



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



www.thecommunists.net

New Series Issue Nr.60

September 2021

COVID Counterrevolution: "Green Pass" & Compulsory Vaccinations

Afghanistan: Meaning of Anti-Imperialist Victory

Interview on Hunger Riots in South Africa

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.60, September 2021

Afghanistan: The Meaning of the Anti-Imperialist Victory and the Perspectives Ahead <i>Questions and Answers from a Marxist point of view</i>	p.3
The Fake Trotskyists and the War in Afghanistan	p.8
South Africa: Interview with a Revolutionary Marxist on the Hunger Riots in July 2021	p.12
“Green Pass” & Compulsory Vaccinations: A New Stage in the COVID Counterrevolution <i>Down with the chauvinist-bonapartist police & surveillance state – defend democratic rights!</i> <i>No to health policy in the service of the capitalist monopolies – expand the public health sector under workers and popular control!</i>	p.18
COVID-19: The Capitalist Anti-Pandemic Policy Kills More People than the Pandemic Itself	p.22

Pictures on the cover: Community quarantine checkpoint in Bohol, Philippines, police officers check a passing jeepney. (Source: Wikipedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Bohol_COVID-19_GCQ_checkpoint_1.jpg)

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

www.thecommunists.net - rcit@thecommunists.net
Tel/SMS/WhatsApp/Telegram: +43-650-4068314

Afghanistan: The Meaning of the Anti-Imperialist Victory and the Perspectives Ahead

Questions and Answers from a Marxist point of view

Statement by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 24 August 2021

The historic defeat of the Western imperialist powers in Afghanistan has not only tremendous consequences for the country itself but also on a regional and global level. It has provoked much consternation and numerous debates among the ideological advocates of imperialist “civilization” as well as among the reformist and centrist left. In the following, we elaborate – in the form of questions and answers – the analysis and perspectives of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) on several of the most important issues.

What have been the factors in the Taliban’s victory against the U.S./NATO occupation forces?

This was by any standards an extraordinary remarkable victory of an oppressed people! One of the poorest nations in the world succeeded to drive out the combined occupation forces from the richest and most powerful Western states. Washington alone has spent about \$2.26 trillion in Afghanistan since 2001 and sent more than 110,000 soldiers as well as their air force. They built, trained and armed an army of, at least officially, more than 300,000 soldiers. The imperialists did everything in their power to smash the popular resistance. More than 241,000 people lost their lives. Still, after 20 years they have lost this bloody occupation war.

A critical Western researcher comments: “The Taliban’s

enemies, particularly the Americans, had immense superiority in terms of technology and firepower; airpower in particular inflicted heavy casualties on the Taliban. The Taliban mostly relied upon military technology from the 1950s, and had little or no anti-aircraft defences except heavy machine guns. During 2002-14 Taliban combat groups often took casualties averaging between 10-20 per cent yearly. By 2014, few of those who had entered the insurgency in the early years were still alive to tell the tale. Almost all still in the ranks, particularly in the elite mobile units, would have seen many of their comrades in arms blown to pieces. Whatever one might think of the Taliban and their cause, their resilience should not be in doubt.”¹

Such a victory would have been impossible if the Taliban would be an isolated group despised by the Afghan people (as the liberal media and large sectors of the so-called “left” claim)! The victory of the Taliban did not happen out of the blue. As everyone can check on the internet, the Taliban waged a guerilla struggle soon after the occupation of the country began in late 2001. They successively expanded their spheres of influence – first in the Southern and Eastern regions, later in the whole of the country.² It is a well-known fact that a guerilla movement which faces a military superior enemy (and there can hardly be a more powerful enemy than the combined armed forces of the U.S., UK, France, Germany, etc.!) can only win if it is supported by a sizeable section of the popular masses.

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People.

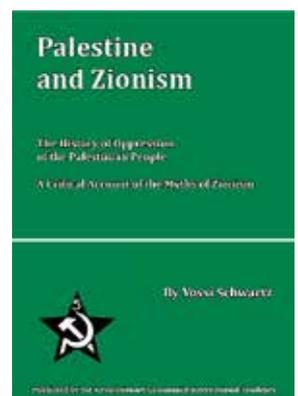
A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

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

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

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

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



How do you characterize the victory of the Taliban against the U.S./NATO occupation forces?

As we have elaborated in a number of statements and articles, the RCIT considers this event as a historic defeat for the U.S. and European imperialism and their allies. It is a gigantic victory for the Afghan people. It is also of paramount importance for all oppressed people in the world fighting against imperialist aggression. No wonder, that the Palestinians, the Syrians and many others are cheering the victory of the Taliban!

Liberal media and their "left-wing" parrots claim that this was a war between forces defending "liberal values" and Islamists. These are useless categories which have no legitimacy in a serious social analysis. Marxists view political and social events through the prism of class analysis: which are the classes involved in a given struggle? It is evident that the occupation forces represented the ruling class of the Western imperialist powers. Their local collaborators were a relative small group of corrupted capitalists, warlords and a technocratic and bureaucratic elite with some layers of the middle class around them. The latter lived pretty comfortable from the huge sums which the imperialists spent in these two decades. But as everyone could see, these Afghan collaborators of the occupations had no support whatsoever among the people. They did not even have any support among their own army. No one of them was willing to fight for the Ghani puppet regime! When the Taliban pushed for the final offensive, these people either joined the Taliban or went home.

This is in strong contrast to the Taliban who fought under the most difficult conditions and under huge sacrifice for two decades. They have been a petty-bourgeois nationalist Islamist guerrilla movement with significant support among the rural masses and the urban poor. This is why they could "*swim among them like a fish in the water*" to paraphrase Mao. Naturally, they also had and still have many enemies. But it is undeniable, and widely recognized, that they always had strong support among the Pashtuns (the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, representing about half of the population) and increasingly won support among other ethnic groups like the Tajiks and Uzbeks (reflected in the increasingly diverse nature of their commanders and fighters). Surely, many are still opposed to the Taliban. But the last two decades have demonstrated that no other political force has as much support within the Afghan society as the Taliban. Every other political force has more enemies.

Add to this the issue of the cause. The Taliban rallied support not because they advocate a specific interpretation of Islam. While they have relations with other Islamist organizations and advocate a version of Islam based on the extremely conservative and patriarchal social order in the country, they are first and foremost a *national* movement. They won broad support because they emphasized the national struggle for the expulsion of the foreign occupiers. The combination of nationalist and Islamic cause was always a powerful factor in driving out foreign occupiers as the British did painfully experience in the past.

Their opponents did not call to fight the occupiers but either supported them or remained ambiguous on this issue. Look yourself: how many followed the Taliban and how many followed their pro-Western opponents?!

In summary, we characterize the insurgency led by the

Taliban as *popular resistance* against imperialist occupation. It has been a *national liberation war* resulting in an anti-imperialist victory against the strongest Western Powers and their local lackeys.

Some people say that the Taliban did win because they did receive support from sections of Pakistan's secret service. What do you say about this argument?

It is certainly true that the Taliban did receive some support from sections of Pakistan's secret service ISI. However, this does not invalidate our argument. Pakistan is a relatively "backward" capitalist semi-colony dependent on Chinese and U.S. imperialism. Its power to influence events can not be compared in any way with the combined power of the Western imperialists! This is also evident from simple facts which everyone could observe. Which kind of support did sections of ISI give to the Taliban? Sanctuary for fighters and leaders, money, information, ... But this is nothing compared with the support of the Western imperialists for their puppet regime! Look at the Taliban fighters: until recently they had no armored vehicles, no tanks, no artillery, no anti-aircraft guns, no missiles, not even proper uniforms! So, guess yourself: how significant could have been Pakistan's support for the Taliban compared with Western support for the puppet regime?! In short, in terms of money, arms and logistic support the Afghan puppet regime was by any standards far superior to the Taliban. So how can any thinking person refer to the factor of Pakistani support as something decisive for the Taliban's victory?! Further, there is hardly a single national liberation struggle in the world that has not the support of at least one foreign state resp. force on its side. Only fools and militarily illiterates can believe that a national liberation force under the lash of an imperialist power can survive in complete isolation. The main question is not if, but *which* foreign political forces are lending support, to *which degree* and with *which* consequences.

How do you characterize the Taliban?

As mentioned above the Taliban have been a petty-bourgeois nationalist Islamist movement. As they are conquering power now, they are in the process of transforming themselves into a new ruling class, i.e. becoming a bourgeois force. Their political positions have been always reactionary, defending capitalist property relations and advocating a theocratic dictatorship.

Hence, while we always sided with the Taliban in their military struggle against the imperialist invaders from 2001 onwards, we never lent *politically support* to them. We supported the struggle of the Taliban against the imperialists, but never their political program. Naturally, we can also not lend any political support to the new Taliban government today.

However, it is a matter of fact that they have successfully led a 20-year long insurgency. We denounce any arrogant interference of the imperialist powers to deny the fact that the Taliban are the new legitimate government of Afghanistan. It is up to the Afghan people to overthrow them, not to the Great Powers or their local puppets!

So why do you celebrate their victory?

Albeit the Taliban are a force with a reactionary program, they nevertheless took the lead in organizing the national

resistance against the imperialist occupation. This role was objectively progressive as it was directed against Afghanistan's domination by the most powerful Western imperialists.

It often happens that objectively progressive struggles are led by reactionary forces. Think about a workers strike led by corrupted, pro-capitalist bureaucrats. Think about the national resistance in Iraq against the U.S. occupation after 2003, the national defense war led by the Ethiopian monarchy against Italy, the Islamist Mahdiyah in Sudan against the British in the late 19th century, the Islamist Somali Dervish movement against the British invaders in the early 20th century, the heroic Rif War in 1921-26 led by the Islamist Abd el-Krim against Spanish and French imperialism (and supported by the Communist International). We could give many more examples. All these struggles were objectively progressive and deserved full support of all authentic socialists.

As a matter of fact, given the weakness of revolutionary forces, nearly all struggle of the workers and oppressed are led by forces whose political program is non-revolutionary and which we can not support politically. But this does not make us ignore the fact that the struggle of the masses, which such forces happen to lead, is objectively progressive. Any other approach would condemn revolutionaries to an utmost sterile and sectarian position, refusing to join the struggle of the masses as it is. In reality, this means to turn the back away from the struggle for a revolutionary leadership before it even starts.

What is your position on the several smaller protest demonstrations against the Taliban?

Naturally, we do not have sufficient information in order to make a judgement of each and every of these small demonstrations. Revolutionaries could derive a tactical position only from a concrete analysis of such events, their composition, their goals, etc. This is also true for future conflicts.

Our general approach is to differentiate between actions by authentic popular sectors and such of forces with pro-imperialist or reactionary goals. When people protest for

democratic rights, women's rights, free press etc. we will support this. If there is any form of ethnic oppression against minorities (like the Shia Hazara), we defend the latter. If the future Taliban government subordinates to any imperialist Great Power and there is genuine protest against such, Marxists might also support these activities.

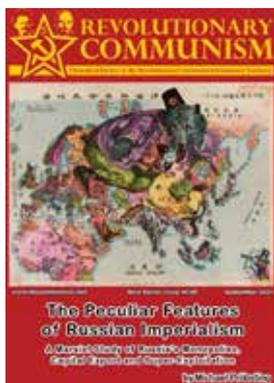
However, it is utterly illegitimate for socialists to support any protest against the Taliban organized by supporters of the former Ghani regime, i.e. by the puppets of Western imperialism. In fact, when such forces claim to advocate "democracy", "women's rights", etc. they in fact advocate another round of Western imperialist intervention. Supporting such actions borders to support for imperialism.

Another example of reactionary opposition against the Taliban is the so-called "*Islamic State in Khorasan*", the local division of Daesh/ISIS. Their struggle against the Taliban is utterly reactionary as it has been the case in Syria.

In general, we can expect various conflicts in the future given the bourgeois and anti-democratic character of the Taliban government. It should also be taken into account that the Taliban suffered several splits in the last decade (e.g. the "*Mullah Dadullah Front*", the "*Fidai Mahaz*" or the "*High Council of Afghanistan Islamic Emirate*") and it is quite possible that there will be conflicts between them and the new government.

What is your position on the threat of armed struggle against the Taliban in Panjshir Valley?

The armed rebellion in the Panjshir Valley has gained some media attention as this is the last area which is not under control of the Taliban. However, this struggle is utterly reactionary as it is led by forces of the former puppet regime. Its leaders are Amrullah Saleh, the former vice-president under Ghani, Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, the former Minister of Defence under Ghani, and Ahmad Massoud, the son of the notorious war lord of the pro-US "Northern Alliance" which played a key role in the imperialist invasion in 2001. In short, these are the remnants of the pro-imperialist puppet regime and deserve no support whatsoever by socialists.



Publications of the RCIT

The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism

A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory

By Michael Pröbsting, August 2021

Introduction * Another Denial of Russia's Imperialist Character * The Methodological Failure of our Critics * Russia's Economy: Dominated by Domestic, not Foreign, Monopolies * Capital Export and the Problem of "Round-Tripping" Foreign Direct Investments * "Phantom FDI": No Russian Peculiarity but a Global Phenomenon * Russia's Leading Multinational Corporations and their Foreign Investments * Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Capital Export * Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Migration * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

What do you say about the so-called “refugee crisis” at the Kabul Airport?

It is a crisis caused by the Western imperialists. They created a puppet regime with a sizeable bureaucratic apparatus. Now these people want to flee to the West. As Marxists we defend the right of refugees to enter imperialist countries. However, many of those who are now at the airport are former collaborators of the imperialist occupation who have lost their jobs. They betrayed their country and served the enemy. They should face justice in Afghanistan.

It is typical for the hypocrisy of the imperialist media (and their “left-wing” parrots) that they express their sympathy for the refugees at the Kabul airport. The occupation forces have destroyed the country, many people live in extreme poverty, etc. – still the whole attention is focused on the “poor” former collaborators at the airport!

The imperialists did the same in the past when they cried crocodile tears for the “gusanos” (worms), the right-wing opponents of the Castro government in Cuba, or for the Vietnamese “boat people” who fled the country after the defeat of the Americans in 1975.

Collaborators with foreign occupiers are never welcomed by their own people. We saw this in Europe in 1945 when collaborators of the German occupation forces were persecuted. The same was the case in Algeria after the French imperialists were expelled in 1962, and in many other countries.

What do you say about the situation of human rights in general and of women’s rights in particular?

As mentioned above, the RCIT fully supports the struggle for democratic rights in general and for women’s rights in particular. Now, as the Taliban have taken power, the struggle for such rights has to be directed against them. However, we fully share the protest of anti-imperialist feminists who denounce the exploitation of the issue of women’s rights as an instrument to support imperialist interference.³

In fact, many supporters of the imperialist occupation use the issue of women’s rights as a pretext. Do these people want to tell us that 20 years of occupation, claiming a quarter of a million deaths, wide-spread poverty, a regime with a corrupted and violent (and rapist) army – that such a situation was in any way better for women than a Taliban regime?!

Do these people want to tell us that the U.S. attack and occupation of Afghanistan had the liberation of women as one of its goals?! Well, they had two decades time to show their true intent!

It might be the case that a small layer of middle-class women in Kabul enjoyed more rights than they did under the Taliban. Naturally, we defend their rights against any attacks by the Taliban. But for the women of the popular masses, there was no improvement compared with the situation in 1996-2001.

Finally, we warn all socialists and feminists not to fall into the trap to legitimize imperialist war and occupation under the pretext of “democracy”, “human rights” or “women rights”. This is an old and worn-out method of the imperialists. With such pretexts, the Western imperialists bombed Serbia in 1999, invaded Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003, Mali in 2013, etc. Of course, we have no sympathy

for any dictatorial regime (like that of Milosevic, the Taliban, of Saddam Hussein, etc.) But we refuse any imperialist aggression and occupation which is the worst enemy of the oppressed people! It is the oppressed people themselves which have to overthrow such reactionary regimes.

What is the socialist perspective for the class struggle in Afghanistan?

As Marxists, the RCIT advocates the perspective of a workers and poor peasant government based on popular councils and militias. It should expropriate multinational corporations and nationalize all industry, mines, banks and large infrastructure under workers control. It should take the land from the big landowners and distribute it to the small and landless peasants. It should implement full democratic rights for women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, etc. Such a workers and peasant republic of Afghanistan should be part of a socialist federation in the region.

For such a perspective, revolutionaries in Afghanistan have to organize in the underground, build a revolutionary party and prepare for a long struggle. They should support all genuine and legitimate protests and oppose all provocations by pro-imperialist forces or by ultra-reactionary forces like Dash/ISIS. They should support resistance against all efforts by imperialist Great Powers to exploit and subjugate Afghanistan.

How do you view the policy of the Western imperialist powers concerning the new Afghanistan?

It is not possible to make exact predications about the policy of the Western imperialists towards Afghanistan. It is possible that they want to expand their occupation of the Kabul Airport under the pretext of the “refugee crisis”. Naturally, all Afghan patriots and all anti-imperialist socialists strongly oppose such an expansion of the imperialist occupation. We call for the immediate and unconditional expulsion of all imperialist troops from the country.

Likewise, we strongly protest the economic blackmail of U.S. imperialism against Afghanistan. Washington has scandalously freeze \$7 billion of Afghan reserves. By the way: what a demonstration of colonial subjugation! Afghanistan’s official exchange reserves were based in all those years of occupation not in Afghanistan but ... in the U.S.! Likewise, we protest against the blockage of \$460 million which the IMF promised to the country for COVID relief.

Furthermore, we demand comprehensive reparation payment to Afghanistan by the U.S. and other imperialist powers which participated in the devastating occupation of Afghanistan in the past 20 years.

It is possible that the U.S. will continue military interventions in Afghanistan against the Taliban under the pre-text of “counter-terrorism”. In such cases, the RCIT will side with the latter against the imperialist aggressors.

What are the consequences of the Taliban victory for the role of Chinese and Russian imperialism?

Again, we can not make any exact predictions. However, it is clear that the Taliban fostered relationships with the Russian⁴ and Chinese rulers in the past years. Even before the Taliban had stormed Kabul, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy leader of the Taliban, met with Chi-

na's foreign minister and called China "a reliable friend of the Afghan people."⁵ Likewise, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying vowed to deepen "friendly and cooperative" relations with the Taliban after its triumph in Kabul.⁶

Russia has also signaled their intention to establish positive relations with the Taliban. Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan Dmitry Zhirnov has praised the Taliban for improving the security situation in Kabul and claimed that resistance to the Islamic Emirate is futile. And Putin's envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov praised the Taliban as a more trustworthy partner than the Afghan government.⁷

As neither China nor Russia did participate in the 20-year long occupation, these powers are less discredited in Afghanistan than the Western rivals. It is also clear that both imperialist powers – and in particular the economically stronger China⁸ – are eager to get access to Afghanistan's gigantic mineral deposits (bauxite, copper, iron ore, lithium and rare earths) which are crucial for mobile phones, computers, electric cars, power cables, solar panels, wind turbines, and many other high-tech commodities. Afghanistan is called the "Saudi Arabia of lithium" and its reserves are estimated worth nearly US\$1 trillion.⁹ Add to this the geo-strategic location of the country as a crossroad between Central Asia, Western Asia and South Asia. Hence, China views it as an important potential component for its "Belt & Road Initiative".

Albeit we can not predict future developments, it is very likely that the leadership of the Taliban – due to their bourgeois nature – will subordinate in one way or another to imperialist Great Powers. The question however is how this will be received by the popular masses.

Naturally, the RCIT opposes all forms of imperialist subjugation of Afghanistan by any Great Power – those of the West as well as those of the East.

International Bureau of the RCIT

Footnotes

1 Antonio Giustozzi: *The Taliban at War 2001–2018*, C. Hurst & Co., London 2019, pp. 1-2

2 See on this e.g. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban_insurgency and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_War_in_Afghanistan_\(2001%E2%80%932021\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_War_in_Afghanistan_(2001%E2%80%932021))

3 See on this e.g. Rafia Zakaria: *White Feminists Wanted to Invade. Afghan women never asked for US air strikes*, August 17, 2021, <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/white-feminists-wanted-to-invade/>; Belen Fernandez: *Women's rights and the US's 'civilising' mission in Afghanistan*, 21 Aug 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/8/21/white-women-washing-the-uss-civilising-mission-in-afghanistan>

4 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in Russia and its rise to an imperialist power. See on this e.g. several pamphlets by Michael Pröbsting: *The Peculiar Features of Russian Imperialism. A Study of Russia's Monopolies, Capital Export and Super-Exploitation in the Light of Marxist Theory*, 10 August 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-peculiar-features-of-russian-imperialism/>; *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/>; *The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of "Catastrophism". On the Marxist Theory of Capital-*

ist 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/>

5 Yara Bayoumy: *The U.S. Has Left Afghanistan. Will China Move In?* New York Times, Aug. 20, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/opinion/afghanistan-china.html>

6 Samuel Ramani: *A new Afghanistan: How regional powers are preparing for Taliban rule*, 23 August, 2021, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/how-afghanistans-neighbours-are-preparing-taliban-rule>

7 Ibid

8 The RCIT has published numerous documents about capitalism in China and its transformation into a Great Power. See on this 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, Vienna 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/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/reference-workentry/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/>.

9 See on this e.g. Dave Makichuk: *China eyeing Afghan rare earth windfall: Congressman*, 19 August 2021, <https://asiatimes.com/2021/08/china-eying-afghan-rare-earth-windfall-congressman-2/>; Isabel Malsang: *Taliban inherit untapped \$1 trillion trove of minerals*, 23 August 2021, <https://asiatimes.com/2021/08/taliban-inherit-untapped-1-trillion-trove-of-minerals/>

The Fake Trotskyists and the War in Afghanistan

By Yossi Schwartz, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19 August 2021

In a war between oppressed nations and the imperialists, revolutionary Marxists support the military defeat of the imperialists and the military victory of the oppressed nations regardless of the political nature of the movement and parties that lead the fight against the imperialists. That does not mean we give political support to bourgeois or petit-bourgeois leadership of these movements whether they are secular or religious.

For these “Marxists” who fail to understand the difference between military and political support we refer them to Lenin during the Kornilov’s attempt to bring down Kerensky government in a military coup. Lenin said, *“We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, just as Kerensky’s troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. On the contrary, we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten.”* [1]

This was the position of Trotsky and the revolutionaries around him in the Spanish civil war: the military defense of the popular front’s government without giving it any political support. A caricature of this position was held by the American sectarian LRP who equated the slogan victory to an oppressed nations fighting imperialism with political support. In other words, for them the victory of the oppressed is a defeat for them. No wonder they ended like Max Shachtman with support to the imperialist Democratic party under Biden. Sectarians are really reformists who are afraid of their own shadows.

Some other centrists who call themselves “Trotskyists” refuse to take the side of the movements led by Islamists when they fight the imperialists. We saw it in the case of Syria, in the case of the wars of Hamas and Hezbollah with imperialist Israel, and we see it again in Afghanistan. Their position reflect the pressure of their own capitalist class and the Islamophobic reactionary imperialist ideology.

The Anti-Colonial Struggle of the Islamist Rif Republic in the 1920s

The early Communist International when it was still a world revolutionary party supported the Islamist Rif Republic:

“On September 11th, 1924, l’humanité published a telegram sent the day previous by Pierre Séward, General Secretary of the Parti communiste français (PCF) and Jacques Doriot, leader of the Federation Federation des jeunesses communistes, to the leader of the Republic, Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi. It reads: ‘We hope that after the definitive victory over Spanish imperialism, it [the Republic] will continue, with the French and European proletariat, the struggle against all imperialists, including the French [français y comprise], until the complete liberation of Morocco’s soil’.” [2]

Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi was the son of a Qadi (judge) of the Aith Waryaghal tribe. He became a judge in Melilla in 1915. In 1917, Al Khattabi was imprisoned for opposing Spanish colonialism. In 1919 he escaped from prison and returned to Ajdir where, with

his brother’s assistance, he began to unite various tribes demanding independence. Al Khattabi proclaimed the Confederate Republic of the Rif in 1922. It was the first republic that was the outcome of an anti-colonial revolt in the 20th century. Al Khattabi created a parliament that included tribal heads that appointed a government. The government applied the Sharia. In 1926 the Rif was defeated by the Spanish and French imperialists who deployed an army with the combined strength of 450,000 soldiers.

The French Socialist Party, that betrayed the international working class already in August 1914, stood with the French imperialists against the Rif. The *“Cartel des Gauches”*, the alliance of the Radicals (a bourgeois party) and the socialists won the elections in May 1924. They sent the French imperialist army to crush the revolt, but it took them two years to do it. For them, the Berber of the Rif were primitive Muslims who dared to raise their heads against the European masters, barbarians who dared to attack civilization.

The position of supporting the oppressed nations in a war against imperialism was buried by the Stalinists who copied the *“Cartel des Gauches”*, in the policy known as *“popular front”*. In Spain, the popular front with the participation of the Stalinists and the socialists with a section of the bourgeoisie ruled Morocco as a Spanish colony. This betrayal allowed Franco to recruit Moroccan soldiers against the popular front which was one of the reasons for the defeat of the Spanish republic. The policy of the popular front from 1935 onwards, was the end of the Stalinists as centrists and put them on the other side of the class’s Rubicon.

Trotsky on Anti-Imperialism

Trotsky explained the attitude of the revolutionary Marxists to the anti-imperialist wars led by reactionaries against the colonialists and the imperialists

“We do not and never have put all wars on the same plane. Marx and Engels supported the revolutionary struggle of the Irish against Great Britain, of the Poles against the tsar, even though in these two nationalist wars the leaders were, for the most part, members of the bourgeoisie and even at times of the feudal aristocracy ... at all events, Catholic reactionaries. When Abdel-Krim rose against France, the democrats and Social Democrats spoke with hate of the struggle of a “savage tyrant” against the “democracy.” The party of Leon Blum supported this point of view. But we, Marxists and Bolsheviki, considered the struggle of the Riffians against imperialist domination as a progressive war. Lenin wrote hundreds of pages demonstrating the primary necessity of distinguishing between imperialist nations and the colonial and semi-colonial nations which comprise the great majority of humanity. To speak of “revolutionary defeatism” in general, without distinguishing between exploiter and exploited countries, is to make a miserable caricature of Bolshevism and to put that caricature at the service of the imperialists.

In the Far East, we have a classic example. China is a semi-colonial country which Japan is transforming, under our very eyes, into a colonial country. Japan’s struggle is imperialist and

reactionary. China's struggle is emancipatory and progressive. But Chiang Kai-shek? We need to have no illusions about Chiang Kai-shek, his party, or the whole ruling class of China, just as Marx and Engels had no illusions about the ruling classes of Ireland and Poland. Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle." [3]

He also wrote: "I will take the most simple and obvious example. In Brazil there now reigns a semi-fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be. I will answer for myself—in this case I will be on the side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to the national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks, one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!" [4]

The Useless Centrists for the Working Class and The Oppressed

In this part we compare the revolutionary position of Trotsky and the French Communist Party in 1924 to the positions of the centrists of today.

The IMT of Ted Grant and Alan Woods

In an article written by Hamid Alizadeh on 16 August 2021 he wrote: "America's longest war has ended in abject shame and humiliation for US imperialism. Twenty years after the invasion of Afghanistan, the most powerful military force the world has ever known has been dealt total defeat at the hands of a band of primitive religious zealots"... In the last week, there has been a sharp contrast between the valiant phrase-mongering of the army commanders and politicians – who all vowed to fight to the bitter end – and their complete, treacherous failure to put up any resistance when the time came for it. In one city after another, the same people who had been thumping their chests only days before handed power to the Taliban and either escaped the country or in some cases, switched sides and offered their services to the new regime"... "While the likes of Ghani and his cohorts were busy looking after themselves, swarms of Taliban fighters descended on the capital without any resistance. Now the Afghan masses, who have suffered so much at the hand of US imperialism, are bracing themselves for the return of theocratic rule. The return of the Islamic fundamentalists struck terror into the hearts of the Afghan people. As the insurgent forces approached Kabul, panic erupted in the capital."

Thus, this useless position for the working class and the

oppressed put on the same level the imperialists and their servants and the fighters of the Taliban. Alizadeh did not even ask himself how a small army poorly armed of at most 75,000 destroyed an army of 300,000 trained soldiers who preferred to run away or capitulate rather than fight? For him, the defeat of the imperialists is a disaster rather than a reason to celebrate. Just compare his idiotic lines to the positions of Marx, Engels Lenin, and Trotsky.

Shamelessly he wrote: "Despite the official proclamations of the Taliban that it will respect women's rights and grant amnesty to all those who do not resist it, reports are surfacing of intellectuals and women being killed. In Herat yesterday, female students were turned away from the university and female bank employees were told to go home". In reality as France 24 wrote that: "Afghan girls return to school in Herat after Taliban takeover The scenes -- which many feared would be banned under the Taliban -- were filmed by an AFP cameraman this week, just days after fighters from the hardline Islamist group took the city following the collapse of government forces and local militia." [5]

There is a known working-class song: "On which side are you on?" "Florence Reese, a thirty-year-old miner's wife in Eastern Kentucky, wrote it during the coal wars of the early 1930s. Sung to the traditional tune of "Lay the Lily Low," it spoke of the "good news" of the union, the violence of the gun thugs, the hardships for workers and families, and the necessity of deciding "which side are you on". [6] It is not difficult to guess on which side Alan Woods is on. [7]

The IMT is sick with Islamophobia. Their newspaper "Socialist Appeal" characterizes the Iranian reactionary regime that we call to overthrow by a working-class revolution "the most reactionary form of bourgeois counter-revolution in history" [8]. Really? What for example about the Nazis taking power in Germany? The implication of their position is that in a case of a war between imperialist state like Israel and Iran to refuse to defend Iran which is not an imperialist state. This is the same method that led them to support British imperialism in the Malvinas War in 1982 because Argentina was ruled by the military junta led by Lieut. Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri.

The roots of their position can be found already in WWII. At that time, Ted Grant – the late founder of the IMT and its predecessor, the CWI – called the British Eighth army "our army". In his book "History of British Trotskyism", published in 2002, Grant still defended his social-chauvinist statement from 1943 which reflected nothing but support for the British imperialist army: "We have a victorious army in North Africa and Italy, and I say, yes", I stated to the WIL conference. "Long Live the Eighth Army, because that is our army. One of our comrades has spoken to a number of people who have had letters from the Eighth Army soldiers showing their complete dissatisfaction. We know of incidents in the army, navy and other forces that have never been reported, and it is impossible for us to report. It is our Eighth Army that is being hammered and tested and being organised for the purpose of changing the face of the world. This applies equally to all the forces." [9]

The ISA

The ISA – a half-sister of the IMT as it split with the CWI in 2019 – has the same line expressed in an article by Tom Crean. "After 20 years, the U.S. effort at "nation-building" has

predictably ended in utter failure. No evidence keeping U.S. forces in Afghanistan for another 20 years would change the outcome. The Biden administration has been forced to accept the weakening of U.S. imperialism in the region and is abandoning Afghanistan to be able to pursue its interests more vigorously in East Asia. A Taliban victory would have disastrous implications for the rights of ordinary people in Afghanistan, especially women. The Taliban did not allow girls to attend school when they were in power in the 1990s and their ideology defends the complete subjugation of women.” [10]

Thus, for the ISA we have the same question: On which side are you on? According to their argument, the life of the Afghans, especially women, was much better under imperialist rule. This was true for the capitalists, the opium dealers, the upper-middle class while most Afghan women and men were broken and poor.

The British SWP in the Tradition of Tony Cliff

The British SWP is the “mother” section of the IST whose organization in Egypt – the RS – first supported politically Morsi in 2012 and afterward sided with the bloody military coup against him in July 2013. It wrote an interesting article with some real facts but without the revolutionary conclusion of the support for the military victory of the Taliban without giving them political support: “US president Joe Biden broke open decades-long lie on Monday. Seeking to justify his policies, he said the brutal war on Afghanistan was never about “nation-building”. That is directly contrary to what George Bush and Tony Blair claimed the “war on terror” was for.

British, US, and other troops from their alliance committed atrocities that flowed from the imperialist nature of the war. They used Afghan civilians as target practice in broad daylight, raided homes at night to execute people, and tortured “suspected” Taliban fighters. It was the occupation and its brutalities that drove support for the Taliban. Soldiers took pictures with murdered victims, or collected body parts as “trophies”—as in the Maywand District murders from June 2009 to June 2010 In the Kandahar massacre in March 2012, US soldiers intentionally murdered 16 civilians and injured a further six. Nine of their victims were children. And the Wech Baghtu US airstrike caused 37 civilian deaths and 27 injuries at a wedding. US soldiers also backed Afghan warmongers with a history of corruption, murder, torture, and rape. True numbers of civilian deaths have been purposefully covered up. One airstrike in December 2001 blew up 65 civilians. The US’s Bagram airbase was, until this week, a prison full of torture and abuse for some 5,000 people. And Britain held a prison at Camp Bastion—where captives were held indefinitely without charge. It is a result of a war that should never have been started, and which continued far too long.” [11]

Really and what if it was a shorter imperialist war? Israel’s war in 1967 was short – it took only six days. Was it than a good war, or an imperialist war on the part of Israel?

Socialist Action (USA)

This organization, that the master head of their site includes the Stalinist Castro and Hugo Chavez, is the most prominent force in the so-called left opposition within the Mandelite “Fourth International”. It condemns the US

occupation of Afghanistan and still they call the victory of the Taliban a humanitarian catastrophe rather than the military victory of the oppressed: “It gives me no pleasure to say that what has happened in Afghanistan is exactly what the anti-war movement foretold in 2001 and that today’s humanitarian catastrophe is a direct result of the political choices of Bush and Blair at that time. After the attacks of 9/11, the US pursued regime change in Afghanistan. They got involved in a long-running civil war by backing the Northern Alliance against the Taliban, intending to install a friendly puppet regime. But they had not read their history books. Foreign forces with their agenda trying to impose an unpopular government on another country never end well, as centuries of colonial history demonstrates. Every people want to determine their destiny not have it decided by war criminals in the White House or 10 Downing Street, those who saw themselves as gods to decide the fate of millions. Maybe Blair didn’t look at the history of UK intervention in Afghanistan. Maybe Bush didn’t reflect on the lessons of the Vietnam War. Now, 20 years on, it’s time to acknowledge that US and NATO forces should never have been in Afghanistan. The new propaganda developing in the media, that the withdrawal is a mistake and may lead to further terrorist attacks in the west, is whole to be rejected and condemned”. [12]

There is not a substantial difference between these centrists and the position of the so-called progressive wing of the Democratic party, which shows that the centrists who called themselves revolutionaries are opportunistically adapting to reformism.

“Progressive lawmakers are calling on the U.S. to accept Afghan refugees as the Taliban has taken over the country, forcing at least thousands of residents to attempt to flee.

The U.S. has yet to announce any mass refugee resettlement plans. President Joe Biden has been relatively quiet, and, on Friday, Reuters reported that the U.S. is searching for countries willing to temporarily house Afghan refugees who have worked for the U.S. government.

Progressives on Twitter say that the U.S. should open its doors to refugees immediately — not just because of the morality of the matter, but also because of the U.S.’ role in imperializing the country and killing civilians, adding to chaos and destruction in the country over the past two decades.

“After 20 years of U.S. effort,” wrote Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), “Afghanistan was left with a corrupt government and an ineffectual military. At this moment, we must do everything we can to evacuate our allies and open our doors to refugees.”

“If we don’t start putting everyday people first, no matter what country they’re born in, this will keep happening,” wrote Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Michigan) on Sunday. “Let’s start by opening our country to shelter refugees fleeing the consequences of our actions.”

Tlaib also pointed out that, while the U.S. has waged its forever war in Afghanistan, politicians and arms dealers have profited greatly from the conflict. “Innocent people suffer the horrors of war while political leaders and arms-dealing corporations sit back and make billions,” she said.

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-California) pushed back against that idea over the weekend. “What’s happening in Afghanistan currently is a humanitarian crisis. Let’s be clear: there has never been, and will never be, a U.S. military solution in Afghanistan,” she wrote. “Our top priority must be providing humanitarian aid and resettlement to Afghan refugees, women, and children.”

Indeed, many progressive advocates have said for decades that the U.S. should never have engaged in war in Afghanistan to

begin with, arguing that the war would and has done more harm than good, especially to the citizens of Afghanistan.

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota) argued as such last year when she introduced a proposal to accelerate the U.S.'s withdrawal from the country and end the war. But she was shot down by Republicans and a whopping 103 Democrats in the House who voted down her proposal." [13]

What refugees are they speaking about? Those rats who served the imperialist's occupation? These people are not different from the right-wing Cubans – the *gusanos* ("worms"), who escaped to the USA, the Iranians supporters of the Shah who escaped to the USA, or the right-wing Vietnamese serving the American war. In Afghanistan, there are 2.5 million internal refugees because of the imperialist war about them Sanders and his colleagues have nothing to say. Needless to say, they also do not call for the return of Palestinian refugees.

The Western imperialists presented WWII as a war of democracy against fascism. Nevertheless, those left-leaning members of the International Brigades fighting Franco and Hitler were persecuted by the Western imperialists.

Not only this but at the end of the war, the US and other imperialist states like Canada and Australia helped Nazi "refugees" to settle in the USA, Canada, and Australia in addition to countries in Latin America. These "refugees" were right-wing anti-working-class elements that were helped by the imperialists for a reason: to be used against working-class uprisings. We saw their role in Chile as experts in torturing workers and the poor after Pinochet backed by the CIA brought down the popular front of Allende in 1973. They were present in the Argentinean military dictatorship's detention centers. Some torturers even played Hitler speeches as they tormented their victims.

Liberal Canada that speak so nicely about human rights and the need to accept the suffering poor refugees from Afghanistan escaping the Taliban has an history of collaborating with US and British intelligence leading to the opening of Canada's doors to Ukrainian Nazi collaborators. "Canada received 165,000 political refugees, so-called Displaced Persons (DPs). Anti-communist applicants were favored over others; Poles and Ukrainians constituted 39% of this group, as a total of 25,772 refugees of Ukrainian origin arrived in Canada between 1947 and 1951 through the efforts of the International Refugee Organization (IRO). Followers of Stepan Bandera (1909–1959), the leader of the radical wing of the far-right Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, known

as OUN(b), constituted the largest political party. Others were the paramilitary wing, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (known under its Ukrainian acronym UPA (Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia). In 1950, the Ukrainian Nationalist community grew further, as Canada admitted between 1200 and 2000 veterans of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician)." [14] These are the kind of "refugees" the imperialists love. Their mass media present them as victims of cruel oppression.

The fake "Trotskyists" who speak of the catastrophic event speak the language of the Zionists. Today in the *Time of Israel* we can read an article entitled: "Catastrophe in Afghanistan – for Afghans, Israel, the region... and for America" [15] What is a Catastrophe for them is a reason to celebrate!

Footnotes

[1] V. I. Lenin To the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. August 30 (September 12), 1917

[2] <https://avalancheofdust.wordpress.com/2017/09/10/the-republic-of-the-rif-and-the-french-communist-party-part-i/>

[3] Leon Trotsky: On the Sino-Japanese War (September 1937)

[4] Leon Trotsky: Anti-Imperialist Struggle Is Key to Liberation. An Interview with Mateo Fossa (September 1938)

[5] <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210818-afghan-girls-return-to-school-in-herat-after-taliban-takeover>

[6] <https://workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/2012/04/09/which-side-are-you-on-the-life-and-travels-of-a-working-class-song/>

[7] <https://www.marxist.com/afghanistan-the-cynical-betrayal-of-us-imperialism.htm>

[8] Socialist Appeal, 10 March 2009

[9] Ted Grant: History of British Trotskyism, Wellred Publications, London 2002, p. 99, <https://www.marxist.com/history-british-trotskyism-ted-grant/part-two-trotskyism-of-a-new-type.htm>

[10] <https://internationalsocialist.net/en/2021/08/taliban-move-to-take-over-afghanisatan>

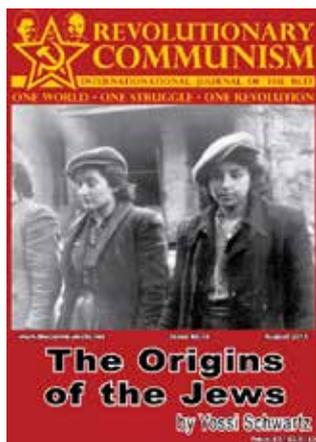
[11] <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/52265/Massacres+were+the+true+face+of+Afghan+war>

[12] <http://www.socialistaction.net/2021/08/18/afghanistan-the-war-is-over/>

[13] <https://truthout.org/articles/bernie-sanders-barbara-lee-call-for-opening-u-s-to-refugees-from-afghanistan/>

[14] Per A. Rudling: Long-Distance Nationalism: Ukrainian Monuments and Historical Memory in Multicultural Canada

[15] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/catastrophe-in-afghanistan-for-afghans-israel-the-region-and-for-america/>



Publications of the RCIT

The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

South Africa: Interview with a Revolutionary Marxist on the Hunger Riots in July 2021

Note of the Editorial Board: *Below we publish a highly interesting interview with comrade Azanian Red. He is a revolutionary socialist activist in South Africa (Azania). He is committed to building a revolutionary vanguard party for the achievement of a socialist anti-racist world. He is interviewed in his personal capacity.*

Please tell us a bit about the background of the hunger riots which have shaken South Africa in the last days?

The riots are correctly characterised as being the result of hunger, despite the spark being the arrest of ex-president Zuma. There was already structural hunger for the South African black¹ working class majority before Covid-19. This crisis plunged them into total despair when the ANC government discontinued the R350 (about 21 Euro) per month Special COVID-19 Social Relief Distress Grant. This was paid to unemployed adult South African residents, who are not the recipients of any other income, or any other social benefits from the state.

This leads us to the two primary reasons for food insecurity in South Africa despite its agricultural abundance. The one relates to access to land for independent agricultural production, and the second relates to the lack of incomes and insufficient incomes. Both these are experienced most severely by the African indigenous population that had their land dispossessed by colonialism and fossilised in the 1994 Democratic Counter Revolution.

The 1996 Constitution guarantees property rights with a 'willing buyer willing seller' formula to address matters of land redress within the logic of neoliberal integration of the South African food value chain to world and domestic markets. This maintenance of land and all other patterns of ownership with the settler colonial bloc that was already integrated into the world imperialist system under Apartheid are at the heart of the counter revolution of 1994.

South Africa as a whole is food secure, and an exporter. The financial-agricultural-retail value chain is well integrated vertically. This monopolistic integrations is supported by credit and pricing structures. Access to food therefore for the majority of the population is via the retail end of this sector. The overall structure of the food value chain has led to, along with other factors that I will point to later; food becoming inaccessible and unaffordable for the majority of the South African black working class.

The arrangement of this sector has been done under total accommodation by the ANC to neoliberalism even before the 1994 Democratic Counter Revolution. For example, subsidies to farmers were slashed at the behest of the Bretton Woods Institutions in 1993, and South African produce is subject to World Trade Organisation Tariff arrangements and barriers from the European Union. Despite these restrictions, South African agricultural exports have grown from R8bn in 1994 to R110bn in 2018.²

The lifting of subsidies caused many black farm labourers to loose employment, rudimentary farm dwellings for their families and significantly, access to food as part of their wage or allotment of small patches for basic cultivation. An estimated 1.5million people left the land as a

result. Most headed for urban areas, increasing the rate of urbanisation that had already started in the early 1980s despite Apartheid era movement controls for Black-African people of all classes. This trend continues to date, to the fringes of urban locations in search of work and access to basic municipal amenities. This takes the form of the establishment of sprawling informal settlement ghettos. The process continues in the face of structural joblessness.

Joblessness is a key driver for the lack of incomes. In 1994, the unemployment rate was 21%. By 2002 it had grown to 27.8% due mainly to the deindustrialisation and integration of the autarkic Apartheid era industrial base into the international value chain with whole industries, such as the garment manufacturing industry being offshored to China. Or, for that matter, the steel industry being privatised and integrated into a multinationals production value chain, with a resultant job bloodbath.

In 2008 before the effect of the Global Financial Crises, the unemployment rate had dropped to 22.8%, reflecting that despite GDP growth of on average 5.5% for the two preceding years, on the back of strong mined minerals exports, the level of job creation remained the key structural crises directly affecting the largely black working class. The effect of the financial crises, despite the South African Financial Services Sector's minimal exposure to the contagion, nevertheless led to the loss of about 1 million jobs. This was caused by the drop in physical demand for minerals on the world market, reflected in the drop in GDP growth to 3.1% in 2008. By 2010 unemployment stood at 24%.

However, along with the overall trend under capitalism worldwide, the impotence to prevent the financial crises from translating directly into the crises of accumulation has found full impact in South Africa. By 2019 the unemployment rate had reached 28.8% and in the middle of the 2020 pandemic year 29.2%, with about over 2 million jobs said to have been lost as a result of the total lockdown in 2020. The current official joblessness rate is 32.6%. The GDP rate had reached a negative (0.15%) in 2019. In 2020 it reached negative 7% as a result of the effect of the COVID pandemic hard lockdown.³

The statistics are defective but indicative of the crises. Their defect is that they relate to formal work seekers and exclude the lumpen section of the class structurally and permanently unemployed. These are estimated to add another 10% at the least to the joblessness rate. A most recent statistic is that 63.3% of the youth between ages 15 to 24 are unemployed. In 2019 this age group comprised 16% of the total population.⁴ By 2021, 71% of all unemployed are aged between 15 and 34.⁵

The use of GDP is indicative only, as it skews the distribution of the GDP growth with the working class enjoying a significantly lower share of GDP per capita.

The income void is filled by an increase in social grant recipients from 7% of the population in 1996, to 20% by 2005. Since 2011 it has averaged at 30% and currently stands at 31%. This is aside from the additional 11% of the population receiving the Relief Grant in 2020 during the pandemic. This makes for a minimum total of 41% of the

population dependent on social grant incomes.⁶

Significantly, much of the employment available is precarious and large employers use labour brokers to intermediate the employment relationship with workers. This is a response to manage the risks of the robust labour relations legislation passed on the wave of gains made by workers throughout the 1980s.

Wages are poor and reflect race based hierarchical stratification of the working class. Minimum wage legislation introduced in recent years entrenches South Africa, from its colonial days, as a low wage hyper-exploitive economy. The current legal minimum wage is R3 470 (208 Euros) for most workers and for domestic workers it is R3 054 (183 Euros) per month.⁷ In 2019, excluding all other living costs, the food poverty line for each individual was determined to be R561 (34 Euros) per month.⁸ According to a report, 30% of households that comprised more than three children reported that food access was inadequate. More than half of workers eligible for the minimum wage are paid below this level.

South Africa is the most unequal country in the world both by income and asset ownership. The top 1% earn 20% of the income (own 67% of assets); the next 9% earn 45% (assets 26%) and the remaining 90% earn 35% of income (7% assets).⁹

So all of these factors have made for a pre-COVID structural hunger pandemic!

The picture in 2017 was that of 16.2 million households in South Africa in 2017, almost 20% had inadequate access to food and 12% experienced food hunger. More than 500 000 households with children below five years of age had experienced hunger. Just fewer than 16% of households engaged in some basic agriculture to supplement food, despite receiving social grants.

A leading bank in South Africa estimated before June 2020, that about 50.3% the current population would be food insecure as a result of the pandemic within 9 months.¹⁰ This includes growing food insecurity among white collar workers and strata of the middle class, both black and white. However, the insecurity falls most heavily on the wider black working class, most of who are indigenous Africans.

So the withdrawal of the special COVID Grant, as modest as it is, brought the food insecurity to a volcanic point. The extension of the looting to opportunistic and middle class elements does not detract from the essential character of the riots. Nor does the lit match thrown on the incendiary condition of the working class by the Zuma allied wing of the ANC!

How do you view the court sentence against former President Zuma?

The sentencing was in respect of a conviction for contempt of court. He had refused to appear before a Judi-

cial Commission tasked with investigating 'State Capture' during his presidency. This is aside from his having been charged criminally in relation to, among other charges, the receiving of a bribe from French arms manufacturer Thales. That matter is yet to commence beyond preliminaries before the courts.

State capture is used by the mainstream media to distinguish the brazen methods used by the Zuma administration to enable capital accumulation by a marginalised aspirant black political and middle class. It is distinguished from the facilitation, creation and absorption of small strata of black capitalists within the dominant structures of the existing capitalists. These, have been drawn mainly from liberation struggle notables from within the ANC, including Ramaphosa. Their facilitation into the mainstream has been by means of Black Economic Empowerment legislation and major ownership deals with large capitalist players. They are largely collaborative with the policy framework required by the established white and international bourgeois.

The methodology of this collective bourgeois class in South Africa is their dominant influence over policy, and its execution via legislation, regulation and implementation; as is the lobbying in any other capitalist country. However, their kleptocrat activity, when discovered, is always downplayed by the press.

In contrast, under Zuma, the rentier activity of senior state officials at all levels of the ANC and government had grown to greater proportions, and were focussed on more keenly by the bourgeois press. Organs of the state and its administrative arm, government, were controlled to ensure that contracts benefitted new and aspirant capitalists who had been marginalised from any prospect of significant accumulation. This took the form of patronage, controlling decision making, using state assets to further private interests, and controlling the boards of state owned enterprises to direct inflated priced contracts to the newly emerging capitalists. It also took the form of gutting out certain governmental departments such as the intelligence services.

This intersected very directly via his family and key political allies with the Gupta family. These recently arrived immigrants from India rose from near penury to a dominant influence on the Zuma years; with powers to influence cabinet appointments. Their activities intersected with international advisory firms and established capitalists therefore reflecting the *entire capitalist class as being corrupt, notwithstanding their outward pretences at respectable behaviour.*

The political angle to this activity was stated as being Radical Economic Transformation. This was a smoke-screen by this wing of capitalists and frustrated aspirant capitalists, to use the state as the instrument of primitive accumulation. This was the political ruse of filling the vac-

Comunismo Revolucionario

Spanish-language Journal of the RCIT

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

uum of economic aspects of the programme of the petty bourgeois nationalist ANC; not having been addressed to dismantle white monopoly capitals dominance when the 1994 change of state-form to Constitutionalism, happened.

The more significant factor was that *the Guptas and their allied business partners had entered the field of the physically productive capitalist economy as opposed to have emulated there mainstream kleptocratic cousins, merely as rentiers*. They owned mines, a newspaper, and other businesses and were intent on launching a bank. This represented a real challenge to the collective arrangement among the existing monopolies all dominated substantially by 'white monopoly capital,' the obverse characterisation to Radical Economic Transformation.

This conflict, has played out since President Ramaphosa had narrowly won the Presidency of the ANC and hence confirmation as the State President in the last elective conference of the ANC. He has moved gradually and deliberately and has yet to decisively consolidate his hold on the party and the state apparatus. He has promised a clean-up from corruption and to uphold the supremacy of the bourgeois rule of law and its citadel defence, the Constitution.

However, he has encountered resistance at all levels both within the party and the state apparatuses, from those who feel vulnerable to his wing of the party, and the elements of the state, involved in the anti-corruption drive. The riots, however they were primed, reveal the inability of the present order overseen by the ANC in the main, of addressing the structural basis for the riots.

The priming of the food riots indicates a level of popular mobilisation capacity and militaristic and intelligence capability at play. Strategic economic targets were attacked with trucking on major inter-provincial highways being stopped, permitting them to be looted and set alight to cause blockades. Major large food supermarket chains and retail shopping malls were attacked, looted and set ablaze. About 16 tons of ammunition from a newly arrived shipment at Durban Harbour has been stolen. However, there is also evidence of police inactivity and in instances participation in looting.

Troop deployments have been gradual and in KwaZulu Natal province the violence has degenerated into inter-'racial' conflict. There is a sizeable retail presence among the 'Indian' population; but not anywhere near the monopolistic dominance of the large retail chains. So too is there an historic pattern of home ownership both provided by the state and privately held since the days of social engineering of entire communities, irrespective of class, into race classified areas, including dormitory labour township-ghettos mainly on the periphery of cities such as Durban. Proximate to these have sprung up informal settlements occupied overwhelmingly by the dispossessed Africans now urbanising. This differential and competition for jobs from both ends of their marginalised sections of the wider working class, has led to a deep mutual racial divide that has been a feature of the province historically, and promoted in the colonial and Apartheid era.

It also reflects on the programme of the ANC as a liberation organisation in its affirmation of separate nations being amalgamated into a Rainbow Supra National Identity. For example, the Natal Indian Congress established by Gandhi, was a front for the ANC during its exile, and was a decidedly ethnic mobilisation vehicle to its programme.

This has been decidedly not anti-racist but multi-racial, mirroring the logic of Apartheid; and wanting to establish a non-racial South Africa.

This situation also reflects on Zuma having invoked continuously his Zulu ethnicity ("100% Zulu Boy") from the days of his fight to win the presidency and now emphasised by his followers in their campaign to have him freed. This has intersected the pre-existing ethnic tensions.

Greater 'Indian' income and social mobility since the end of formal Apartheid, via access to jobs because of their classification as black and their historically better access to education; partly a result of a sturdy merchant class within the community funding the establishment of schools and partly the result of social race classification based segregated education funding levels under Apartheid. All this made for violent confrontation during the riots with vigilantism taking a 'racial' and racist form, especially in the absence of police and army protection of the businesses and properties of both the petty bourgeois and workers in this community.

However, vigilantism has not been exclusively racially biased. In the Gauteng province where the looting took place mainly within formal housing in historically established township labour-dormitories; many Kombi Taxi owners, drivers and community members have taken up armed protective duties against looting.

The phenomenon of vigilantes has arisen in the absence of police efficacy, complicity and inaction in protecting businesses and communities. This reflects on a fracture that is emerging within the ANC as a party, and in government structures. There is clearly a degree to which the centre around Ramaphosa is contested, as reflected by the slow pace response to the riots and the confusing and contradictory actions and statements from within government. Many hedge their political bets!

The riots are therefore a popular expression of deep distress at food insecurity. They were primed by the Free Zuma expression of the faction within the state and the ANC. *They have opened all the deep wounds of South Africa in its race-class contradiction. In essence this is a factional civil war between two wings of capitalism as played out within the ANC and now wider society.*

The working class have no objective interest in fighting this conflict for the two factions of capitalism, and less so to be divided along ethnic and socio-racial lines. Nevertheless this has opened up the prospect of putting to the working class a revolutionary socialist programme for the resolution of all the contradictions of South Africa, including its position within the International Capitalist system, and the neo-imperial arrangements in Southern Africa.

In fact the narrative of the bourgeois press and the government is that the riots are simply criminal. The Zuma supporters are criminally insurrectionists against a legitimate constitutional order. The rule of law in defence of private property is supreme. Their bourgeois directives to the government are the legitimate way of doing things. That community vigilante defence groups be brought under state control and be disarmed. That the spontaneous mobilisation of clean up brigades reflects the majority of South Africans are behind the rule of law.

In short: the masses are experiencing ferment and are subject to all kinds of intrigue in the absence of their independent organs that now spontaneously spring up, be-

ing led by a socialist programme that declutters the fog that the mainstream narrative seeks to obscure whilst their army and police raid from door to door confiscating the food and goods taken by the hungry masses.

These riots will be used to repress the working class and to begin a programme of reform that have slim prospect of success given the current international and domestic capitalist crisis. *The conviction of Zuma and other key allies is necessary to demonstrate the integrity of the capitalist rule of law.*

How do you characterize the ANC-SACP-COSATU government which has been in power since 1994?

The ANC is the dominant political partner in this alliance with the South African Communist Party and the Congress of Trade Unions. The ANC's petty bourgeois nationalist programme enjoys dominance over the other two components that have gone along with it.

Since the overt adoption of neoliberal policies once the Constitution was finalised as the instrument of bourgeois rule in 1996, the so called developmental state was to be achieved by trickle-down economics. That black economic empowerment and affirmative action in the workplace to redress the historically segregated labour market, would build a sturdy black middle class.

Whilst awaiting job creation by this mechanism, the teeming masses trapped in Apartheid labour reservoirs in the rural areas and the teeming urban unemployed would enjoy the balm of social grants way below the amount required for a minimal living. There is much talk of reorienting the economy with a resignation to the deindustrialisation in the face of the holy neoliberal international market.

COSATU as the dominant trade union federation since the mid-1980s had played a very significant role at the economic level in improving workers terms of employment and wages. It had more significantly been dominated by

'workerists' who saw in the absence of democratic political rights the need to extend their activities into the political arena in support of the ending of Apartheid. However the majority of the leadership was captured to the policies of the ANC by means of Ministerial appointments since 1994 and their false confidence in influencing the ANC programme and policies. In exchange, they were satisfied with the legal codification of the gains at the workplace in the anti -Apartheid struggle. In short, they became the managers of industrial peace in South Africa.

The SACP has, since the two stage theory of revolution and emphasis on the National Democratic Revolution of Stalin's Third International from the 1920s, accommodated itself to coat tailing the ANC. Its total accommodation to the neoliberal policies of the ANC is further reflective of its total misunderstanding of the nature of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Apartheid government, in conjunction with the leading western capitals all agreed that South Africa was opportune for saving for capitalism with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of socialism as a system. The SACP seems to have accommodated itself to this logic, given its fundamental inability to understand the nature of the degenerate workers state under Stalinism. In Short, the SACP is no champion of an independent socialist political programme of the working class, let alone any pretensions at social democracy.

In summary, this government is not committed to any other path than being responsive to the credit rating agencies and international financial institutions in operating within an austerity budget consistently to ensure its creditworthiness rather than focus on what is required to change the conditions of the structurally poor since colonialism and Apartheid. *An abiding feature of the pre and post Zuma ANC administrations is that they continued in their commitment to neoliberal policies!*

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.

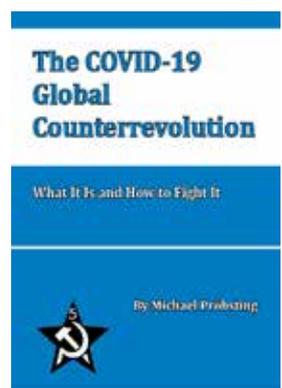
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

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.



Zwelinzima Vavi, the General Secretary of the South African Federation of Trades Unions, has threatened to launch a general strike. How do you see the possibility of such a development?

A general strike is conceived of by some sections within SAFTU as using the vulnerability of the ANC government and the capitalist system at this juncture as an opportunity to win a universal income grant of about R1 500 (900 Euros). It is also advocated to win decent jobs for all to address the unemployment question. Despite the demand being made within the context of a slash in social spending, it is in reality a call for shuffling the deck chairs. Capitalism in South Africa is largely an appendage of international capitalism and hence there is not going to be massive shifts in wealth or incomes by some cocktail of social democratic reforms.

As I had explained earlier the void of political articulation of the independent political programme of the working class in South Africa (by a party of that class) is a distinct problem for the revolutionary programme. This combines with the failure of the Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party to articulate and organise this politics. The SRWP was formed out of the same process that led to the formation of SAFTU: The break by the largest COSATU affiliate; the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) from that federation on the basis of the continued neoliberal policies of the ANC.

So in this political void, it is the proverbial trade union bureaucratic dog that wags the political tail of the class! I do not see this general strike call as being a political strike despite it being made to seem so. Frankly, the possibility of this becoming a generalised strike without strong organisation outside of the shrinking and divided workforce will have limited impact. It will have to call upon the unemployed masses and mobilising community based organisations. Hence there have been Assemblies of the People via remote participation to build a movement. Nevertheless, the build up to a possible strike seems to be driven by considerations of uniting the class and talks with COSATU and other federations are very possible. However, it seems more so as a precursor to the uniting of the working class and the building of a mass workers party of the entire class on the lines seen in the 1920s in Britain. The dangers remain the same: the absorption of the political arm of the labour movement into the mainstream constitutional parliamentary arrangements. Already, far sighted bourgeois pundits are advocating an economic CODESA and calling for greater inclusive participation in this process. Given the pronouncements by SAFTU on the loss of jobs by truck drivers due to the looting, the confusion between economic demands and clearly political demands are blurred and served up as a set of transitional demands. More worrying is the affirming references to the constitution and the rule of law when addressing the Zuma conviction phenomenon and subsequent events by some trade union leaders.

Notwithstanding these limitations, I would advocate participation in the strike action no matter how ineffective, in advocating for the building of a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class pronouncing its independent political programme.

What is the state of forces to the left of the SACP?

Communism was proscribed in 1949 in South Africa. Despite this, with the advent of Trade Unionism and the Workerist Movement within that; there was space created to have Marxist concepts and revolutionary thought permeate many working class cadre within the union movement. The liberal universities created space for the academic dissemination of Marxism within the confines of the Arts faculties.

On the unbanning of the ANC and the SACP to facilitate negotiations in the early 1990s, Marxism was no longer proscribed. Instead of this new space being effectively exploited for the furtherance of Revolutionary Marxism, the opposite occurred. The SACP accommodated its Stalinist conceptions to the neoliberal reality and seem oblivious to the ripe conditions for their so called second of two stages to revolutionary power by the working class.

The advent of postmodernism as the vogue in Universities internationally has not escaped South Africa. However, more troublesome is the retreat of those to the left of the SACP who have lost all hope of the vanguard party being the vehicle for the proletariat. Their refrain is that the vanguard leads to Stalinism. Instead they advocate socialism from below. Their intersection with radical liberalism is most keenly observed in the NGO sector that straddles particular issues and specific interests that fund them.

Their political expression is largely to take Marxism into movements and there is a distinct Capitalist Climate disaster wing that does not see the seizure of workers power as the basis for the resolution of this accelerated degeneration by capitalism.

There are small groups of Marxist still committed to revolutionary Marxism in their posture. However, they seem overly dependent on the various internationals for guidance to their politics in South Africa. They are resultantly schismatic. Most of them advocate a very radical but nauseating accommodation to the mainstream narrative inasmuch as they try desperately to distinguish themselves from that narrative. Their interpretation of the absence of a revolutionary Marxist leadership within the class necessarily requires that the looting and vandalism that has taken place is wrong and anti-revolutionary.

However, irrespective of the recognition of the revolutionary potential or not, they remain committed to a Mass Based Workers Party of the entire class.

The SRWP and its professed vanguardism had been missing in action since the commencement of the food riots. The reason is that the party is fundamentally flawed in that its building is beholden to a trade union bureaucracy that sees in its Bolshevik members the end of the project they midwived into being, and that is required to accommodate to their particular brand of politics to fulfil the unfinished tasks of the Freedom Charter. This mainstream within the party heralds a SACP Mark II.

All of these socialist political expressions are weak organisationally, and more important in their politics.

How do you see the possibilities or building a revolutionary party in South Africa?

The possibility has taken a quantum leap given the events recently. The working class is ripe for leadership and the trade union movement and community based organisations are the terrain from which a revolutionary party cadre

re may be drawn from and developed. This means both organic theoretical and practical work in building solidarity action committees within each community, educational institutions and workplaces to build the independent programme within the organs of the class.

The RCIT has issued a statement on the hunger riots. What is your view on it?

The statement correctly characterises the riots as proceeding beyond Jacob Zuma's release and that they are in substance hunger riots. I have explained some structural features and their deepening nuances under current conditions, of the pre-existing crises as it manifests specifically in South Africa.

The statement is significantly accurate in its advocacy that the revolutionary Marxists not stand aside this great fissure in the volcanic terrain of the working class.

However, as the matter of whether a lockdown or not is appropriate for South Africa, the matter has to take into account the appropriateness of support measures in the face of the prevailing poverty and unemployment.

The relief has been strongly partial to big businesses and not aimed at providing immediate and sustainable and adequate relief to the poor. In substance the lockdown is sub-optimal for this reason and for the reason that the health system is underfunded because of austerity. Under Apartheid South Africa was a leading health research centre internationally. All of this has been denuded by the integration of health research and medical production capability along neoliberal production- lines internationally.

The health system is two tiered. The state health care system caters for 84% of the population. The private health care system employs 70% of doctors. The ability of the health system to deal with the COVID pandemic is therefore a major factor in the lockdowns. The overriding factor as I see it is the question of the level of vaccination achieved by the state and the private sector before the health system can be sufficiently efficient to cope with the pandemic.

That does not mean that the repression and the erosion

of civil liberties that have accompanied the lockdowns should not be combatted. At the heart of this is the near absence of ability to organise politically by all. The entry of the rioters into the historic stage may at this juncture not as yet have translated into any degree of sophistication of organisation, but it certainly is necessary to grow and organise this in-embryo phenomenon; I agree with RCIT.

The matter of what the appropriate liberties and measures that should have accompanied the lockdowns is the subject of much debate and campaigning since the first hard lockdown in March 2020. The matter of lockdowns in principle for South Africa yes, has to be debated actively by revolutionary Marxists. However in this debate the left should not in any way emulate Narendra Modi as a super-spreader of COVID by a reckless approach to the question.

Footnotes

1 Black in South Africa continues to be a reference to the collective of the Apartheid era population classification along the social category races: African (Indigenous Africans including the descendants of non-Bantu Africans who had been experienced cultural genocide and assimilation into the socio-racial category – Coloured; Indians the majority of whom are descendants of indentured labourers imported into British Natal from the 1860s and Coloured that includes people of mixed heritage and those who were brought to the Dutch Colonised Cape as slaves).

2 <https://www.dalrrd.gov.za/Portals/0/Statistics/P80>

3 tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate; <https://knoema.com/atlas/South-Africa/Unemployment-rate>

4 South Africa: population, by age group | Statista

5 Statistics South Africa

6 'It has increased sharply' - How many South Africans receive social grants? | News Dome

7 This is based on hourly rates of R21, 69 and R19, 08 respectively; for a 160 work month. www.labour.gov.za

8 This is the minimum amount to purchase the minimum required daily energy intake. www.timeslive 2019-08-06

9 World Inequality Database.

10 https://www.investec.com/en_za/focus/beyond-wealth/food-security-and-covid-19.html; accessed 20 July 2021, 13H:35



RCIT AFRICA PROGRAM

Manifesto for the Revolutionary Liberation of Black Africa

Adopted at the 2nd World Congress of the RCIT in November 2017

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A5 Format

“Green Pass” & Compulsory Vaccinations: A New Stage in the COVID Counterrevolution

**Down with the chauvinist-bonapartist police & surveillance state
– defend democratic rights! No to health policy in the service of the capitalist
monopolies – expand the public health sector under workers and popular control!**

Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 29 July 2021

1. The ruling class in Europe, China, Israel, Argentina and other countries have started, or are pushing for, the fast introduction of the so-called “Green Pass”. The official purpose of this passport is the combat against the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. This is basically a certificate (in paper or digital format) that a person has acquired immunity or has been vaccinated. While the concrete application differs from country to country, the concept of the “Green Pass” is basically that possession of such a certificate is mandatory in order to work in specific sectors (health, education, etc.) as well as to enter restaurant, gyms, museums, cinemas, stadiums, long-distance public transport, travel, etc. The concept of “Green Pass” is inextricably linked with the campaign of governments to impose mass vaccination, or more precisely, to make vaccination compulsory for large sectors of the population.

2. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) unreservedly condemns the offensive of the ruling class to impose the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations. We do so because it is evident that this system is neither motivated by concerns of public health nor does it serve such a goal. In reality, like the Lockdown policy and the COVID Counterrevolution as a whole, it is dictated by the political and economic interests of the ruling class. Hence, socialists have to oppose the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations. We call the vanguard of the working class and the oppressed to mobilize against this new counterrevolutionary offensive. The main reasons for our stance are the following.

The main consequences of the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations

3. First, the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations is a gigantic attack on democratic rights which opens the road to a dramatic expansion of the chauvinist-bonapartist police and surveillance state. The whole concept is directed towards the creation of a *new Apartheid* – dividing the population in those who are vaccinated and those who are not. The latter are excluded from most sectors of the society and reduced to second-class citizens who are in the crosshair of state apparatus and capitalists.

4. Secondly, the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations can only be effective if a gigantic repression and surveillance apparatus is created. It requires a centralized data entry system of the health conditions of all citizens and of information of who has been at what place at what time. Without such a centralized data entry system no “Green Pass” system could work. It is evident that this dramatically expands the omnipotence of the capitalist repression apparatus. It makes George Orwell’s “1984” reality with a single stroke! Furthermore, it will be

not only the state itself which has access to all these data but also the capitalist monopolies or maybe the bosses in general (they will say that they need to know if their labor force is healthy). It is not necessary to point out that various criminal hackers or political opponents will also be able to access such information.

5. Thirdly, such an expanded system of state surveillance requires by its very nature an “armed fist” in order to enforce the restrictions. In other words, the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations allows the capitalist state to expand the repression apparatus to enforce everywhere that people who are not vaccinated do not enter this or that place, public transport, etc. Likewise, such repression forces will have to be present at various places in order to control and enforce the rules of social distancing, etc.

6. This is even more the case as only an utterly naïve person could believe that the virus will be eliminated in the foreseeable future. Hence, the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations does not end the “old” methods of the COVID Counterrevolution – based on the Lockdown policy and “social distancing”. No, it is very likely that the ruling class will continue to implement such counterrevolutionary measures and will rather *complement* them with the new methods.

7. Fifthly, the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations will become a gigantic chauvinist weapon of the imperialist bourgeoisie against migrants from poorer countries. If the state imposes comprehensive surveillance of its own citizens within their country, it will even more control all movements at the borders of its territory. The state will only allow those migrants to enter the country who can prove that they are vaccinated. Imperialist governments will build upon the public hysteria about COVID-19 and claim that any migrant who is not vaccinated is a potential danger for the whole population. Such a policy will legitimize an even more brutally and deadly mission of police and army at the borders and at the sea. In addition, as a substantial number of migrants are living in imperialist countries without official permission (so-called “illegal migrants” or “Sans-Papiers”), governments will use this as a pretext to increase the presence of repression forces on the streets and to control the identity papers of people.

8. Finally, the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations represents an extraordinary business opportunity for the monopolies in various sectors. This is not only true for the pharma corporations but also for the biotech industry, the IT and the security industry, and others. It is no accident that the leading monopolies associated with the richest billionaires in the world – from Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg to Zhong Shanshan, Jack

Ma and Huang Zheng (to name only a few) – have been key proponents of the Lockdown policy, of the concept of social distancing, of the “Green Pass” and of compulsory vaccinations. In short, the leading monopolies which were the economic backbone of the first stage of the COVID Counterrevolution (focused on the Lockdown policy), are also the driving economic force behind the second stage.

The place of the new system within the COVID Counterrevolution

9. All these developments do not come as a surprise as they are only the logical consequence of the fundamental nature of the COVID Counterrevolution. The RCIT as well as the Argentinean comrades of *Convergencia Socialista* (who have recently joined the RCIT) have emphasized from the very beginning of this era in February/March 2020 that the ruling class exploits the pandemic as an excuse for a preventive counterrevolution. As we pointed out in our Manifesto “*COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive*” (21 March 2020), the ruling class was faced with a *pre-revolutionary crisis* beginning in autumn 2019 due to the beginning of the Great Depression of the capitalist world economy, a global wave of mass struggles in numerous countries on all continents, and the acceleration of the tensions between the Great Powers. “*These are the conditions which make it necessary for the ruling class to adopt major steps in order to regain the initiative and to enforce its political control over the popular classes via massively expanding its state apparatus. In order to achieve this goal, they create the atmosphere of global panic and a state of emergency. They do so both on a national as well as on a global level.*”

10. It has been always clear to us that these factors do not disappear as capitalism has entered a deep, long-term and catastrophic period of crisis. It will remain necessary for the ruling class for an indefinite future to expand the chauvinist-bonapartist state apparatus in order to control and atomize the popular masses. Likewise, it will be urgent for the monopolies for an indefinite future that they try to increase their profits via such a “health” policy. Hence, we predicted that the new measures to surveil the population – under the pretext of “public health” and “*combating the pandemic*” – will not disappear in a few months or 1-2 years but which is here to stay for an indefinite period. As we stated in our *Manifesto* in March 2020, “*with one stroke, “Big Brother” is here, openly and without any attempt by the capitalist state to conceal it. The massive surveillance techniques will soon be the new normal worldwide.*” (For a more detailed elaboration we refer to our book “*The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It*”, published in April 2020)

11. For all these reasons, it is clear – both from announcements of leading representatives of the ruling class as well as from the inner logic of the fundamental nature of the COVID Counterrevolution – that the system of “Green Pass” and compulsory vaccinations is a long-term project of the ruling class. It will only disappear if it is defeated by a popular uprising!

12. The vast majority of the monopoly bourgeoisie in imperialist countries as well as in advanced semi-colonies has advocated and implemented the COVID Counterrevolution and its ideology of justification since spring 2020.

They claimed that SARS-CoV-2 would have caused an unprecedented pandemic, that it would represent such a dramatic danger for humanity that this would justify unprecedented restrictions of social life and mass curfews. Shamefully, most so-called left-wing parties parrot this propaganda advocated by large sectors of the ruling class and their media. Stalinist and left-populist parties supported the Lockdown policy from the beginning, brutally implemented it where they have been in power (e.g. Spain, South Africa, China, Vietnam). Some of them (including so-called “Trotskyists”) even called for a more draconic mass curfew (“ZeroCovid”).

COVID-19: Some Myths and Facts

13. As the RCIT has explained since February 2020, Marxists do not deny the existence of a pandemic or that the virus is dangerous for certain sectors of the population (old people and people with pre-existing disease). This is why socialists advocate the expansion of public health sector under workers and popular control. Likewise, vulnerable groups should be offered supportive measures if they wish so (e.g. leave of absence with full wages, comprehensive social and financial support for those who wish to isolate themselves, etc.).

14. However, from the viewpoint of public health there is no justification at all for the transformation of the society in a totalitarian direction! First, the bourgeois whips demagogically exaggerate the danger of the pandemic. As a matter of fact, this pandemic is not unique as similar events in last decades have also caused the death of millions of people (e.g. the influenza pandemics in 1957-58 and in 1968-69, HIV/AIDS, TBC, etc.). None of these pandemics has ever provoked a government to impose mass curfews on its people or to force the whole population to get vaccinated! Sweden, a country which has experienced no lockdown at all until now, had a total mortality per capita in 2020 which was only 1.5% higher than in 2015. Secondly, it is evident – and has been confirmed by various studies – that countries which imposed the Lockdown policy did not fare better than countries (or regions) which did not (e.g. Sweden, Uruguay). More generally, it is completely absurd to destroy a society because of a pandemic which might cause a somewhat higher mortality rate (up to the level of what it had been 5 or 10 years ago)!

15. This is not only absurd but also extremely dangerous since the policy of Lockdowns has catastrophic middle- and long-term consequences due to the lack of attention to people with other serious diseases (e.g. cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.). Furthermore, it is safe to assume that many people will have serious illnesses or will die directly because their immune defenses have been weakened due to the tremendous social stress caused by the governments’ COVID policy. We repeat that such a policy is, from a public health point of view, completely absurd given the fact that the COVID virus is not particularly dangerous for the vast majority of the population – i.e. for all except old people and people with pre-existing disease. For example, according to official data of Sweden’s authorities, all age groups under 75 years experienced hardly any or no increase at all of all-cause mortality per capita in 2020; only those above 90 years saw an increase of all-cause mortality per capita to a level higher

than that during the last decade (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Sweden)

16. To those who advocate mass vaccination, we say the following. We are not anti-vaxxers and vaccination has been useful against this or that illness. A socialist society would make serious research of public scientific institutions about which medicine is most effective against a disease. Such research would not be motivated by business interests but by public health considerations. We are not against vaccination if it is tested for its short-term effects and long-term consequences. However, we oppose the bourgeois propaganda for the COVID vaccines that have been hastily introduced – obviously in order to secure gigantic profits for the pharma corporations. Surely, crazy explanations by morons like Brazil's President Bolsonaro that vaccines will turn people into crocodiles can not be taken seriously. Nevertheless, not only have the potentially long-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines been barely researched. The vaccine policy of most governments is a Bonapartist mix of control and forcing people to obey to medical procedures as the price for the right of social freedom (which remain nevertheless limited). This is a general rehearsal for a future in which capitalists are not only dictating over the economic and social life, but even over the body of the working class and oppressed.

17. Furthermore, it would be naïve to assume that the laboratories of the big pharma corporations would subordinate their research to the interests of public health. No, obviously, they are paid by the corporations for the purpose of increasing their profits. Hence, their primary interest is to develop medicine for the largest possible market. For example, a vaccine which has to be boosted once or twice a year by everyone is an excellent way to make gigantic extra profits! In other words, the pharma corporations make business with the pandemic and have no interest to seriously eliminate it. If we add the psychological effects and other diseases caused or worsened by the Lockdown policy, it is evident that this increases the business opportunities for big pharma even more!

18. Given the fact that the long-term consequences of the currently used vaccines are not known, we propose that their application is limited to the vulnerable sectors of the population (as long as the affected people are informed about the risks and agree on such a treatment). Likewise, we oppose that alternative methods to vaccination – like Ivermectin, equine and human plasma, ibuprofen soluble, etc. – are not seriously considered. As our Argentinean comrades from *Convergencia Socialista* have pointed out for some time, it is necessary to call for the allocation of a part of the health budget to the development of such alternative treatments – even more so, as there have been promising results in Argentina.

19. Furthermore, it is clear that existing vaccines do not stop the spreading of the virus. This is evident from countries in which the majority of the population has been vaccinated (e.g. Israel, UK, Chile). However, everybody who wants to get a vaccination should have access and possibility to free vaccines of their choice. The same is the case for alternative treatments, medicine, etc. Only the workers movement can organize access to these resources in the most democratic and most effective way. Irrespective of the individual choice, we must state clearly: while vaccines as such have been used in the past mainly

for medical purposes, it became clear with the COVID-19 vaccine program that a huge political dimension has been added. Revolutionaries oppose any policy that makes getting vaccinated a precondition for participation in all aspects of economic, political and social life. Indigenous people, Black people in the United States, Roma and Sinti people in Europe and many other oppressed have already been forced to medical procedures in the past. They correctly mistrust the ruling classes based on their historical experiences, and we have to share this approach now more than ever before.

20. Even if it would be the case that vaccination reduces the risk of the virus, this would be hardly an argument for the current bourgeois mass vaccination policy. First, as said before, it is widely recognized that the virus is not particularly dangerous for large segments of the population. Why starting a never-ending cycle of mass vaccinations against such a virus?! Secondly, it is often ignored that the rush to introduce a campaign of new vaccines has negative long-term consequences. As such vaccines don't eliminate the virus in the whole population, it fastens the mutation of the virus, i.e. it makes the virus more dangerous. How can this represent an improvement from a public health point of view?!

21. To those who advocate compulsory vaccination we have nothing to say. As die-hard supporters of chauvinist state bonapartism who legitimize the shift towards totalitarianism, these are enemies of the people.

Mass protests and revolutionary tactics

22. It is hardly surprising that the draconic imposition of the system of "*Green Pass*" and compulsory vaccinations provokes wide-spread resentment by large sectors of the population. Despite a systematic and hysterical campaign by a nearly monolithic alliance of all parties and media of the bourgeoisie, many people do not buy the propaganda of the governments. In France, Italy, Greece and other countries large demonstrations have already taken place. In France, many local initiatives have sprung up in order to organize resistance. Likewise, various local trade union branches (including such of left-wing trade unions like CGT or SUD) oppose the new laws of Macron. However, on a political level, so-called left parties do not play any role in such mobilizations. This is hardly surprising since nearly all of them have been hard-core advocates of the COVID Counterrevolution since the beginning. As a result, those political forces which play a role in the opposition against the "*Green Pass*" and compulsory vaccinations are primarily petty-bourgeois democratic forces (including various artists) as well as certain right-wing forces (e.g. « *les Patriotes* » in France - a Euro-sceptic split from RN). Given the support of Stalinist and left-populist parties for the policy of Lockdown and mass vaccination, it is only logical that other forces take the leadership in such protests.

23. No doubt, die-hard reformist and centrists will point to the important role of right-wing forces in such mobilizations in order to justify their denunciation of these protests. However, it is the fault of the so-called "left" that reactionary forces can air as "democrats"! If the "left" capitulates to chauvinist state bonapartism, populist demagogues have free rein. Such a situation is not with-

out precedent. When Nazi-Germany occupied nearly all countries in Europe in 1939-41, the major force among left-wing parties – the Stalinists – refused to organize serious resistance because of Moscow's alliance with Hitler. When Stalin joined forces with U.S. and U.K. imperialism (1941-45), the Stalinists (as well as the social democrats) strongly opposed any class struggle in pro-Western countries and colonies. Hence, it was left to other forces – including some who collaborated with Nazi-Germany like Nasser in Egypt or Bose in India – who played a leading role in the liberation struggle.

24. What should be the tactics of socialists towards such demonstrations? Naturally, this has to be decided concretely on a case-by-case basis. However, the RCIT has advocated certain principles about this issue since spring 2020 which, in our opinion, are still valid. The strategic goal is to build a socialist, pro-working-class pole within the mass protests as this is a multi-class, highly contradictory, and often confused milieu. It is crucial to defeat and drive out reactionary, right-wing forces. It is absolutely legitimate to make tactical alliances with progressive, democratic forces. However, socialists have always to keep an independent profile. It is impermissible for socialists to build for demonstrations organized and dominated by right-wing forces (or even to make alliances with them). There can be contradictory situations where a mobilization has been originally initiated by a right-wing party but assumes such a mass character that they lose control over it in the course of a demonstration. In such situations it can be tactically sensible to intervene and to break sectors away from such a demonstration. Naturally, it is useful to distribute propaganda and agitation and to discuss with

participants wherever segments of the masses – driven by a democratic outrage against the COVID Counterrevolution – are engaged in protests. However, it is imperative to avoid any impression that the red flag could have anything in common with the flag of right-wing chauvinism! In the end, the goal must be that socialist, progressive and democratic forces organize their own, independent mobilizations against the COVID-19 Counterrevolution.

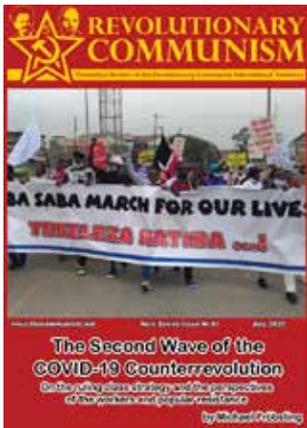
Conclusions

25. In summary, the RCIT considers the system of "Green Pass" and compulsory vaccinations as a new and dangerous stage of the COVID Counterrevolution. It opens the road to a drastic expansion of chauvinist-bonapartist police and surveillance state. It is driven by business interests of monopolies the pharma, bio-tech, the IT, the security, and other industries. Socialists must unreservedly oppose this gigantic reactionary offensive against democratic rights. They must build for socialist leadership in mass protests against this attack. Our main slogans are:

- * *Defense of democratic rights – no to all "emergency" laws of the last 1,5 years!*
- * *Expropriation of all pharmaceutical corporations under control of the working people!*
- * *Expansion of the public health sector under workers and popular control!*

We call all socialists who share a perspective as we have outlined in this document to join the RCIT in the struggle against the COVID Counterrevolution!

International Secretariat of the RCIT



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

COVID-19: The Capitalist Anti-Pandemic Policy Kills More People than the Pandemic Itself

A UN report on South Asia demonstrates the devastating consequences of the Lockdown policy

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 3 July 2021

A recently published report by the *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) reveals the devastating consequences of the capitalist Lockdown policy.

¹ The reports analysis the effects of the anti-pandemic policy of the governments in South Asia – a region which is home to 1.96 billion people or nearly 25% of the world population.

It is well-known that the draconic mass curfew imposed by the right-wing Modi governments in India had horrendous consequences for the popular masses. People – many of them day laborer – could no longer go to work. Slums were cordoned off and many millions of rural migrants were forced to leave the cities and to walk (as transport was closed) to their native villages. Likewise, the capitalist Lockdown policy resulted in severe disruption of social and health service. Other governments in the region imposed similar measures.

It is hardly surprising that such barbaric anti-people policy resulted in mass impoverishment and a large number of deaths, in particular among newborn and children. The UNICEF study reports: *“The observed and estimated disruption in SRMNCH services is expected to have had a substantial impact on maternal and child mortality. The number of deaths among children < 5 years are estimated to increase by a total of 228,641 across the six South Asian countries in 2020 compared to the previous year, with 134,789 of these deaths expected to occur in the neonatal period. The greatest increases are anticipated in India (154,020, 15% increase) and Pakistan (59,251, 14% increase) respectively. The number of stillbirths are also predicted to increase in the region. Across South Asia as a whole, an estimated 89,434 additional stillbirths are anticipated as a result of reduced coverage of essential SRMNCH services. (...) Similarly, the number of maternal deaths is also expected to increase in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic response, compared to those observed in 2019, with the highest number of deaths anticipated in India (7,750, 18% increase) and Pakistan (2,069, 21% increase). Due to the observed and expected reduction in coverage of modern contraceptive methods, more than 3.5 million additional unintended pregnancies are expected in South Asia, with the highest number likely in India (~3 million). The number of unsafe abortions are also expected to increase in the region, by more than 50%. Overall in South Asia, child and maternal mortality is expected to increase by 14% and 16%, respectively.”* (p. 20)

These figures are staggering. Nearly a ¼ million infants have died in 2020 in South Asia alone because of the capitalist Lockdown policy which was supposed to save lives! This is all the more remarkable as the number of dead children under 5 years in South Asia is higher than the total number of COVID-19 deaths! South Asia has reported nearly 13 million Covid cases and more than 186,000 deaths so far. ²

Even the UN – a solid instrument of the imperialist Great Powers which have all promoted the global Lockdown policy – can not escape notifying the utter cynicism of the

situation. *“According to our estimates, additional ~230,000 child, and ~11,000 maternal deaths will occur in South Asia in 2020 alone, as a result of coverage disruption of essential SRMNCH services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response. This number (> 240,000 maternal and child deaths) is far higher than the COVID-19 deaths observed and expected (< 200,000 by Dec 1, 2020).”* (p. 34)

Staggering high global figures

Readers must bear in mind that the UN report only deals with the consequences of the governments' pandemic policy for children under 5 years! Hence, they do not include the number of additional deaths among elder children and adults. It is therefore evident that the total number of deaths caused by the capitalist Lockdown policy is substantially higher.

Furthermore, if we now take into account that this study has dealt only with South Asia, it is not difficult to recognize that the global consequences of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution have been devastating in terms of excess mortality. While we are not aware of a current study on this issue, there exists a study published by *Lancet* last year. It attempted to calculate the consequences of the governments COVID-19 policy for child and maternal deaths in 118 low- and middle-income countries. Translated into the language of Marxism, these countries represent more or less the semi-colonies of the South where the vast majority of the world population lives.

The study was published in summer 2020 and, hence, is largely based on prognoses. The authors elaborate three different scenarios, from a best case to a worst case. They arrive at the following conclusions. *“Under our first scenario (...), over 6 months there would be 253 500 additional child deaths and 12 200 additional maternal deaths. Under our third scenario (...), over 6 months there would be 1,157,000 additional child deaths and 56,700 additional maternal deaths. These deaths would represent a 9.8–44.7% increase in under-5 child deaths per month, and an 8.3–38.6% increase in maternal deaths per month, across the 118 countries”* ³

As we have seen above, UNICEF calculates that about 228,000 children died in South Asia in 2020. This figure is nearly identical with the number in the best-case scenario of the *Lancet* study for the whole South! It therefore very likely that the global number of additional child and maternal deaths is close to the worst-case scenario (about 1,2 million)!

We repeat that these figures deal only with the consequences of the capitalist Lockdown policy for children under 5 years and not for the other age groups! Likewise, they only deal with the immediate effects and not the long-term consequences of the bourgeois COVID-19 policy. Needless to say, that the extreme impoverishment, exploding unemployment (114 million people were thrown out of the global labor force in 2020! ⁴), the destruction of social and

health infrastructure, etc. will reduce the lifespan of many people – in particular for the popular masses in the South but also for the lower strata of the working class in the imperialist heartlands. Add to this the devastating effects for education as a result of the closure of schools.

It is impossible to ignore the cynicism of the imperialist governments and their media. They shed crocodile tears when a pandemic results in the death of people mostly in their 70s, 80s or older living in rich countries. But it hardly makes it into the news when the Lockdown policy, which supposedly shall save lives, kills hundreds of thousands of children who, under other circumstances, could have had a whole life ahead of them! You see, the lives of old white people is much more worth than those of children living in the South!

Understanding the nature of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution

These tragic developments demonstrate, once more, that the official policy of capitalist government which supposedly should help fighting the pandemic, in fact is incapable to combat the pandemic, causes many unnecessary deaths, destroys the future for large sectors of the world population, and attacks democratic rights.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and our comrades of *Convergencia Socialista* (Argentina) have explained since spring 2020 that the ruling classes all over the world exploit the pandemic for their political and economic interests.⁵ Their policy of state of emergency, mass curfews, dramatic restrictions of movement and mass vaccination is not driven by any considerations for public health. If that would be the case, governments would have spent billions not for the expansion of the police and surveillance apparatus but rather for the expansion of the public health sectors.

But the ruling class has never cared about the health and well-being of the popular masses. They only care for power and profit. Hence, they have utilized the pandemic all over the world, on one hand, to launch a process of massive expansion of the police and surveillance state – resulting in a shift from parliamentary democracy to *Chauvinist State Bonapartism* resp. an expansion of authoritarian state regimes. On the other hand, the big corporations have exploited the crisis for creating gigantic profits and advancing the process of monopolization.⁶ This is the real essence of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution.

The silly Lockdown Left and the smart Indian peasants

Shamefully, the opportunist left-wing parties deny this elementary truth. In order to ensure themselves a place in the institutions of the capitalist state or in the ranks of the labor bureaucracy (or at least in hope for such), the Lockdown Left supports more or less all pillars of the bonapartist government policy (like lockdowns, banning of mass events under the pretext of “social distancing”, mass vaccination, etc.).⁷ In consequence, while Marxists have fought the COVID-19 Counterrevolution from the very beginning, these crawling capitulationists have become its social-bonapartist servants.

In contrast to the Lockdown Left, large sectors of the working class and the popular masses increasingly un-

derstand the political and economic interests of the ruling class behind the official pandemic policy. This has been reflected in spontaneous uprisings and mass demonstrations all over the world.⁸

Let us conclude by providing a recent example which demonstrates that the popular masses increasingly understand the nature of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. As is well known the Indian peasants are waging a massive struggle against the Modi government since more than half a year.⁹ In early May, the Modi government started to impose new lockdowns under the pretext of the pandemic. In response, many peasant unions launched mass protests against the lockdown.

*“Farmers from Punjab on 8 May will stage a protest opposing the statewide lockdown, a congregation of 32 farmer organisations from Punjab, the major organ of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) decided at a meeting held on the Singhu border on Wednesday, 5 May. (...) Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Balbir Singh Rejwal said, “It is the decision of 32 farmer unions of Punjab that on 8 May, a large number of farmers, labourers, shopkeepers will come out on the streets and protest against the lockdown.” The farmers’ leader added that the central government had failed to provide proper healthcare and basic facilities like oxygen, beds, medicines, etc to the citizens, and “while the BJP is claiming that the farmers are spreading the corona, the farmers are taking necessary precautions and vaccinations”. A press note by the SKM stated, “Governments are imposing lockdowns to hide their failures and to take anti-people decisions, which are affecting the lives of farmers, labourers, shopkeepers and common citizens.”*¹⁰

No doubt, if the leftist intellectuals would not be so stupid but as intelligent as the Indian peasants, things would be much better for the so-called “left”!

Footnotes

1 United Nations Children’s Fund: Direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and response in South Asia, March 2021

2 BBC: Covid-19 disruptions killed 228,000 children in South Asia, says UN report, 17 March 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56425115>

3 Timothy Robertson at el: Early estimates of the indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal and child mortality in low-income and middle-income countries: a modelling study, *Lancet Glob Health* Vol 8 July 2020; Published Online: May 12, 2020, p. e906, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30229-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30229-1)

4 ILO: World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2021, Geneva 2021, p. 22

5 The RCIT has 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/>.

6 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: That Was A Damn Good Year ... for the Billionaires in West and East who massively gained from the anti-democratic Lockdown policy, 5 January 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-that-was-a-damn-good-year-for-the-billionaires-in-west-and-east/>

7 For our critique of the Lockdown Left see various articles on the above mentioned sub-page: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>.

8 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: Interesting Assessments of the Global Class Struggle by a Bourgeois Think Tank, 21 June 2021, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/interesting-assessments-of-the-global-class-struggle-by-a-bourgeois-think-tank/>.

9 See on this e.g. RCIT: India: Victory to the “Dilli Chalo” Uprising! 22.12.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/india-victory-to-the-dilli-chalo-uprising/>

10 ‘Govt Failed’: Punjab Farmers to Oppose COVID Lockdown on 8 May, The Quint, 05 May 2021, <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/government-has-failed-farmers-to-oppose-covid-lockdown-on-8-may#read-more#read-more>

