analysis of the Great Power rivalry 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 our numerous 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/>. The RCIT regularly publishes documents in the Great Power rivalry. Our latest pamphlet is by Michael Pröbsting: "A Really Good Quarrel". *US-China Alaska Meeting: The Inter-Imperialist Cold War Continues*, 23 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/us-china-alaska-meeting-shows-continuation-of-inter-imperialist-cold-war/>

9 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *No to chauvinist warmongering by Japanese and Chinese imperialism!* 23.9.2012, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/no-war-between-china-and-japan/>

10 See on this e.g. *Down with the Imperialist Trade War between Japan and South Korea! Down with all chauvinist boycott campaigns! Class War instead of Trade War! Joint Statement of the Revolutionary Communists of South Korea and the RCIT*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/trade-war-between-japan-and-south-korea/>

11 See on this e.g. RCIT: *China-India Border Conflict: Down with Chauvinist Warmongering on Both Sides! Support the national rights of the Kashmiri and the Nepalese people!* 28 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-india-border-conflict-down-with-chauvinist-warmongering-on-both-sides/>; Michael Pröbsting: *The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences. What are the background and the nature of the tensions between China and India in the Sikkim border region? What should be the tactical conclusions for Socialists and Activists of the Liberation Movements?* August 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-india-rivalry/>

12 See on this e.g. See on this e.g. *Korea: There Is No Peace Without Overthrowing Imperialism and the Rule of Capital! Peace through the Proletarian Socialist Revolution! Joint Statement of the Revolutionary Communists of South Korea and the RCIT*, 8 March 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-on-south-korean-imperialism/>; (Hong Su-Cheon: *War Crisis on the Korean Peninsula and the Rivalry between US and Chinese Imperialism*, Article in Korean language, Spring 2019), <https://www.thecommunists.net/home/%ED%95%9C%EA%B5%AD%EC%96%B4/crisis-on-korean-peninsula-us-and-chinese-imperialism/>

13 See on this e.g. RCIT: *India-Pakistan: Defeat the War Mongers! Free Kashmir!* 27 February 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/india-pakistan-defeat-the-war-mongers-free-kashmir/>

14 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: "Next Time We Will Bomb the Target". *Shooting incident in Black Sea between UK and Russia shows that capitalism in decay is stumbling towards war*, 24 June 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/russia-uk-next-time-we-will-bomb-the-target/>

15 See on this e.g. RCIT: *Myanmar: Popular Masses turn against Chinese Imperialism! For an indefinite general strike and armed insurrection to bring down the dictatorship! No illusions in US and European imperialism!* 16 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/myanmar-popular-masses-turn-against-chinese-imperialism/>

16 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *Myanmar: Popular Anger also Turns Against Japanese Corporations. Once more, Stalinist slander against a popular democratic uprising is refuted by reality*, 17 March 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/myanmar-popular-anger-also-turns-against-japanese-corporations/>

17 The RCIT has published numerous documents on the Arab Revolution. They can be found at <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/arab-revolution/>

[thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/). Our documents on the second wave of the Arab Revolution are compiled here: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-2nd-wave-of-great-arab-revolution/>. Our numerous booklets, statements, and articles on the Syrian Revolution that can be accessed: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>. And our documents on the latest Gaza War and the Third Intifada are compiled here: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-fourth-gaza-war/>.

18 See e.g. RCIT: India: Victory to the "Dilli Chalo" Uprising! Poor peasants are waging the largest struggle in modern history against the reactionary BJP government, 22.12.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/india-victory-to-the-dilli-chalo-uprising/>.

19 The RCIT has published various documents on the popular protests in Thailand. See e.g. Thailand: Another Bloody Crackdown Looms against the Democracy Movement! Down with the military dictatorship! Abolish the monarchy! 15 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-another-bloody-crackdown-looms-against-the-democracy-movement/>; Laurence Humphries: Thailand: Over 100,000 Students and Workers demonstrate against the King and the Regime. For the Removal of Prayut Chan-o-cha and his Regime! Abolish the Monarchy of King Vajiralongkorn! 2 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/thailand-protests-october/>.

20 The RCIT has published various documents on the mass protests in Hong Kong. See e.g. China/Hong Kong: The Beginning of the Counterrevolution. The new National Security Law represents a full-scale assault on democratic rights by the Stalinist-Capitalist regime! 1 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-hong-kong-the-beginning-of-the-counterrevolution/>. At the end of this statement, readers find references to several other documents on this issue.

21 We refer reader also to our documents on the Kashmiri liberation struggle which are collected in a special sub-section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/collection-of-articles-on-the-liberation-struggle-in-kashmir/>.

22 We have dealt with the consequences of these issues for revolutionary party building in various works. See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism, RCIT Books, Vienna 2014, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/rcit-party-building/>; we have also dealt with this in the above-mentioned book *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*.

23 We have dealt with the Russian left on several occasions. See e.g. chapter VIII, XXIV, XXV and XXVIII in the above-mentioned book *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*. See also: Michael Pröbsting and Petr Sedov: Mr. Ichlov's Truth Barometer. A reply to a polemic against the RCIT by the Russian left-wing journalist Boris Ichlov, 7 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/truth-barometer-reply-to-russian-journalist-boris-ichlov/>.

24 See on this e.g. two pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified? 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, 5 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>; Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“. 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, 21 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syria-great-power-rivalry-and-the-failure-of-the-left/>.

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 of Workers

Where are the Workers in the Chinese “Communist” Party?

Some interesting findings on the CCP’s class composition according to an official report of the party’s Organization Department

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 21 June 2021

A few weeks ago, the *South China Morning Post* published a longer article about the social composition of the membership of the Chinese “Communist” Party. The figures in this article were based on the findings of the latest official report of the party’s Organization Department.¹ In this brief article we will summarize the most important and interesting conclusions of this report.

The CCP is without doubt a huge party – in fact, it is the largest party in the world (about as large as the right-wing Hindu-chauvinist BJP in India). It has a membership of 91.92 million, representing around 6.6% of the total Chinese population. If we subtract those below the age of 14 years², the share of the party members among the adult Chinese population rises to 7.5%.

However, while the CCP is definitely a very large party, it is not a communist party in any meaningful way. This becomes clear not only by the decades-long policy of its leadership to restore and expand capitalism in China and to even transform the country into an imperialist Great Power.³ The pro-capitalist character of the party is also evident when one looks at its composition.

In theory, one could assume that a communist party is based on the working class. This is even more the case if such a party exists already for 100 years, is in power since nearly three quarter of century and presides over a country with a rapidly growing proletariat.

However, as a matter of fact, the CCP is definitely not a party of the working class. According to the party’s official data, the number of blue-collar workers in the membership declined from an already low figure of 7.25 million in 2012 to only 6.45 million in 2019 (i.e. 7% of the total membership). In the same period, the already large number of peasants increased from 25.35 million to 25.56 million (i.e. 27.8% of the total membership).

The number of “professional, technical and managerial staff” among party members – a category which includes white-collar workers but also large sectors of the middle class – grew from 26.93 million in 2012 to 31.61 million in 2019 (i.e. 34.4% of the total membership).

Likewise, the number of “government and Communist Party staff” – i.e. the bureaucracy in the narrow sense – increased from 7.16 million to 7.68 million.

In addition, the number of pensioner members grew in the same period from 15.54 million to 18.66 million while that of students (i.e. youth) declined from 2.91 million to 1.96 million.

These figures are highly revealing in several ways. First, it is telling that this “Communist” party has more members among the state and party bureaucracy than among the blue-collar workers.

Secondly, the share of blue-collar workers among the party members is much smaller than its share among Chi-

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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

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

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

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

25 years.

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

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

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

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



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

na's total labor force. In fact, according to official figures 27.5% of China's total labor force was in industry in 2019. The share of those employed in agriculture was smaller (25.1%).⁴ However, when it comes to the CCP membership, the share of those employed in agriculture is four times as large as those employed in industry! Can there be a more powerful confirmation of the RCIT assessment that the CCP is not a workers party?!

Thirdly, while the CCP is indeed a large party, one has to understand the meaning of this fact. This is not a party in struggle – this is a party which runs the country since 1949. In fact, it is the only party allowed to exist. Hence, by its very nature, this is a party which serves the ruling elite to control the popular masses via a large net of party functionaries and members. Furthermore, it is impossible to make career in China – in business, in the state apparatus, in the army, etc. – without a membership card of the CCP. In other words, a very large proportion of party members is motivated not by any kind of "Marxist" ideas but rather by a very practical desire to advance their career.

In summary, the CCP is not a party of the masses. It is rather a party dominated by the state and party bureaucracy with a certain social base mainly among the middle class, peasants and pensioners. Politically speaking, the CCP is an instrument of the Stalinist-capitalist ruling class in order to administer Chinese capitalism and to control the masses.

It is thanks to this party that, today, China provides the largest number of super-rich (1/3 of all billionaires in the world!).⁵ Likewise, thanks to the CCP, it has the largest number of global leading corporations (the Fortune Global 500 list of 2020 has 124 companies from China and 121 from the U.S.).⁶

It is a shame that numerous Stalinists, Bolivarians and even some pseudo-Trotskyists still deny the reality and claim that the CCP would be a party advocating "socialism" or, at least, defending a "deformed workers state".

The RCIT and all authentic Marxists characterize the CCP as a bourgeois, pro-capitalist party and an enemy of the working class! The workers and oppressed in China need a new, revolutionary party, fighting for the overthrow of the Stalinist-capitalist CCP!

Footnotes

1 Phoebe Zhang: China's Communist Party in profile: its make-up by sex, ethnicity, age and profession, South China Morning Post, 1 June 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3135532/chinas-communist-party-profile-its-make-sex-ethnicity-age-and>

2 See <https://www.statista.com/statistics/250753/number-of-people-in-china-by-age-group/>

3 The RCIT has published numerous studies on this issue. See e.g. our 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/>; by the same author: Chinese Imperialism and the World Economy. An Essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1; China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>. See also many more documents which are compiled at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>

4 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270327/distribution-of-the-workforce-across-economic-sectors-in-china/>

5 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: China is Definitely the Place where You Want to Be (If You are a Billionaire). Following the Latest Report of the Hurun Global Rich List, 8.3.2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-is-definitely-the-place-where-you-want-to-be-if-you-are-a-billionaire/>; by the same author: China's Billionaire Lawmakers. A telling comparison of extremely wealthy Chinese lawmakers with their peers in the US Congress, 9 March 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-s-billionaire-lawmakers/>; China: A Paradise for Billionaires. The latest UBS/PwC Report about the Global Super-Rich Delivers another Crushing Blow to the Stalinist Myth of China's "Socialism", 27.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-is-a-paradise-for-billionaires/>; China's "Socialist" Billionaires. Following the Latest Report about the Global Super-Rich, 16.11.2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-s-billionaires/>

6 Fortune Global 500, August 2020, <https://fortune.com/global500/>.

Table 1. Membership of the Communist Party of China in 2012 and 2019 (in Millions and as a Share)

	2012 (Millions)	2019 (Millions)	2019 (Share)
Blue-Collar Workers	7.25	6.45	7%
Peasants	25.35	25.56	27.8%
Professional, Technical and Managerial Staff	26.93	31.61	34.4%
Government and Communist Party Staff	7.16	7.68	8.4%
Students	2.91	1.96	2.1%
Pensioners	15.54	18.66	20.3%

Examples of Pro-Russian Social-Imperialism

British Stalinism and the misnamed “World Socialist Web Site” on the shooting incident in the Black Sea between UK and Russia

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 28 June 2021

Last week, a dramatic incident in the Black Sea demonstrated the massive acceleration of the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers. A British warship entered territorial waters near Crimea which had been annexed by Russia in 2014 whereupon Russian forces fired warning shots and dropped bombs ahead of the vessel.

This was the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that Moscow acknowledged using live ammunition to deter a NATO warship. Recognizing the significance of this incident, our international organization – the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) – has published several documents which have been translated in various languages.¹

It is not without interest to see how the reformist and centrist left has responded to this important event. Well, most tellingly, many left-wing parties and organizations have preferred to keep silent on this issue (at least until now). While this shooting incident has provoked much attention in the bourgeois global public and international media, many opportunists have done their best to ignore it.

This is not surprising, since dealing with this incident provokes two questions:

- 1) What is the class character of the two states involved – Britain and Russia?
- 2) What should be the response of socialists, which tactics should be advocated in case of a military clash between the two powers?

Our international organization – the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) – has provided clear and unambiguous answers to these questions. We characterize Britain (and the other Western G7 states) as well as Russia (and China) as imperialist Great Powers.² Hence, this is an inter-imperialist conflict in which all both states pursue reactionary goals. Consequently, we equally oppose both sides and their militarist foreign policy (sanctions, armament, military maneuvers, etc.). In case of a military confrontation, the RCIT advocates a defeatist position on both sides in such conflicts. None is the “lesser evil” for the working class and the oppressed people. The task is rather to utilize such conflicts in order to intensify the class struggle and to ultimately bring down all capitalist ruling classes.³

In contrast, most left-wing organizations imagine that they have a political right to remain silent of which they make an extensive use. So, they take no position – at least not in public – on the first shooting incident between a NATO state and Russia and hope that none will ask them on this issue.

Pro-Russian Stalinists: From London with Love

However, a few others have published articles on this incident. Some took a more or less correct position⁴, others however managed to avoid addressing the most fundamental issues.

The *Morning Star*, the daily newspaper of the *Communist Party of Britain* (CPB), published an editorial which was limited to a denunciation of militarist provocations by the Tory government.⁵ Of course, there is nothing wrong with such denunciations but for Marxists it is inappropriate to not say a single word about the class character of the states involved (are one or both states imperialist?). Likewise, they change into a silent frog when it comes to the consequential tactics for socialists in such a conflict (should socialists take any side?).

Of course, this does not mean that the Stalinists have no positions on such issues. The CPB is a long-standing and unashamed admirer of Chinese “socialism”, i.e. of the rising imperialist Great Power in the East. Their publications are full of glowing praise for the achievements of China.⁶

One just need to take the *Morning Star*'s issues of the last days. The editors prominently advertise meetings of the “*Friends of Socialist China*”. They also promote the new book of John Ross called “*China's Great Road - Lessons for Marxist theory and socialist practices*”. Ross is a former British “Trotskyist” in the Mandelbrite “Fourth International”⁷ who became a leading advisor of London's mayor Ken Livingstone in the 2000s. Since a number of years, he is a Senior Fellow at Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China. He regularly publishes books and articles and is a columnist with the state-run web portal www.china.org.cn. His articles on China's economy have won several prizes in China (where he is known as Luo Siyi). In other words, Ross is a favored and well-paid academic propagandist for the Chinese monopoly bourgeoisie.

Naturally, the British Stalinists sympathize with Russia as it is a close ally of China. Consequently, they support Russia's military intervention in Syria as well as the brutal dictatorship of Putin's ally Assad.⁸ Some years ago, the *Morning Star* caused a scandal when it cynically characterized the conquest of Aleppo by Assad's militias at the end of 2016 as “*liberation*”.⁹ In short, the British Stalinists are social-imperialist servants of Russia in the name of “communism”.

The fantasy world of the WSWS

The so-called “*World Socialist Web Site*” (WSWS) – an online publication of the pseudo-Trotskyist “*International Committee of the Fourth International*” (ICFI) led by David North – has issued several articles on the skirmish in the Black Sea.¹⁰ These people don't go as far as the Stalinists. They do not spare critical words of the Putin and Xi and their policy.

However, they emphatically insist that neither Russia nor China constitute an imperialist state. In a lengthy programmatic statement called “*Socialism and the Fight Against War*”, the ICFI dedicates several paragraphs to denounce all those who characterize Russia and China as imperialist. Of course, their rejection of such a characterization is

not based on a scientific analysis of the class character of these states. It is rather based on a simple assertion: *“What political purpose, it must be asked, is served by adding the word ‘imperialist’ to descriptions of China and Russia? In practical political terms, it serves very definite functions. First, it relativizes, and therefore diminishes, the central and decisive global counterrevolutionary role of American, European and Japanese imperialism. This facilitates the pseudo-left’s active collaboration with the United States in regime-change operations such as in Syria, where the Assad regime has been backed by Russia. Second, and even more significantly, the designation of China and Russia as imperialist—and thus, by implication, as colonial powers suppressing ethnic, national, linguistic and religious minorities—sanctions the pseudo-left’s support for imperialist-backed ‘national liberation’ uprisings and ‘color revolutions’ within the boundaries of the existing states.”*¹¹

In other words, the WSWS rejects the characterization of Russia and China as imperialist simply because of the political-tactical calculation that this would make it more difficult for them to justify their siding with these states in any conflict with the US, EU or Japan. Likewise, it would make it more difficult for them to justify their support for these regimes which are brutally suppressing the Chechens, the Syrians, the Muslim Uyghurs and other peoples. At least the WSWS openly admits that their politics is not based on a scientific Marxist analysis but on cynical political calculations!

Some years ago, they even published a lengthy polemic against the RCIT in which they denounced our analysis of Russia and China as “imperialist” as *“theoretical charlatanry”*. As they were not able to provide a single fact or figure to prove their thesis, they rendered to hysterical accusations like: *“The documents written by its international secretary and leading theoretician Michael Pröbsting – notwithstanding references to Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, buttressed by radical-sounding rhetoric – read like strategy papers authored in the foreign and defense ministries and think tanks of the imperialist powers.”*¹²

Their denial of the imperialist nature of Russia and China has not changed since then. In one of their articles on the skirmish in the Black Sea the WSWS characterizes the Putin regime as follows: *“Moscow’s policy, combining reassuring statements with reckless stunts, reflects the class character of the Putin regime. It is the heir of the Stalinist bureaucracy that in 1991 restored capitalism and destroyed the Soviet Union, which German imperialism failed to accomplish in World War II. Bitterly hostile to the working class, it relies on both close relations with imperialist finance capital abroad and the ceaseless promotion of nationalism at home; it will use such an incident to appeal to nationalist sentiments and divert social opposition within Russia itself.”*¹³

Let us ignore at this point the therein suggested idea that the Putin regime would have similarities to the Stalinist bureaucracy before 1991 or that the current British provocations would have similarities to the Nazi war against the USSR in 1941-45. By these suggestions, the WSWS intends to provoke the idea that Trotskyists should side with Russia against UK as they were obligated to defend the USSR against imperialism.

The WSWS position contained in the above quote not only adulterates the truth – to put it politely. It also does not adhere to basic standards of the Marxist method. Every regime in a class society rests – and can only rest – on

particular classes resp. class fractions. The WSWS article defines as the basis of Putin’s regime *“imperialist finance capital abroad”* and ... *“nationalism”*. The latter is a particular policy but not a class or class fraction. Hence, according to the WSWS, the only class on the Russian regime relies on *“imperialist finance capital abroad”*.

Where *“abroad”*? Obviously, the WSWS means North America and Western Europe (may be also Japan) since they deny that there exist any imperialist states outside of the old *“Western”* world. So, Putin is a puppet of Western finance capital? Really? So why on earth do the Western imperialist states impose since many years sanctions against their supposed *“puppet regime”*?! Why does the West protest against Russia’s military intervention in Syria if it is it supposed ally?! Why does NATO regularly stage hostile military maneuvers close to the borders of Russia?! And why does Britain’s Navy stage a provocation against its supposed ally?! Questions upon questions and the WSWS can not answer a single one of these!

A brief look at the nature of Russia’s monopoly capital

As a matter of fact, Russia is not dominated by unspecified *“imperialist finance capital abroad”* but by its domestic monopoly bourgeoisie. We have demonstrated in our studies – mentioned in footnotes above – in much details that powerful Russian corporations have emerged out of the chaotic process of capitalist restoration in the 1990s. We refer to these documents for a more detailed analysis of Russia’s monopoly capitalism.

We limit ourselves at this point to the fact that these monopolies often represent a mixture of state-owned and private shares; hence state-capitalism is an essential feature of Russia’s economy (by the way, the same is true to an even larger degree for China). According to a recent IMF study, the share of the Russian state in the economy (calculated as GDP) in 2016 was in a range of 30-35%. The report continues: *“Correcting for the size of the informal sector in value added and employment pushes the Russian state’s share significantly up, to almost 40 percent of formal sector activity, and shy of 50 percent of formal sector employment.”*¹⁴

We see a similar picture in the financial sector. Far from being dominated by *“foreign capital”*, as the WSWS fantasizes, it is dominated by state-owned banks which are closely intertwined with Russian oligarchs. According to another study *“state-owned banks now dominate, distributing more than 65 percent of retail loans and 71 percent of corporate loans in 2016.”*¹⁵

In contrast to the claims of the WSWS, foreign capital only plays a very small role in Russia. In other words, the social base of the Putin regime is mainly the Russian (not foreign!) monopoly bourgeoisie, also known as the *“oligarchs”*.

Add to this the well-known and undisputed political and military weight and it should not be too difficult to recognize that Russia is definitely not a vassal or a semi-colony of *“imperialist finance capital abroad”* but rather an imperialist Great Power in its own right.

Afraid of stating the logical conclusions

However, as the WSWS gets it wrong in analyzing the class character of Russia, it consequently fails to take a defeatist position on both sides. This is not surprising. If it would be true that Russia and China are not imperialist states, Marxists would be obligated to defend these countries in any conflict with Western imperialist states.

True, the WSWS does not state explicitly such conclusions in these articles. In fact, they don't say a single word about tactics for socialists, about which position to take in a political and potentially military confrontation! (In general, the WSWS is known for being usually silent when it comes to tactics as these sectarians live in an aloof world where ideas have no practical consequences.) Instead, they limit themselves to some very general declarations: *"The only social force capable of fighting against imperialist war is the international working class. It is propelled into revolutionary struggles by the same objective contradictions that drive imperialism toward war. Across the world, workers have been radicalized by decades of austerity, war and the experience of the pandemic, and are beginning to fight back. The critical task now is to fight for the establishment of a Trotskyist political leadership for these struggles in the working class through the building of the International Committee of the Fourth International."*

¹⁶ It seems that these sectarians are afraid to speak out the necessary tactical conclusions from their positions.

However, from their emphatic denial of the imperialist character of Russia (and the simultaneously characterization of UK and other Western powers as "imperialist") it follows logically and unavoidable that the WSWS has to side with Russia (and China) in any confrontation with their rivals. In other words, these "Trotskyist" stay on the same side of the barricade as the Stalinists a la CPB!

As we noted somewhere else, it is not only the WSWS which arrives at such pro-Russia/China social-imperialist conclusions. For example, the *Partido Obrero* in Argentina and their affiliates in the *"Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International"* (e.g. EEK in Greece, DIP in Turkey) arrive at very similar conclusions.¹⁷

In summary, we see that it not only Stalinism which serves the ruling class of this or that imperialist Great Power. There are also many pseudo-Trotskyists who race for a place somewhere at the tail end of the entourage of Mr. Putin or Mr. Xi.

Footnotes

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2 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia. See on this e.g. 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.the->

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3 For our programmatic approach on this see e.g. RCIT: *Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States*, 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>; see also chapters XVI to XX in our 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/>.

4 See e.g. an article of the Socialist Workers Party (UK): Charlie Kimber: *Reject Tory flag-waving after British and Russian naval clash*, 24 Jun 2021, Issue No. 2760, <https://socialist-worker.co.uk/art/52007/Reject+Tory+flag+waving+after+British+and+Russian+naval+clash>

5 Morning Star: *British warships should not be goading a nuclear-armed state in the Black Sea*, 2021-06-25, <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/e/british-warships-should-not-be-goading-nuclear-armed-state-black-sea>

6 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China. See on this e.g. our above-mentioned book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*. See also by the same author an essay published in the second edition of *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1; China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power (2012), in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4/>; How is it possible that some Marxists still Doubt that China has Become Capitalist? (A Critique of the PTS/FT), An analysis of the capitalist character of China's State-Owned Enterprises and its political consequences, 18 September 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism-2/>; Unable to See the Wood for the Trees (PTS/FT and China). Eclectic empiricism and the failure of the PTS/FT to recognize the imperialist character of China, 13 August 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/pts-ft-and-chinese-imperialism/>. See many more RCIT documents at a special sub-page on the RCIT's website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>.

7 As the author of these lines – a teenage member of the Mandelbrot "Fourth International" in the 1980s – remembers well, John Ross was already in his "Trotskyist" days pretty Stalinophile!

8 The RCIT has published a number of booklets, state-

ments, and articles on the Syrian Revolution that can be accessed on a special sub-section of this website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/collection-of-articles-on-the-syrian-revolution/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT call *Save the Syrian Revolution!*. <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/call-save-the-syrian-revolution/>; see also two pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: *Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified? 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*, 5 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>; *Syria and Great Power Rivalry: The Failure of the „Left“. 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*, 21 April 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syria-great-power-rivalry-and-the-failure-of-the-left/>.

9 See e.g. Morning Star statement on the situation in Aleppo, December 13, 2016, <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/a-6e18-morning-star-statement-on-the-situation-in-aleppo-1>

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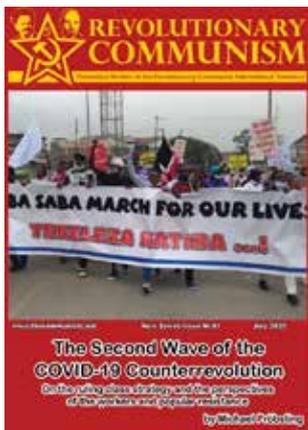
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Publications of the RCIT

The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution

On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance

By Michael Pröbsting, July 2020

Introduction * The localized version of Lockdown policy is spreading * New information concerning severity (or not so severity) of the pandemic * Telling figures for Europe, Sweden and Ischgl * The worst pandemic in Africa? Really? * Capitalism and care homes as deadly traps for old people * The real nature of the ruling class bonapartist offensive under the cover of COVID-19 * Why is the ruling class opting for a local lockdown strategy? * Excuse: A crisis characteristic for the present period of capitalist decay * The nature and inner contradictions of the local lockdown strategy * Preparing for a new counter-revolutionary offensive * The Lockdown Left: a never ending embarrassment * The shameful example of the PSTU/LIT-CI * The imperialist aristocratism of the Lockdown Left * Building a Revolutionary World Party * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

Interesting Assessments of the Global Class Struggle by a Bourgeois Think Tank

A commentary on the findings of the latest issue of the “Global Peace Index” by the “Institute for Economics & Peace”

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 21 June 2021

A few days ago, the 2021 edition of the *Global Peace Index* (GPI) was published.¹ The GPI is a report which measures international trends of conflicts and violence. It is produced by the *Institute for Economics & Peace*, a top bourgeois think tank which collaborates with various leading imperialist institutions like the OECD, the United Nations etc. The GPI report uses data collected and collated by the *Economist Intelligence Unit* which in turn is related to *The Economist*, a well-known publication related to the British monopoly bourgeoisie.

Naturally, one can not and one should not expect a thorough analysis of the global class struggle by such bourgeois institutions. They deal with “violence” and “conflicts” in abstract, without assessing the concrete political background, without understanding the class content. For them, all is equal – the violence of a capitalist regime against oppressed people as well as the resistance of the oppressed; the violent protests of right-wing forces as well as those of progressive.

However, this does not mean that the *Global Peace Index* is without interest for political observers. Even if such bourgeois institutions don’t understand the background and the inner dynamics of world politics and the international class struggle, their findings nevertheless reflect some important dynamics.

In this article we limit ourselves to three conclusions of this report which we consider – from a Marxist point of view – as the most interesting. As we will see, the GPI report contains several important confirmations of the analysis of the world situation as the *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) has elaborated in various documents in recent years.

First, the GPI 2021 report recognizes the fact that the pandemic, and the official policy to combat it, has been exploited by the ruling class in order to attack democratic rights and to expand the police and surveillance state. Such the report states: “*The pandemic has been used as a pretext for government repression and political terror in some countries. (...) Excessive force has also been used to enforce lockdowns and movement restriction laws.*” (p. 27)

As examples, the report refers to important countries like Russia, Egypt, India, South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, Honduras and Mexico. Naturally, many more countries could be named. More importantly, it is not only countries of the East and South which have utilized the pandemic as a pretext in order to launch an anti-democratic offensive and to introduce resp. expand chauvinist state bonapartism. As we have pointed out numerous times, in fact, the COVID-19 Counterrevolution is taking place all over the world – including in China and the Western imperialist countries.²

But, given the bourgeois political nature of the *Institute for Economics & Peace* – which collaborates closely with the OECD and the UN – one can not expect such

conclusions. As the saying goes: “*you don’t bite the hand that feeds you.*” Nevertheless, it is important that the report admits the anti-democratic nature of the official COVID policy in many important countries.

The sharp turns of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary developments in 2019/20

Secondly, the GPI 2021 report gives an interesting assessment of the contradictory development of the international class struggle in the past one and a half years. The RCIT has pointed out in several documents that when the world economy entered the Great Depression in autumn 2019³, this went hand in hand with a dramatic rise in the global class struggle – opening a pre-revolutionary world situation.⁴

However, the pandemic and the launching of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution provoked a temporary end of this struggle cycle in spring 2020. But, as we have emphasized from the beginning, the reactionary offensive of the ruling class would and could only deepen the contradictions of the capitalist world system and provoke a new wave of mass struggles. And indeed, after some time, the masses again started to fight back – most importantly the Black Lives Matter uprising in the U.S.⁵ and the general strike of more than 250 million Indian workers on 26 November 2020 and the following months-long mass rallies, blockades, and occupations by the poor peasants.⁶

The GPI report fully confirms this view from an empirically point of view. “*The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the level of conflict and violence in the world in 2020, with some of these effects likely to last for years to come. While it was initially thought that the main impact of the pandemic would be to reduce violence around the world, this proved to be true for only some indicators of violence. Although key indicators of internal conflict did decrease in 2020, the impact of the pandemic on active conflicts was short-lived, and the total level of political and civil unrest rose over the past year.*” (p. 25)

“*Although there was an initial fall in civil unrest and demonstrations at the start of the pandemic, the number of demonstrations worldwide surged after this initial lull. The total number of protest events worldwide increased in 2020, and although not every demonstration was directly related to the pandemic, it was a key driver of civil unrest across many countries, most notably in Europe.*” (p. 27)

Another confirmation by the CIA

At this point, we would like to add an important finding from another bourgeois research project. The RCIT has repeatedly emphasized the close relationship between the opening of a pre-revolutionary world situation in autumn 2019 and the dramatic decision of the ruling class in nearly

all countries to launch the COVID-19 Counterrevolution in spring 2020. In our book about this historic event, published in April 2020, we noted: *“This development [the opening of a pre-revolutionary world situation in autumn 2019, Ed.] was the single most important factor which caused the ruling classes to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a cover for launching a counterrevolutionary offensive with mass lockdowns and the build-up of chauvinist state bonapartist regimes.”*⁷

Several weeks ago, *Al Jazeera* published an interesting article which illustrates the development of the global class struggle in the last years with several graphics.⁸ The article is based on the findings of a university research project called *“Mass Mobilization Project”*. This academic project itself – led by two university professors of *“Political Science and Peace Studies”* – is highly interesting. Its official website states: *“The Mass Mobilization (MM) data are an effort to understand citizen movements against governments, what citizens want when they demonstrate against governments, and how governments respond to citizens. The MM data cover 162 countries between 1990 and 2018.”* Sounds progressive, doesn't it?!

And indeed, if one opens the website of the MM project, one feels reminded to a classic left-wing website as the main page has a large single picture of a street fighter with a flag, gas mask and throwing a stone. But – contrary to this impression – this is definitely not a progressive or even radical research project! As its official website states: *“The Mass Mobilization project is sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the Principal Investigators' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.”*⁹ This demonstrates, by the way, the close relations of academic institutions and the ruling class or – in some case – even an imperialist secret service itself!

Anyway, the findings of this *“Mass Mobilization Project”* are highly interesting as they fully confirm the RCIT's analysis of the dramatic turn of the global class struggle in 2019. A graph – reproduced in the *Al Jazeera* article mentioned above – shows the number of global mass protests (outside the U.S.) with more than 10,000 participants in the years 2010-2020. In the years 2010-18, the number oscillated between 50 and 100. However, in 2019, the graph shows a dramatic jump to 250, i.e. two and a half times as many as the highest year recorded before!

One does not need to be Einstein to understand that the imperialist bourgeoisie must have been highly worried about the dramatic acceleration of the global class struggle in 2019 – combined with the beginning of the collapse of the capitalist world economy – and that, when the pandemic started, it saw its chance (and need) to exploit this event for a massive counterrevolutionary offensive! It is only the silly petty-bourgeois left which ignores this so obvious fact and which shamefully supports the reactionary Lockdown policy of the ruling class!¹⁰

The revolutionary character of the historic period opening in 2008

Finally, the GPI report contains an interesting observation about the class struggle in the historic period which opened up with the Great Recession in 2008/09. The RCIT has pointed out repeatedly that the crisis of capitalism and the antagonisms between the classes as well as between

the states has dramatically accelerated in this historic period. Hence, there has been a massive rise in the class struggle – most importantly the Arab revolution beginning in 2011 – as well as an acceleration of the inner-imperialist rivalry between the Great Powers (U.S., China, EU, Russia and Japan). Given such basic lack of equilibrium on the world stage – economically and politically – the RCIT has characterized this historic period as *“revolutionary.”* We have arrived at such an assessment of this period already in January 2009 and, since then, we have elaborated our analysis in a number of documents.¹¹

The GPI report confirms the Marxist analysis in its own way by providing an interesting graph about the number of *“violent demonstrations”* in the years between 2008 and 2020.¹² This graph shows a massive rise since the Great Recession in 2008/09, reflecting the dramatic rise of global class struggle in the current historic period.

The authors of the study comment. *“The level of civil unrest has also risen substantially since 2008. The number of anti-government demonstrations, general strikes and riots rose by 244 per cent between 2011 and 2019, and 61 countries had a deterioration on the violent demonstrations indicator from 2008 to 2021, compared to just 27 countries that recorded an improvement over the same period. Central America and the Caribbean was the only region to record an improvement since 2008. It seems likely that the trend of increasing violent demonstrations will continue in the near future. Lockdowns and other movement restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic initially led to a fall in the number of demonstrations. However, the level of protest activity surged shortly after and has remained at pre pandemic levels or higher in most countries. Several countries saw record numbers of people protesting in 2020, most notably in the United States.”* (p. 34)

In the past years, numerous Stalinists and pseudo-Trotskyists have refuted the characterization of the current period as *“revolutionary”* by the RCIT and other authentic Marxists. These people rather view this period as *“reactionary”* and denounce the masses for their *“backward consciousness”*. As we noted in the past, *“such ideas rather reflect the distance of these forces to the revolting workers and oppressed who might have a raw political consciousness but who are determined to fight against reactionary regimes and imperialist aggressors. In many cases, such pseudo-Marxist organizations are politically (and often also organizationally) linked to the bureaucracies of reformist and populist mass organizations. In various cases they are also linked, directly or indirectly, with imperialist Great Powers like China, Russia or the European Union. In general, they are – politically speaking – “old dinosaurs” who feel repulsed by the revolting masses.”*¹³

The task of authentic Marxists is to side with the workers and oppressed in the class struggle, to aid the vanguard by elaborating a revolutionary strategy and by building a new *World Party of Socialist Revolution*. Such a party must be primarily based on the new vanguard layers of the militant workers and youth. The RCIT calls all revolutionary activists to join us in the struggle for a socialist future!

Footnotes

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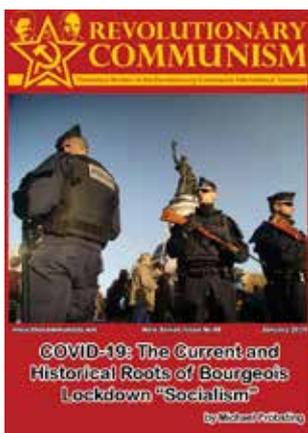
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Publications of the RCIT

COVID-19: The Current and Historical Roots of Bourgeois Lockdown "Socialism"

Police State, Universal Basic Income & a new version of "War Socialism" of 1914

By Michael Pröbsting, January 2021

Introduction * 1. An Overview of the Policy of the Lockdown Left * 2. A Marxist Critique of Lockdownism and Universal Basic Income * 3. The Bourgeois Ideology of the "Caring State" (The Capitalist Handout State) * 4. The Objective Basis for Lockdown Socialism: Changes within the Political and Economic Physiognomy of Capitalism * 5. A Historical Analogy: The Mobilization of the Imperialist State for World War I * 6. War Socialism in 1914: The Social-Chauvinist Lensch-Cunow-Haenisch Group in German Social Democracy * 7. Lenin and other Marxists Declare War on War Socialism * 8. The Lockdown Left: A Worthy Successor of Social-Chauvinist War Socialists * 9. Once Again, the State Question: Marxism versus the Opportunist Left

A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format

Changes in the Composition of the International Working Class

Some interesting findings from a new report of the UN's International Labour Office

Article (with 2 Tables) by Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the RCIT, 30 June 2021

For many years our tendency has pointed to important changes in the composition of the international working class. To encapsulate our main theses in a few sentences, the RCIT states:

1) Contrary to various post-modernist theoreticians, the international working class continues to grow.

2) Global capitalist production, and therefore the world proletariat, has shifted during the past half century from the old imperialist metropolises (i.e., North America, Western Europe and Japan) to the semi-colonial countries in the South as well as to rising imperialist powers like China.

3) More concretely, the focus of the world proletariat has shifted to the region of East, South-East and South Asia.

4) The mass of the working class are not highly skilled laborers but rather low and medium skilled workers.

5) These developments have important consequences for the strategy of revolutionaries. They must be reflected in the politics of the international workers organizations, i.e. they must have a specific focus to the liberation struggles in the South as well China.

6) Related to this, the building of a new Revolutionary World Party must have its focus in these regions (and not in Western Europe and North America).¹

We have elaborated our analysis in much detail in several RCIT books and pamphlets.² At this point we do not intend to repeat our lengthy analysis. Rather, we want to draw attention to the latest report of the UN's International Labour Office which strongly confirms the Marxist analysis.

Before doing so, we need to repeat that the bourgeois categories of the ILO (wage laborers, labor force, etc.) are not identical with the Marxist definition of the working class. Neither do they recognize the existence of specific strata within the working class like the labor aristocracy. In addition, categories like "High-Income Countries", "Low-Income Countries", etc. are not identical with the Marxist categories of imperialist and semi-colonial countries.³ For a more detailed explanation of these problems, we refer to other works.⁴ Nevertheless, as we have explained in these works, the ILO categories are despite their weaknesses useful as an approximation to the developments of the global proletariat and its composition.

So let us turn to summarizing the most important findings of the latest ILO report.

First, the report shows the ongoing growth of the international working class – both in absolute figures as well as a share of the labor force. As Table 1 below demonstrates, the share of wage laborers among the labor force grew from 45.7% (2000) to 53.3% (2020).

There are 1,701 million wage laborers today in absolute numbers. Of these, 509 million live in the old imperialist countries (North America, Western Europe and Japan). They represent a share of 29.9% which consequentially means that 70.1% of the world working class live in the South and China. In fact, this share is even larger as a substantial part (approx. 1/3) of the wage laborers in the old imperialist countries belong the salaried middle layer and not to the proletariat. This becomes evident if we look at

the shift within the global industrial proletariat. While 30.2% of manufacturing workers lived in the old imperialist countries in 1990, this share dropped to 17.5% in 2018.⁵

The figures of the new ILO report also underline the RCIT's thesis of the strategic importance of the proletariat in East and South Asia. Today, 866 million – this means 50,1% of all wage laborers on this planet – live in this region. (See Table 1)

The ILO report also shows the dramatic consequences of the Great Depression beginning in late 2019 for the working class.⁶ While the numbers both of the global labor force as well as of the wage laborers are continuously growing, both categories suffered a massive decline in the year 2020. From 2019 to 2020, i.e. within a single year, the average number of total weekly hours worked declined from 2,850 to 2,617. Likewise, the total labor force was reduced from 3,490 million to 3,409 million, i.e. by 81 million. The number of wage laborers also declined from 1,768 million to 1,701 million, i.e. by 67 million.

Finally, the ILO report also demonstrates the fact that the large majority of the world report are low- and medium-skilled laborers. Their share among the global labor force is 78.9%. (See Table 2) They constitute a majority even in the old imperialist countries (56.8%).

We conclude this article by emphasizing once more that the RCIT considers it as crucial for revolutionaries to pay particular attention to the working class in the South and the East, i.e. outside of the old imperialist states in Western Europe, North America and Japan. The huge weight of the Southern proletariat must be reflected not only in their massive participation in international workers' organizations, but also in the leaderships of these forces. And questions of particular importance for the Southern working class – their super-exploitation, their national liberation struggles against imperialism, etc. – must play a central role in the organizations' propagandistic and practical work.⁸

Footnotes

1 We have dealt with the consequences of these issues for revolutionary party building in various works. See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2014

2 The most comprehensive elaboration of the RCIT's analysis of the changes in the world proletariat and the resulting consequences for the revolutionary strategy can be seen in Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, 2013, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>. See also chapter III in Michael Pröbsting: *Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today. The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the present Period*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/bookunited-front/>. Furthermore we refer to the following articles by the same author: *On the Composition of the International Working Class. A new report of the UN's International Labour Office with interesting figures about social developments between 2000 and 2018*, 25 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/on-the-composition-of-the-international-working-class/>; *Once again on the Composition of the International Working Class. Some additional informa-*

tion which confirm the shift away from the old imperialist countries towards the South as well as China, 10 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/once-again-on-the-composition-of-the-international-working-class/>

3 For the countries as categorized by the ILO see: ILO: World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2021, Geneva 2021, p. 118).

4 See on this the above-mentioned article: On the Composition of the International Working Class

5 See on this the above-mentioned article: Once again on the Composition of the International Working Class

6 See on this e.g. 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-themain-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-](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/another-great-recession-of-the-capitalist-world-economy-has-begun/)

[economy-hasbegun/](https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-next-looming-great-recession/); by the same author: 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 ILO: World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2021, Geneva 2021, p. 136

8 See on this Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT): The Revolutionary Communist Manifesto, published in 2012, pp. 28-30; online on the RCIT website at www.thecommunists.net/rcit-manifesto

9 Figures for the year 2000 are taken from: ILO: World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2019, Geneva 2019, pp. 84-115; Figures for the year 2020 are taken from: ILO: World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2021, Geneva 2021, pp. 128-161. The ILO report from 2019 did not only include the figures for wage laborers but also for "own-account employment" and "contributing employment". These figures are relevant to assess the number of peasants as well as the urban poor. Unfortunately, the 2021 report does no longer list these categories. Hence, while we reported the figures for these categories in our last article on the composition of the international working class, we can no longer do so here.

10 ILO: World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2021, Geneva 2021, p. 128

Table 1. Composition of the Global Working Class, 2000 and 2020 ⁹

	<i>Wage and salaried Employment (Share)</i>		<i>Employment (in Millions)</i>	<i>Wage Laborers (in Millions)</i>
	2000	2020	2020	2020
World	45.7	53.3	3189.0	1701.0
Low-Income Countries	15.8	20.1	253.0	50.0
Lower-Middle-Income Countries	26.2	34.0	1071.0	343.0
Upper-Middle-Income Countries	47.7	59.1	1449.0	800.0
High-Income Countries	84.4	87.6	622.0	509.0
Northern Africa	57.0	62.7	71.9	39.0
Arab States	73.2	81.8	58.2	43.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	19.6	24.3	416.0	95.0
Latin America & Caribbean	60.0	61.9	292.0	162.0
Eastern Asia	43.4	58.7	923.0	516.0
South-Eastern Asia & Pacific	36.4	51.8	350.0	175.0
Southern Asia	20.3	27.9	674.0	175.0
Central & Western Asia	51.5	68.0	75.0	46.0
Northern, Southern & Western Europe	83.3	85.2	221.0	174.0
Eastern Europe	83.9	87.5	141.5	117.0
Central & Northern America	91.6	92.8	186.0	158.0

Table 2. Occupations by Skill, Share of Laborers, 2005 and 2020 ¹⁰

	(in percent)	
	2005	2020
Share of occupations requiring low skill	44.2	37.6
Share of occupations requiring medium skill	38.5	41.3
Share of occupations requiring high skill	17.3	21.1

