



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency



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May 2019

Strategies and Tactics in the Great Arab Revolution

PLUS: Zionism & Anti-Semitism * Bangladesh & the Saudi Military Pact
China's Billionaire Lawmakers * Proposal for a Revolutionary Platform

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.18, May 2019

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Picture on the cover is from a rally in solidarity with the Syrian Revolution (Vienna/Austria, 17 March 2019)

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

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Zionism and Anti-Semitism

By Yossi Schwartz, Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine), 21.03.2019

The last attack on pro-Palestinians political figures is the attack on Ilhan Omar in the US. Recently I signed a statement circulated by Jews for Palestinian Right of Return. It says:

"We Stand with Ilhan

We are Jews who stand with Representative Ilhan Omar. She has been falsely accused of anti-Semitism since tweeting that GOP threats against her and Representative Rashida Tlaib for criticizing Israel were "all about the Benjamins baby." When asked to clarify who is paying members of Congress "to be pro-Israel," Omar replied, "AIPAC!"

There is absolutely nothing anti-Semitic about calling out the noxious role of AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee), which spends millions each year to buy U.S. political support for Israeli aggression and militarism against the Palestinian people. As the NYC chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace summed up: "Accurately describing how the Israel lobby works in this country is not anti-Semitic. The never-ending smear campaign against Ilhan Omar is racism and Islamophobia in action."

There is no denying that money rules U.S. politics, and that powerful lobbies from the NRA to the fossil fuel lobby to AIPAC play destructive, anti-democratic roles in our political system, wielding money for legislative influence. The pro-Israel lobby has played an outsized role in producing nearly unanimous congressional support for Israel. It has organized a national campaign to suppress Palestinian activism on campuses, made the Israel Anti-Boycott Act a legislative priority, and for decades has boasted about their power to make or break political careers. To point out this reality is not anti-Semitic.

Genuine anti-Semitism and the growth of white supremacy are indeed growing concerns in Donald Trump's America. Omar and Tlaib, the first two Muslim congresswomen in this country's history, are not part of this ugly growth of white supremacy. Instead, they are part of movements which seek to confront it. For that, and for their courageous support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, they are being smeared by a racist and Islamophobic chorus, including the House Democratic leadership itself.

As long as the Israeli state continues to militarily besiege, economically choke, and incessantly dispossess the Palestinian people, and as long as it does so with the full backing of the United States government, we need to speak out against these crimes. We thank Ilhan Omar for having the bravery to shake up the

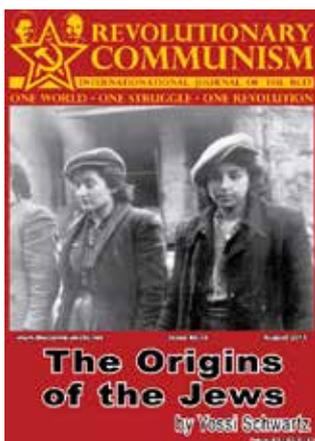
congressional taboo against criticizing Israel. As Jews with a long tradition of social justice and anti-racism, AIPAC does not represent us". (1)

AIPAC and similar Zionist organizations in Europe is not concern with the fact that the Israeli government allies itself with real Anti-Semite parties, movements and government, but they lead the attack on progressive people and movement that are in solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians. Last week Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shocked even his like-minded politicians by joining forces with an openly racist party, the far-right *Otzma Yehudit* Party, which prides itself in tracing its roots to Rabbi Meir Kahane, considered the father of the most far-right Jewish groups. Until now no leader of a major party aligns himself with a fascist group that calls for, among other things, the expulsion of Israel's Palestinian citizens and the total annexation of Palestinian land.

AIPAC was forced to support a statement by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), which described the alliance with *Otzma Yehudit* as "reprehensible". AIPAC said that it agrees with the AJC, adding that it has a long-standing policy not to meet with members of this racist and reprehensible party.

Thus AIPAC does not condemn Netanyahu for his alliance with the fascists in and out of Israel. It invited US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer to its annual conference where he said that Israeli settlement building was not an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians, instead blaming the failure to reach a peace accord on the Palestinian refusal to accept the Jewish state. AIPAC does not condemn the Israeli army for killing every Friday people in Gaza who want to return to their lands stolen by Israel when Israel expelled 750,000 Palestinians in 1947-8. AIPAC contributes money to the settlements. This explains why they cannot criticize Netanyahu and his connection to the fascists. Among the contributors to the settlements is *Christians United for Israel* founder John Hagee.

The Christian Zionists were always supporters of Zionism. The Zionist ideology did not begin with Herzl or the Jews. It began with Christian Zionism. Christian Zionism began among Protestants of the 16th century and 17th century Puritans of England. In 1607, Thomas Brightman published a book by the name "Revelation of the Revelation" where he spoke of the return of the Jews to Palestine. Isaac



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

de la Peyrere (1594-1676), the French Ambassador to Denmark, wrote a similar book.

In the 18th century, the Christian Zionist Movement, under the name *Restoration Movement*, among them Thomas Newton, the Bishop of Bristol, preached the same idea.

In the 19th century one of the leaders of the Christian Zionists was Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, a member of the Tory party. Shaftesbury argued for a Jewish return as a way to advance the economic and political advantages for England. In 1853, Shaftesbury wrote to the Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, that Greater Syria was "a country without a nation" in need of "a nation without a country... Is there such a thing? To be sure there is, the ancient and rightful lords of the soil, the Jews!" (2) This is of course the origin of the Zionist slogan coined by the British Jewish Zionist Israel Zangwill: "A land without people for people without a land."

One of the Christian Zionists was the Chaplain William H. Hechler who worked with Herzl and attended the first Zionist Congress. (3)

The Christian Zionists influenced Balfour and his known declaration of 1917, in which Arthur Balfour wrote that the British government viewed "with favor the establishment of a Jewish national home" in Palestine. Another known Christian Zionist was Orde Wingate who trained the Zionist terrorist organization "night operation".

He said: "here is only one way to deal with the situation, to persuade the gangs that, in their predatory raids, there is every chance of their running into a government gang which is determined to destroy them. The units would carry the offensive to the enemy, take away his initiative and keep him off-balance, "and ...produce in their minds the belief government forces will move at night and can and will surprise them either in villages or across country." (4)

Thus in the case of Christian Zionism the Gospel became the ideology of imperialism colonialism and militarism. David Lloyd-George was even more pro-Zionist than Balfour. From Great Britain Christian Zionism moved to the USA where a number of Protestant theologians including the evangelist Dwight Moody, C.I. Schofield and William E. Blackstone. The Christian Zionists saw the wars of 1948 and 1967 as miracles of God and the beginning of the end of times which is a period of wars destructions and the building of the Jewish third temple. They are hard supporters of Zionist apartheid in entire Palestine. According to their belief system Jesus will return to reign on Earth after an epic battle between good and evil. The Zionists are the good and the Muslims are the bad. The Evangelical leader Pat Robertson, while on his tour of Israel during the Israel-Lebanon war, said: "The Jews are God's chosen people. Israel is a special nation that has a special place in God's heart. He will defend this nation. So Evangelical Christians stand with Israel. That is one of the reasons I am here." (5)

In addition to the Christian Zionists Napoleon Bonaparte advocated a Jewish autonomy under French protection in Palestine in 1799 during his battle in Acre. He wrote: "The great nation which does not trade in men and countries as did those which sold your ancestors unto all people (Joel,4,6) herewith calls on you not indeed to conquer your patrimony ;nay, only to take over that which has been conquered and, with that nation's warranty and support, to remain master of it to maintain it against all comers." (6)

The alliance of the Zionists with real Anti-Semitism and at the same time stealing the Palestinian lands did not begin with Netanyahu. In 1895, Herzl wrote in his diary:

"We must expropriate gently the private property on the state assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our country. The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly. Let the owners of the immoveable property believe that they are cheating us, selling us things for more than they are worth. But we are not going to sell them anything back." (7)

Benny Morris (the Israeli Historian), described how Herzl foresaw how anti-Semitism could be "harnessed" for the realization of Zionism. He stated:

"Herzl regarded Zionism's triumph as inevitable, not only because life in Europe was ever more untenable for Jews, but also because it was in Europe's interests to rid the Jews and relieved of anti-Semitism: The European political establishment would eventually be persuaded to promote Zionism. Herzl recognized that anti-Semitism would be harnessed to his own--Zionist-purposes." (8)

In his attempts to get the support of the Russian Tsar Herzl met in 1903, shortly after Kishinev pogrom the tsar's interior minister, von Plehve, who had organized the pogroms. Herzl promised Plehve that the Zionists will help the Tsar by turning the Jews away from socialist politics. Plehve told him: "You don't have to justify the movement to me. You are preaching to a convert."

Richard Silverstein in the Jewish Magazine *Tikun Olam* wrote: "Eichmann didn't just visit Palestine in 1937 to meet with the Zionist leadership. He didn't just serve as the Nazis in implementing the Haavara Agreement. He actually endorsed Zionism and did so with fulsome praise. This *New York Times* review of 'In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy From the Women of Terezin' quotes the memory of a Terezin survivor who met Eichmann: Anny Stern was one of the lucky ones. In 1939, after months of hassle with the Nazi bureaucracy, the occupying German Army at her heels, she fled Czechoslovakia with her young son and emigrated to Palestine. At the time of Anny's departure, Nazi policy encouraged emigration. "Are you a Zionist?" Adolph Eichmann, Hitler's specialist on Jewish affairs, asked her. "Jawohl," she replied. "Good," he said, "I am a Zionist, too.

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I want every Jew to leave for Palestine." There is an even more explosive story told of Eichmann's self-identification with Zionism. It was published in Life Magazine in 1960 under the title, 'I Transported Them to the Butcher: Eichmann's Story': 'In the years that followed (after 1937) I often said to Jews with whom I had dealings that, had I been a Jew, I would have been a fanatical Zionist. I could not imagine anything else. In fact, I would have been the most ardent Zionist imaginable.' (9)

Francis R. Nicosia book *"Zionism and Anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany"* does not hide the collaboration of the Zionists with the Nazis but he tried to excuse it by pointing out to the unequal relations between the Nazis and the Zionists. He wrote:

"In the end, the relationship between Zionism and anti-Semitism in Germany helped to define what each was and, perhaps more importantly, what each was not during the period of about half a century before the onset of the final solution" (p. 9). "Thus, the policies of Hitler's regime toward Zionism and the Zionist movement in Germany before 1941, as examples of the implementation of its anti-Semitic ideology, only diminish the likelihood that the 'final solution' was part of an earlier plan or intention to ultimately mass murder the Jews of Europe" (pp. 10-11). "Throughout the 1930s, as part of the regime's determination to force the Jews to leave Germany, there was almost unanimous support in German government and Nazi party circles for promoting Zionism among German Jews, and Jewish emigration from Germany to Palestine" (p. 79).

The Nazis view Zionism as *"an important instrument in addressing both parts of the process of reversing Jewish emancipation and assimilation in Germany and ending Jewish life in the Reich through emigration."* (p. 105)

Thus Zionism is not only the enemy of the Palestinians, it is also enemy of the Jews. A growing number of liberal and left wing Jews in the USA and other places begin to understand it. Anti-Semitism is an enemy of all progressive people and the Zionists are the best friends of the Anti-Semitism. It is time to expose the real nature of the beast.

Footnotes

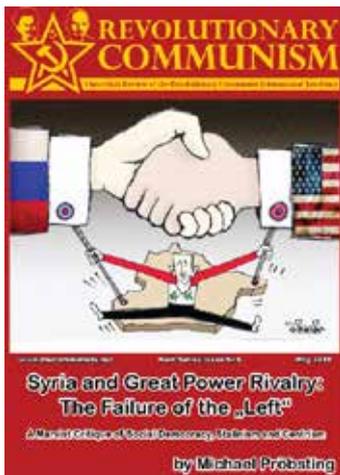
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- (5) David Krusch, "Christian Zionism", Jewish Virtual Library
- (6) Middle East Web: Napoleon Bonaparte's Letter to the Jews
- (7) Benny Morris: Righteous Victims, 1999, p. 21-22
- (8) Ibid, p. 21
- (9) Richard Silverstein: Adolf Eichmann: "If I Were a Jew, I'd Be a Fanatical Zionist, Tikun Olam, May 27, 2016, <https://www.richardsilverstein.com/2016/05/27/adolf-eichmann-if-i-were-a-jew-id-be-a-fanatical-zionist/>

We refer reader for more information on the ISL's and the RCIT's stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people to our websites <http://www.theisleague.com> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>.

The ISL's program can be read here: <http://www.theisleague.com/our-platform/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/summary-of-isl-program/>

See also Yossi Schwartz: Israel's War of 1948 and the Degeneration of the Fourth International, <http://the-isleague.com/1948-war-5-2013/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/israel-s-war-of-1948/>

Michael Pröbsting: On some Questions of the Zionist Oppression and the Permanent Revolution in Palestine, <http://the-isleague.com/zionist-oppression-and-permanent-revolution/> and <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/permanent-revolution-in-palestine/>



Publications of the RCIT

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

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2018

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

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

Bangladesh and the Saudi Military Pact

By Apu Sarwar, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 02 April 2019

Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia signed a treaty of military cooperation in mid-February 2019. There is very little public information about this agreement. Lack of press freedom, secrecy about BD military activities, and a collaborative effort between the government of Bangladesh and national media have kept details of this military pact under wraps.

The Bangladesh Army

The Bangladeshi (BD) army and government, separately and selectively, leaked news of this arrangement in the local media without much elaboration. The BD Army chief acknowledged that 1,800 Bangladeshi military personnel will be deployed along the Saudi-Yemeni border for “non-combat” purposes. The BD Army’s engineering and medical core will also deploy in the Saudi Kingdom. The BD army chief additionally mentioned that his officers will work with the *Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition* (IMCTC). Saudi Arabia’s military officers are to receive training alongside the Bangladeshi armed forces at the Bangladeshi Military Academy.

In the period since the 1971 founding of Bangladesh, the military has ruled the country directly for 15 of those years. Six percent of the annual budget goes to military spending. The armed forces and government are reluctant to provide any information about military spending. Precise information concerning military expenditures is frequently unavailable. The Bangladesh Army is a gigantic corporate entity. It runs banks, a university; food, textile, jute, and power plants; and it’s responsible for roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects. It controls billions of dollars worth of property. There is no evidence that ordinary soldiers benefit from these financial activities. Army bureaucrats are the sole beneficiaries of these corporations run by the military.

Any kind of criticism of the military’s activities is virtually banned in Bangladesh. There is undeclared martial law in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT); home of many non-Muslim, minority ethnic groups. Since the inception of Bangladesh, the Dhaka administration has carefully settled landless peasants and unemployed people from other parts of the country to eradicate non-Muslim, minority ethnic groups and promote “Islamization” of the area. Bengali settlements in CHT have already destroyed the way of life of the indigenous (Chakma, Marma and other nationalities) peoples. Bengali settlers backed by the Bengali Armed Forces are responsible for ethnic violence. This includes the rape of indigenous women, disappearances, arson, and looting in the CHT. The armed forces play a direct role in maintaining a climate of fear in the area.

The ambition of creating the equivalent of NATO in the Middle East is an old idea backed by the USA. Internal conflicts have previously frustrated this development. However for an extended period of time the six Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar) plus Egypt and Jordan have managed some level of military cooperation against their “shared

concern” with Iran and its proxy militias. After multiple attempts at establishing an intergovernmental military alliance of Muslim countries, the *Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition* (IMCTC), was formed in December 2015.

The IMCTC is led by Saudi Arabia and the operational headquarters are in Riyadh. There are 41 Muslim countries in this alliance. Both Iran and Iraq are excluded. The IMCTC has become a vehicle for making Saudi Arabia the dominant national power in the Middle East. The Saudis depend on their close ties with the USA to strengthen this regional status. While the IMCTC is of direct service to Saudi goals, the foreign policies of the balance of the member countries are not based on countering Iran. Hence, its role in the region has related, inherent limitations.

Saudi Arabia is the regional iron fist of US imperialism. Iran and Saudi Arabia may be fierce rivals but they share similar political foundations. Both capitalist countries have established an authoritarian political system built around their interpretation of Islamic law and both actively maintain support groups in Muslim majority countries. Iran and Saudi Arabia have always had brutal, despotic regimes that do not tolerate human rights, free expression, or the right to independent political organization. These two countries freely arrest, torture, and assassinate citizens who express opinions at variance with their government’s policies. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia have an explicit goal of exporting their brand of Islam beyond their borders.

In the immediate post-WWII period (following the CIA overthrow of Iran’s democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, and the installation of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, in 1953), Iran and Saudi Arab were the “twin pillars” of US policy in the region. However, things changed with the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979. The Iranian Islamists called for the overthrow of monarchies and secular governments and their replacement with Islamic republics. This alarmed the Sunni-run Saudi monarchy. The new era of regional hostilities started at this point.

The War in Yemen

Yemen is strategically important. It links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden through which most of the world’s oil shipments pass. One of the Arab world’s poorest countries, Yemen is in the midst of an extraordinary humanitarian catastrophe. In 2015, it was ranked 168 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, based on the challenges of life expectancy, education, and standard of living. The Yemeni civil war is an ongoing conflict that began in 2011. There are multiple factions. However, the conflict consists of two main antagonists: those led by President Hadi and those led by the Houthis. Both claim to constitute the official government of Yemen. The Houthis are a branch of Shiite Muslims backed by Iran and President Hadi’s forces are backed by Iran’s enemy, Saudi Arabia.

The Houthis came to power in spring 2015 against the background of a popular insurrection against the Hadi

regime which implemented a reactionary austerity policy dictated by the International Monetary Fund. The Saudi regime, fearing that this popular rebellion might spread and undermine its regional hegemony, soon intervened and invaded Yemen in order to subjugate the people. Hence, Houthi-led camp has been leading a legitimate defensive, national liberation war while the Saudi aggressors and their local allies are waging an utterly reactionary war. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) and its comrades in Yemen have stated from the beginning that revolutionaries are obligated to defend Yemen against the Saudi aggression, without lending any political support to the Houthis, which is a petty bourgeois Islamist movement.

Saudi military intervention marks the first time in the kingdom's history that its army is involved in a major operation abroad without the direct participation of the U.S. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have conducted airstrikes in Yemen. The United States and the United Kingdom have both provided logistical support and intelligence to the Saudi-led coalition. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Morocco, Sudan, Jordan, and Egypt are also actively participating in the Saudi-led war against Yemen.

Initially, the Saudis thought the war and their related involvement would be short-lived. However the war in Yemen staggers on and continues to evolve in new and explosive directions. This has generated Saudi concerns

that the continued success of the Houthis will have a highly negative impact on the Saudi's domestic politics. Arising from this very real fear, the Saudis are pre-emptively gathering boots on the ground. The Bangladesh-Saudi military pact is a direct response and part of a strategy of mobilizing forces to quell what is regarded by the US-Saudi coalition as a serious regional threat.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) demands:

* *Down with the Bangladesh-Saudi military alliance!*

* *Defend Yemen against the al-Saud Gang of Aggressors! Support the resistance led by the Houthi rebels while not giving any political support to their leadership! No return of the reactionary lackey "President" al-Hadi!*

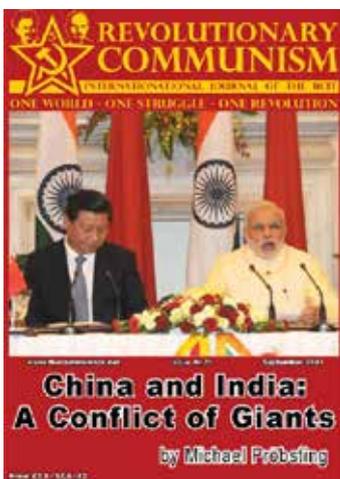
* *For the founding of popular action councils and armed militias to defend Yemen against Saudi aggression!*

* *For a Workers' and Fallahin government defended by popular militias which will expropriate the foreign corporations and the rich domestic capitalists! For the nationalization of the key industries and banks under workers' control!*

* *No to reactionary sectarianism – for unity of Sunni and Shia workers and fellahin, one which is based on solidarity and respect for all groups! Down with the Salafi-Takfiri Daesh!*

* *Down with the reactionary monarchy of Saudi Arabia! Down with the Mullah regime in Iran!*

* *Unite the national liberation war in Yemen with the liberation struggles in Palestine, Syria, Algeria, Libya, and other countries! Forward to the second wave of the Arab Revolution!*



PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT

The China-India Conflict: Its Causes and Consequences

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

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A4 Format

Introductory Remarks * I. Recent Developments * II. The Struggle for Domination of Bhutan * III. The Background: Accelerating Rivalry between China and India in a Period of Capitalist Decay * China's Belt and Road Initiative * India's OCOR as an Alternative to OBOR? * India's Increasing Ties with US and Japanese Imperialism * How are the chances in a military confrontation between India and China? * IV. China as an Emerging Great Imperialist Power * China's Monopolies * Super-Exploitation of the Working Class * China's Capital Export * China as a Military Power * V. India: A Peculiar Semi-Colony in the Role of a Regional Power * A Brief Historical Review * The Characteristics of India's Semi-Colonial Economy * India's Economic Elites: Many ... and at the same time Few * The Parasitic Nature of the Indian Bourgeoisie * India as a Regional Power and an Oppressor State * Brief Remarks on an Historic Analogy: The Ottoman Empire * VI. Revolutionary Tactics in the China-India Conflict * Appendix: Imperialist vs. Semi-Colonial State: Some Theoretical Considerations * 1. What are the Respective Characteristics of an Imperialist vs. a Semi-Colonial State? * 2. Is a Transition from Being One Type of State to Another Possible? * 3. Is the Category of "Sub-Imperialism" Useful? * Footnotes

China: Down with the Pseudo-“Communist” Capitalist Dictatorship!

**No to any imperialist Great Power – U.S., China, Japan, Russia
or the European Union! For a Workers and Poor Peasants Republic!**

Proposal for a platform of revolutionary activists from the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), April 2019

Comrades, brothers and sisters!

The Xi regime claims to defend “socialism”. This is a lie! For many years the regime in Beijing has represented the interests of a small capitalist class. This regime has made China the country with the greatest number of billionaires in the world. Chinese corporations do not spread socialism in the world but imperialism and neo-colonialism.

The regime claims that it continues the heroic struggle of the Chinese people of the 19th and 20th century against foreign imperialism. In fact, this regime has nothing to do with the traditions of the peasant uprisings of the “Yellow Turbans”, the “Red Turbans”, the Taiping, the glorious revolutions of 1911 and 1925-27, or the defeat of the Japanese imperialists and the KMT traitors. It resembles, rather, a modern, capitalist version of the despotic and corrupt empires of Old China.

The RCIT says: this is not a socialist government but a pseudo-“communist” capitalist dictatorship!

The struggle for authentic socialism must not be conducted *with* the regime or via *reform* of the ruling party. No, the struggle for authentic socialism must be conducted by *organizing the workers and oppressed for the struggle against the regime*. The goal must be to organize for the overthrow of the pseudo-“communist” capitalist dictatorship via a socialist revolution of the workers and oppressed!

The RCIT calls on revolutionary activists in China to join forces and build a revolutionary party as part of a new Revolutionary World Party. Join us in this struggle for a socialist future!

The RCIT proposes the following platform of struggle:

** Support workers struggles for higher wages and better working conditions! Against increasing wage disparities!*

** Defend the people in the villages against bureaucratic oppression and exploitation!*

** No suppression of democratic rights! For freedom of the press, the right of assembly, the right to form new parties, the right to independent trade unions, and the right to organize strikes! For religious freedom!*

** Abolition of the hukou system! For the right to move around freely inside the country and equal access for all to social and health services!*

** Stop the oppression of the national minorities in East Turkestan (“Xinjang”), Tibet and other provinces! Dissolution of the so-called re-education camps! Compensation to all prisoners and their families! For the right of national self-determination, including the right to establish independent states!*

** Against the oppression of women! Against the one-child policy!*

** Down with chauvinism, militarism and imperialism! Down with the Islamophobic agitation against Muslims! No to the global trade war! No support for any imperialist Great Power – U.S., China, Japan, Russia or the European Union!*

** Expropriate the domestic and foreign capitalists! Nationalization of all large enterprises in industry, service, agriculture and finance! Put them under workers control!*

** Down with the Pseudo-“Communist” Capitalist Dictatorship!*

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

China's transformation into an imperialist power

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

By Michael Pröbsting (International Secretary of the RCIT)

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China's Billionaire Lawmakers

A telling comparison of extremely wealthy Chinese lawmakers with their peers in the US Congress

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 9 March 2019

The Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* recently published a highly interesting report about the wealth of China's lawmakers.¹ The paper is known as a serious source and it certainly knows what it's talking about as it is owned by the *Alibaba Group*, a Chinese multinational technology corporation headed by Jack Ma, one of the wealthiest people in the world.

According to the SCMP, China's lawmakers suffered a decline of their wealth last year as a result of the crisis in the stock market. The Shanghai Composite Index declined by 24.6% in 2018; Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index fell 13.6%, while the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index fell 13.5%. (This has been a global development: the Tokyo Stock Exchange lost 43% of its value in market capitalization.)²

Still, they have hardly any reason to complain. The article reports that out of the 5,000 delegates of China's legislature, 93 are dollar-denominated billionaires. (Unfortunately the report does not tell us how many of China's lawmakers are millionaires but the figure must be obviously substantially larger.) Despite the stock market decline, these dollar-denominated billionaires/lawmakers have an accumulated wealth of US\$504 billion!

The SCMP adds: "By comparison, the 50 richest members of the US Congress had a combined wealth of US\$2 billion in 2016, according to Roll Call's data. Darrell Issa, co-founder of automobile components maker Directed Electronics, and the Republican

Representative for California, was the wealthiest congressman that year, with a net worth of US\$283.3 million."

This is without doubt a remarkable figure: China's 93 billionaires' lawmakers have an accumulated wealth of US\$504 billion while the 50 richest members of the US Congress have a combined wealth of "only" US\$2 billion!

This confirms, once more, the RCIT's analysis of the emergence of a powerful capitalist class in China. We have elaborated in numerous studies that China has not only become a capitalist country in the early 1990s but it even transformed into an imperialist Great Power in the past decade.³ In the last few years, China has even become the country with the largest (according to Chinese sources) or second-largest (according to Western sources) number of billionaires.⁴ The latest issue of the China-based *Hurun Report* states that "China leads world for 4th year for billionaires with 658, 74 ahead of USA with 584."⁵

The substantially higher number of millionaires among Chinese lawmakers, compared with the U.S., results from the different, historically conditioned, physiognomy of China's ruling capitalist class. American monopoly capitalists are a much "older", longer-existing class. It has established a political and social division of labor. Billionaires don't need to enter Congress in order to implement their dictates. They have, at their disposal, trusted politicians who act as loyal executives.

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018 -

A World Pregnant With Wars And Popular Uprisings

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

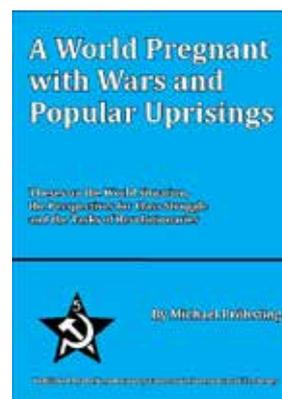
This book is a major contribution of our organization to keep the Marxists' analysis of the world situation and its accelerating contradictions updated. As we emphasize in the document, we consider it as crucial for revolutionaries to understand the nature and the inner dynamics of the current historic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

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

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

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

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



China's monopoly bourgeoisie is a much younger class. It has existed only two or three decades. It is led by a much more centralized leadership. Without this structure, China could have not succeeded in catching up to the older, Western Great Powers. (China's economy as a whole is still more backward than the U.S., European, or Japanese rivals.) As a result, China's ruling class has a less established division of labor. Business and politics are more directly united at the personal level.

It is a sad joke that there are still a number of Stalinist, Bolivarian and pseudo-Trotskyist forces which continue to praise China as a "socialist" or "workers state" (with or without deformations). As we have demonstrated in our latest book, this claim is in full contradiction to the reality and only serves to conceal social-imperialist support for a Great Power that is now challenging U.S. imperialism for global hegemony.⁶

We repeat - revolutionaries must defend the interests of China's working class and oppressed peoples against the Stalinist-capitalist regime.⁷ Socialists around the world must not lend support to *any* imperialist state. Down with *all* Great Powers – the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and the EU!⁸ We call on revolutionaries to join the RCIT in building a Revolutionary World Party that fights for international socialism!

Footnotes

1 Yujing Liu: China's billionaire lawmakers are fewer and less wealthy, as 2018 stock market rout crimped their ranks and fortunes, 6 Mar, 2019 <https://www.scmp.com/business/monopoly/wealth/article/2188727/fewer-billionaires-among-chinas-lawmakers-2018-stock-market>

2 We refer readers for an overview of the state of the capitalist world economy which is close to another Great Recession to the chapter "World Economy: The Next Great Recession is About to

Begin" of the RCIT's *World Perspectives 2019* (<https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2019/>).

3 For a detailed analysis of China's capitalism and its rise to a new imperialist Great Power, we refer readers to the numerous RCIT publications which can be found in a special section on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/>. On the process of capitalist restoration see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: China's transformation into an imperialist power. A study of the economic, political and military aspects of China as a Great Power, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 4, <http://www.thecommunists.net/publications/revcom-number-4>

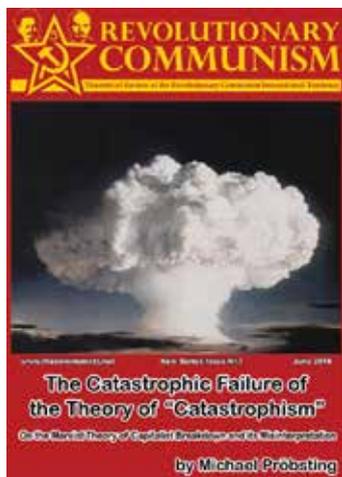
4 Michael Pröbsting China: A Paradise for Billionaires. The latest UBS/PwC Report about the Global Super-Rich Delivers another Crushing Blow to the Stalinist Myth of China's "Socialism", 27.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-as-a-paradise-for-billionaires/>

5 Loong Palace: Hurun Global Rich List 2019, 2019-02-26, <http://www.hurun.net/EN/Article/Details?num=24DD41EE3B19>

6 Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective, RCIT Books, January 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>

7 See e.g. Michael Pröbsting: China: Defend the Muslim Uyghurs against Oppression! 18.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/china-defend-the-muslim-uyghurs-against-oppression/>

8 See on this, in addition to our new book on Great Power rivalry: RCIT: Theses on Revolutionary Defeatism in Imperialist States. Resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 8 September 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-revolutionary-defeatism-in-imperialist-states/>; RCIT: Global Trade War: No to Great Power Jingoism in West and East! Neither Imperialist Globalization nor Imperialist Protectionism! For International Solidarity and Joint Struggle of the Working Class and Oppressed People! 4 July 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/joint-statement-on-the-looming-global-trade-war/>



NEW RCIT PUBLICATION!

The Catastrophic Failure of the Theory of "Catastrophism"

By Michael Pröbsting, May 2018

*On the Marxist Theory of Capitalist Breakdown and its Misinterpretation
by the Partido Obrero (Argentina) and its
"Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International"*

Introduction * A Note on the PO's term "Catastrophism" * What did the Marxist Classics Say? A Brief Overview * Empirical Evidence for the Long-Term Decline of Capitalism * What will come after Capitalism? * Epoch and Periods * The Current Historical Period which Opened in 2008/09 * Empirical Evidence for the Decay of Capitalism in the Present Historic Period * The Dialectical and the Mechanistic Interpretation of Cycles on Capitalism * Permanent Collapse? No, there is Collapse and Collapse * Consequences of "Catastrophism" (I): Confusion on Capitalist Restoration * Consequences of "Catastrophism" (II): Confusion on China and Russia as Capitalist Powers * Excuse: The Theory of "Long Waves" and Dialectical Materialism * From Economic Crisis to Revolutionary Situation? * Can the Crisis of Leadership be Solved without an International Democratic-Centralist Organization? * Conclusions * Footnotes

A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format

The Slogan of the Constituent Assembly in the Great Arab Revolution

Defending the Marxist approach against ultra-left and opportunist criticism

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23 April 2019

The popular uprisings in Algeria and Sudan in the last few months have triggered the beginning of the second wave of the Arab Revolution. ¹ These epochal events push, once again, a number of crucial questions of revolutionary strategy and tactic into the foreground.

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) has supported the Great Arab Revolution from the very first hour in 2011. Our comrades – both in the Middle East as well as globally – have participated in numerous related activities in the past eight years. ² We have advocated to the vanguard of militant workers and youth a consistent Marxist program of struggle as documented in a series of pamphlets, statements and articles. ³

Likewise we have repeatedly argued against the defeatist doomsayers who confused the *setbacks* with a *final defeat* of the Arab Revolution and who used this gross misjudgment as an excuse for denouncing the ongoing liberation struggles of the popular masses as “reactionary”. Well, the profound ruptures in Algeria and Sudan, the ongoing civil wars of the popular masses against dictatorship and foreign invasion in Syria, Libya and Yemen, the steadfast liberation struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist enemy, the increasing number of mass struggles in Iran, Iraq, and Jordan, etc. – all of these events have demolished the reactionary myth of the “done” and “degenerated” Arab Revolution and exposed it as the wishful thinking of demoralized fellow-travelers, Eurocentric skeptics, and Stalinist slanderers.

However, it would go far beyond the scope of the present essay to give a comprehensive balance sheet of eight years of Arab Revolution. ⁴ At this point we choose instead to focus on one particular question that has proven to be important in the recent revolutionary upheavals in Algeria and Sudan – as it has repeatedly in the revolutionary events of the preceding eight years. We are talking about the democratic question, in general, and the slogan of the

Constituent Assembly, in particular.

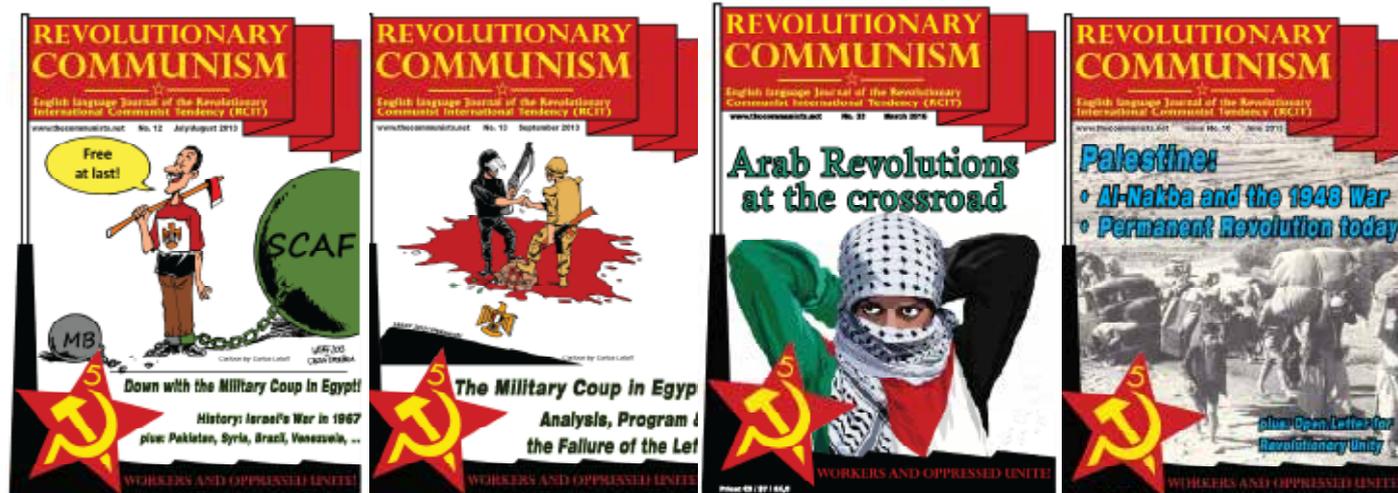
In the following essay we will outline the Marxist approach to this question. We will demonstrate why the issue of the Constituent Assembly is highly relevant in the present conjuncture and how the RCIT tackles this slogan drawing on the theoretical legacy of Lenin and Trotsky. Based on this we will delineate our approach from what we consider thorough revisionist deviations – either ultra-left sectarian or opportunist.

I. Algeria and Sudan: The Central Issue of the Constitution

The events in Algeria and Sudan in the past few months have demonstrated beyond doubt that the issues of the political order and the constitution are playing a crucial role in the revolutionary process. The conflictual process of transition before and after Bouteflika’s resignation is a clear example for this. The dictator facilitated his 20-year rule by amending the constitution in 2008 to scrap presidential term limits. When the popular insurgency swelled, despite efforts of the regime to pacify the masses through pseudo-concessions, the army command of General Ahmed Gaid Salah decided to abandon the tyrant. Again, this was done by utilizing Article 102 of the country’s constitution which regulates the process of removing an ailing head of state. This constitutional measure ensured that Bouteflika officially notified the president of the Constitutional Council, Tayeb Belai, of his “*decision to end his presidential mandate*”. In accordance with the constitution, upper house speaker Abdelkader Bensalah, a close ally of Bouteflika and key figure of his regime, became interim president charged with organizing a “transparent” presidential election within 90 days.

The new de-facto leader of Algeria, General Ahmed Gaid Salah, vowed, according to a defense ministry statement,

PUBLICATIONS OF THE RCIT ON THE ARAB REVOLUTION



that the military would ensure that the transition followed the “rules of transparency and integrity, and the laws of the republic”. He simultaneously inveighed against “slogans aimed at leading the country to a constitutional void and destroying state institutions”.⁵

However, the Algerian people have learned from the experience of the Great Arab Revolution and are continuing their protests in order to get rid of the whole system (one of the most popular slogans is “*Système degage!*”). In this context, people are referring also to Article 7 of the Constitution; it stipulates that “*the people is the source of power*”.

In short, we see an important process of political radicalization evolving in Algeria where the popular masses are determined not only to get rid of the long-time tyrant, Bouteflika, but the whole political caste that has ruled their country for decades. At the same time, the workers and poor have not created their own organ of struggle – committees of action in workplaces and neighborhoods – which could become future organs of power. During the revolutionary process in Russia in 1917 such organs were called “Soviets”. In Germany they were called “Räte”. Furthermore, the masses continue to retain a desire for “true democracy” which they currently identify as some form of bourgeois democracy.

Similar developments have taken place in Sudan. Initially the popular insurgency was triggered by the tripling of the price of bread and other instances of unbearably high inflation. However, the protests were also provoked by regime plans to amend the constitution, so that Omar al-Bashir – who took power nearly 30 years ago – could remain in office beyond a term slated to end in 2020.

Unsurprisingly, the bourgeois democratic forces at the top of the mass movement, which called for the resignation of Bashir and his clique (“*Tasgut bas*”), also focused on issues of the constitution. The *Sudanese Professional Association*, bourgeois opposition parties like the *National Umma Party*, as well as the Stalinist *Sudanese Communist Party* issued on 1st January a document called “*Declaration of Freedom and Change*”.⁶ This document stated their plan to work towards the end of Bashir’s presidency and the “*formation of a National Transitional Government. This transitional government will be formed of qualified people based on merits of competency and good reputation, representing various Sudanese groups and receiving the consensus of the majority. Their role is to govern for a term of four years, until a sound democratic structure is established, and elections held.*” This “transitional government” should, among other objectives, “*convene a Comprehensive Constitutional Conference*”.

It is hardly necessary to point out how undemocratic such a plan is which calls for a “transitional government” taking power for four years without any elections or control. Likewise, it is not surprising that the *Sudanese Communist Party* supports such a pseudo-democratic charade. Mohamed Mokhtar al-Khatib, the general secretary of the Communist Party, said at a news conference on 14 February: “*We have decided on the programme that would take place after the regime falls and (will) hold a constitutional dialogue conference at the end of the transitional period to decide how Sudan will be ruled.*”⁷

In recent days, the army command disposed of Bashir in order to save the system. The newly formed transitional military council announced a state of emergency, a nationwide ceasefire, and the suspension of the constitution.

In short, all these developments demonstrate the central place that the issue of the constitution has played in the revolutionary process in Sudan.

Such developments in Algeria and Sudan are by no means unprecedented. They have been observed during nearly all sharp turns of the revolutionary events in the Arab world in the past eight years. To name just a few examples we refer to Tunisia where a bourgeois-controlled Constituent Assembly was elected after the overthrow of the Ben Ali dictatorship in January 2011.⁸ This Assembly elaborated and adopted a new constitution in January 2014.

A similar process took place in Egypt. After the successful popular uprising resulting in the downfall of the Mubarak dictatorship in January 2011, a Constituent Assembly was elected in March 2012 that elaborated a new constitution. This was approved in a popular referendum in December of the same year and signed by the newly-elected bourgeois Islamist President Mohamed Morsi. Half a year later the Egyptian army overthrew Morsi, suspended the constitution, and created a bloody dictatorship. In 2014 the regime of General Sisi imposed a new constitution. A few days ago, Egypt’s “parliament” approved some constitutional amendments that would allow General Sisi to stay in power until 2030.⁹

To give another example we refer to the constitutional changes and the referendum in 2017 in Turkey that resulted in the creation of a presidential system with strong Bonapartist powers for Erdoğan.¹⁰

Finally, in order to demonstrate that the issue of the constitution is not limited to the revolutionary convulsions that have wracked the Middle East since 2011, we refer to the example of Thailand. Here too, General Prayut Chan-o-cha suspended the constitution when he carried out a military coup in May 2014 against the government of Prime Minister Yingluck. After imposing an interim constitution in the same year he organized a “popular referendum” in 2017 approving a new constitution.¹¹

These examples demonstrate beyond doubt the importance of the issue of a constitution in political life – particularly in periods of revolution and counter-revolution. Only the willfully blind – or politically blinded – could fail to see the importance of the democratic question in general and the issue of the constitution in particular. The central question is how (and how not) revolutionaries should tackle this matter.

II. The Marxist Tactic on the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly

The RCIT starts from the recognition that questions of democracy remain a central component of the class struggle all over the world. The Arab Revolutions against dictatorships and for freedom, the struggles in Latin America against institutional coups (e.g. Brazil 2016-19, Honduras 2009, etc.), the military coup in Thailand in 2014, the struggle against the authoritarian ZANU-PF regime in Zimbabwe, the struggles against national oppression (e.g. Palestine, Uyghurs in China, Kashmir), the struggle against Islamophobia and for full rights for refugees and migrants in Europe and North America, for the right of abortion in Ireland and Argentina, ... these are just a few examples that demonstrate the crucial importance of democratic questions in the current period. This is hardly surpris-

ing given the fact that the current historic period is characterized by capitalist decay and an accelerating rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers of the U.S, China, Russia, the EU, and Japan.¹²

Lenin's famous statement remains completely valid: *"Both in foreign and home policy imperialism strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction. In this sense imperialism is indisputably the "negation" of democracy in general, of all democracy,"*¹³

It would go beyond the scope of this essay to deal at this place with the democratic questions in detail. For those interested we refer readers to a substantial pamphlet that we have published on this issue.¹⁴ At this point we will focus on one of the most important of the democratic slogans – the slogan calling for a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*. Historically this slogan has played a prominent role in Marxist agitation and propaganda. In its program the RCIT has defined its approach to this slogan as follows:

*"Where there are basic issues of political sovereignty on the agenda and there is still no awareness among the masses about the superiority of proletarian council democracy, in certain phases the slogan of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly can be important. Bolshevik-Communists advocate that the delegates should be controllable and open to recall by its people. Thus such a Constituent Assembly cannot easily become an instrument of the ruling class, they should not be called by a bourgeois government, but by a revolutionary government of workers and peasants' councils."*¹⁵

What is a Constituent Assembly? Basically it is a body that is elected for the sole purpose of elaborating and deciding on the constitution of a state. It is therefore a place where the representatives of the antagonistic classes can present their competing programs of how society should be run. Marxists don't have the illusion that socialism can be peacefully introduced via such an assembly. In contrast to the centrist confusionists like Peter Taaffe's CWI or Alan Woods' IMT, we are fully aware of the fact that the transformation of capitalism into socialism is not possible via a peaceful road – neither by a Constituent Assembly, a parliament, nor any other institution.¹⁶ This is a question of power which ultimately will be decided by means of an armed confrontation between the ruling and oppressed classes.

However, revolutionaries advocate utilizing a Constitu-

ent Assembly to propagate the full program for a revolutionary transformation of society and in this way expose the treacherous reformist and openly bourgeoisie leaders. Calling for a Constituent Assembly takes into account that the popular masses still retain illusions concerning the realization of their legitimate aspirations within the terrain of bourgeois democracy. A Constituent Assembly is the most radical democratic form within bourgeois democracy as it involves the popular classes in a debate over the political and economic structure of society. To ensure such participation the deputies of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of local popular assemblies; they should be perpetually recallable by their constituents, and they should receive the salary of a skilled worker.

Historical experience has demonstrated that democratic slogans in general and the slogan for a Constituent Assembly in particular can be posed in either a revolutionary way or a reformist way. Reformists raise democratic demands as an appeal to the bourgeois state and focus on the parliamentary road instead of mobilizing the working class and popular masses. The demand for a Constituent Assembly is usually posed by the reformists and centrists as a proposal to the ruling class to convoke such an assembly. However under such circumstances a Constituent Assembly can only be an instrument of the ruling class since it will be controlled by them.

In contrast to reformists and centrists, the RCIT calls not for a conciliatory Constituent Assembly that can only end up pacifying the masses but rather for a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*. This means a Constituent Assembly that is convened and controlled by the fighting masses organized in councils of action and armed militias. In other words, such an assembly will be the result of a revolutionary upsurge in which the working class and the oppressed take power or have at least initiated a period of dual power.

Of course, integrating the slogan calling for a Constituent Assembly into the democratic program does not necessarily mean that this slogan always stands at the center of the party's agitation. This can only be decided by a concrete analysis of a given political situation. In countries characterized by Bonapartist or dictatorial regimes or in which political instability and dependency of foreign powers

REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION - The RCIT's Monthly Journal

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<p>Kenya: Down with the pro-imperialist Kenyatta Regime!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Gnassingbé Regime in Togo * Zambia: Still Not Free * Interview with Ghana's CPP * Interview with Ghana's CPP 	<p>Support the Liberation Struggle of the Palestinian People!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Interview with Ghana's CPP * Syria: Liberation Struggle at a Crossroad * Brazil: The Shadow of a Military Coup * Catalonia's Struggle for Independence 	<p>The Imperialists Enslave the African People - Then as Now!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Successful 2nd RCIT World Congress * MGKP (Russia) & RCIT collaborate * Syria: No to Turkey's Attack on Afrin! * Tunisia: Solidarity with the Protest! * Palestine: Free Ahd Tamimi NOW! 	<p>The Syrian Revolution is in mortal Danger!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Balfour's Declaration - Myths vs. Fact Six Points for Revolutionary Unity * Italy sends Soldiers to Niger * Class Warfare in Zambia * Liberia: American Puppet President! * UK: Carillon Crisis
<p>Workers and Oppressed United! Price: €3,53,9; £2,45 and Oppressed United!</p>		<p>Workers and Oppressed United! Price: €2,52,6; £1,65 and Oppressed United! Price: €2,55,6; £1,60</p>	

pose by its very nature the issue of the political constitution, it is clear that the slogan for a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly has a permanent relevance. In countries with more stable, bourgeois democratic conditions, this slogan can gain agitational significance only in situations of acute political crisis, when the masses still retain illusions in bourgeois democracy.

III. The Tradition of Lenin and Trotsky

Such an approach draws on the method as it was elaborated by Lenin's Bolsheviks as well as the Fourth International of Trotsky. Lenin always emphasized that the important role of the democratic question in the revolutionary program. He explained that the struggle for socialist revolution is not a one-time event but a long process of which the struggle for democratic rights is an inseparable part.

*„The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practice full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.“*¹⁷

The Bolsheviks and later the Fourth International, always considered the slogan of a Constituent Assembly as a key tactic in the democratic program. The program of the Russian Marxists, adopted at the Second Congress in 1903 and upheld until the revolution fourteen years later, concluded with: *“The RSDLP, for its part, is firmly convinced that the complete, consistent and lasting realisation of these political and social changes can only be achieved through the overthrow of the autocracy and the convocation of a constituent assembly, freely elected by the entire nation.“*¹⁸

Even after taking power in October 1917 the Bolsheviks organized the election of a Constituent Assembly in order to help the popular masses overcome their illusions in the petty-bourgeois and reformist parties (after this task was accomplished, the Soviet Government unceremoniously dissolved the Constituent Assembly in January 1918 without facing serious resistance from the demoralized enemies).

Lenin, in his famous book *“Left-Wing’ Communism — An Infantile Disorder”* strongly defended the tactics of the Bolsheviks. Countering the arguments of various ultra-lefts who opposed raising democratic demands and participating in parliamentary elections, he explained:

“We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois parliament in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then this should be clearly stated and proved, for it is necessary in evolving the correct tactics for international communism. If they were correct, then certain conclusions must be drawn. (...) In September-November 1917, did we, the Russian Bolsheviks, not have more right than any Western Communists to consider that parliamentarianism was politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or a short time, but how far the masses of the working people

*are prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to dissolve the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dissolved). It is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact that, in September-November 1917, the urban working-class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were, because of a number of special conditions, exceptionally well prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disband the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks did not boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before and after the proletariat conquered political power. That these elections yielded exceedingly valuable (and to the proletariat, highly useful) political results has, I make bold to hope, been proved by me in the above-mentioned article, which analyses in detail the returns of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia. The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic and even after such a victory, actually helps that proletariat to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with.“*¹⁹

Lenin also emphasized that as long as the masses were not prepared to actively support a Soviet system based on workers and poor peasants councils and militias, as long it is necessary for revolutionaries to fight for democratic demands including the slogan of a Constituent Assembly: *“Despite views that are today often to be met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary and (in fact) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks in a very cautious manner, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple. At the beginning of the period mentioned, we did not call for the overthrow of the government but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it without first changing the composition and the temper of the Soviets. We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said — and following the April (1917) Conference of our Party began to state officially in the name of the Party — that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly would be better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a “workers’ and peasants’” republic, a Soviet republic, would be better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such thorough, circumspect and long preparations, we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have consolidated that victory.“*²⁰

Later such an approach was defended and developed by Leon Trotsky, Lenin's closest collaborator from the time of the October Revolution until his death in January 1924. Trotsky, too, emphasized that democratic demands remain a crucial part of the revolutionary program as long as the masses retain democratic illusions.

*“Thus presented, the question contains not even a grain of dialectics! Democratic slogans and illusions cannot be abolished by decree. It is necessary that the masses go through them and outlive them in the experience of battles. The task of the proletariat consists in coupling its locomotive to the train of the masses. It is necessary to find the dynamic elements in the present defensive position of the working class; we must make the masses draw conclusions from their own democratic logic, we must widen and deepen the channels of the struggle. And on this road, quantity passes over into quality.“*²¹

Consequently, the slogan of a Constituent Assembly

would play a key role in the programs the Trotskyist movement raised in a number of countries in the 1920s and 1930s (e.g. in China, in Spain, in India, in Indochina). Trotsky remained convinced of the legitimacy of the Constituent Assembly slogan until 1940, i.e. the end of his life. In his most important programmatic document – the *Transitional Program* (which served as the foundation program of the Fourth International in 1938) – he concluded:

*“It is impossible merely to reject the democratic program; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic program, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the “national” bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution.”*²²

And at its emergency conference after the outbreak of the Second World War, in May 1940, - the last conference before Trotsky's death – the Fourth International emphasized again that the democratic demands and the tactic of Constituent Assembly, in particular, plays an important

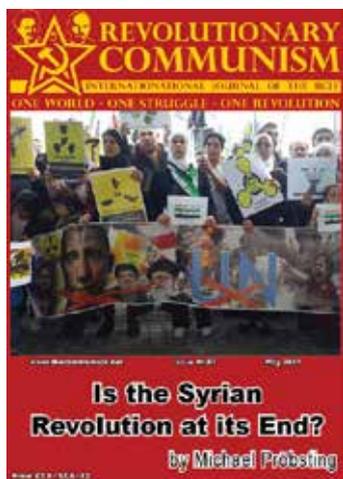
role in the revolutionary struggle.

*“Democratic and transitional slogans retain their full validity, however, especially in the relatively more advanced subject countries like China and India. The slogan of a National or Constituent Assembly remains the most powerful lever for marshaling the masses in struggle. But into this slogan the revolutionary party of the workers must pour the full content of the agrarian revolution and the fight for national liberation. Otherwise it becomes an easy means of deception in the hands of the national bourgeoisie, as it did in China with Comintern help in 1927 and again at the present time. The democratic struggle must not be left in the hands of the national bourgeoisie but must, under conditions of a rising mass movement, find expression in the creation of workers', peasants', and soldiers' councils on a local, provincial, and national scale, as organs of mass struggle and sooner or later as organs of workers' power. Such a power, counterposed to that of the national bourgeoisie, will alone be capable of carrying the democratic revolution through to the end, liberating the peasants on the land, and the land itself from the grip of both native and foreign exploiters.”*²³

In summary, we think these brief excerpts demonstrate beyond doubt that Lenin and Trotsky considered the slogan of a Constituent Assembly as a crucial component of the revolutionary program.

IV. Ultra-Leftist Rejection of the Constituent Assembly Slogan

Let us now deal with the arguments raised by several ultra-left and opportunist opponents. The *Liaison Committee of Communists* – a federation of sectarian grouplet in the U.S., New Zealand and Zimbabwe – has used the event of



Publications of the RCIT

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

By Michael Pröbsting, April 2017

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

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 24 pages, A4 Format

the Algerian Revolution to renew its criticism of the RCIT. This group has repeatedly attacked the RCIT for defending bourgeois democracy against reactionary coup d'états such as Egypt in 2013 or Thailand in 2014.²⁴ We note, in passing, that this "ultrrrrra-revolutionary" group also distinguished itself not long ago by adapting to Trump's "America First" chauvinism by opposing the traditional communist call for "open borders" and, instead, advocated "workers" immigration control in the U.S. and New Zealand!²⁵

*"Calls for any compromise with the national bourgeoisie or imperialism, such as a Constituent Assembly (CA), fall well short of victory and must lead to defeat. The RCIT makes the mistake of calling for a workers' and poor peasants' government based on workers' and poor peasants' councils to 'convene' a 'revolutionary constituent assembly'. This is putting the revolution into reverse. Workers and Peasants councils are the political base for armed workers power in government. A CA is a bourgeois parliament. In other words, a popular front. Such a CA would become the focus for counter-revolutionary attempts to destroy a new Workers and Poor Peasants Government. Attaching the word 'revolutionary' does not change the class composition of the popular front."*²⁶

Here we have, once more, an example of fake-radicalism that hides its ignorance of Marxist teachings behind radical phrase-mongering. The ultra-lefts characterize the slogan of a Constituent Assembly as a "compromise with the national bourgeoisie or imperialism" and a "popular front". So, we ask, how on earth could have Lenin and Trotsky advocated the tactic of a Constituent Assembly throughout their entire political life? How could the Fourth International support this tactic in its founding program? Might the Bordegists have been right in calling Lenin and Trotsky "opportunists"? According to the sectarian geniuses of the LCC, generations of Marxists have been unaware that the Bolsheviks and the Fourth International sought compromises with imperialism and championed the popular front!²⁷

To a certain degree it is true that we suggest a "compromise". But it is a compromise not with the bourgeoisie or imperialism but with the current underdeveloped political consciousness of the popular masses. Only an obstinate proponent of ostrichism denies the reality that the political consciousness of the workers and popular masses is dominated by various shades of petty-bourgeois democratism. There is not the slightest indication that the masses oppose a bourgeois democratic system with parliamentary institutions and, instead, would directly embrace a soviet system.

As soon as one takes this reality into account, the tactic of Constituent Assembly is not a compromise with the bourgeoisie or imperialism but rather a tactic relating to engaging, confronting, and overcoming the limitations of prevailing mass consciousness. This might not be relevant for the sectarians who prefer armchair fantasizing about the Fata Morgana of the masses longing for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is, however, absolutely relevant to Marxists intervening in the revolutionary transformation of those masses!

The slogan of a Constituent Assembly is one that can play an important role in mobilizing the masses – still harboring illusions in bourgeois democracy – to fight for the highest possible form of democracy within the framework

of bourgeois democracy. Calling for the convening of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly can serve as a democratic measure against the ruling elites. In the context of proper timing it can allow the working class and oppressed to gain experience in organizing their own power while simultaneously opposing the treacherous policies of class enemies.

The comrades are anxious to point out a contradiction in our logic. They accuse us of "...*putting the revolution into reverse. Workers and Peasants councils are the political base for armed workers power in government. A CA is a bourgeois parliament.*". This is a contradiction, however, only for the sectarian mechanist who lacks any dialectical understanding of real life.

Workers and peasants councils emerge as organs of struggle. They don't emerge because the masses subjectively decide that they want to get rid of capitalism and have chosen socialism. Marxists work towards a development where such popular councils and militias confront a bourgeois government, try to overthrow it, and take power into their own hands. However, this does not mean that the masses would have already transcended their bourgeois democratic prejudices. Have the LCC comrades forgotten the important experience of the Russian Revolution where the Bolsheviks held elections for a Constituent Assembly even *after* taking power?

The sectarians claim that a Constituent Assembly could be used by the bourgeoisie for their own reactionary agenda. This is undoubtedly true. But for any thinking person this is not a legitimate argument. Nearly every democratic demand, even wage increases, *can* be exploited and utilized by the ruling class for their own purposes. Let us list some examples: wage increases can be utilized by the capitalists to pacify the working class and persuade it into accepting concessions such as "flexible" working hours; the broadening of the right to vote (women's suffrage or the lowering of the voting age to 16 years – the latter has taken place in several EU countries in the past years) with the deliberate intent of blunting the class struggle; the use of agrarian reform in poor countries to bolster a layer of wealthy middle peasants; formal sovereignty for a colony with its actual transformation into a semi-colonial country dependent on imperialism. The tactic is called *bait and switch*.

One can easily find dozens of instances for each of these above-mentioned bourgeois political gambits. But should these lead revolutionaries to refrain from fighting for higher wages, for broadening of the right to vote, for an agrarian reform, or for national self-determination? Only the most sectarian die-hard could arrive at such a conclusion!

No, the relevant point is *how* to fight for such democratic goals, i.e. to fight for these not in a passive and bureaucratic way which would make it easy for the capitalists and the reformist traitors to liquidate the revolutionary potential of such issues. Instead, Marxists must create a revolutionary path in fighting for such democratic goals so that it enables the working class and oppressed to organize themselves, to strengthen their combative abilities, and to develop an increasingly political class consciousness.

It is the same with the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. The slogan in itself is not a miracle that can solve the problems of the class struggle. It can serve to advance

the class struggle but it can do so only if this tactic is applied in a revolutionary manner. In other words, there is no guarantee that the struggle for a Constituent Assembly will result in a victory for the working class. It is, however, guaranteed that if one rejects the fight for democratic demands like the Constituent Assembly, the liberation struggle will be doomed.

Marxists must develop tactics that *acknowledge* the *current* political consciousness of the popular masses. We cannot impose an imagined socialist consciousness that we, in fact, must be the active agents in developing. The purpose of revolutionary democratic tactics is rooted in engaging current consciousness, helping the masses realize its limitations, and achieving socialist class consciousness as an outcome. That's a transformative process. We are midwives, not passive witnesses or commentators.

In this context it is crucial to understand the dynamic in Algeria and Sudan and, in general, the entire Arab Revolution. The explosive, revolutionary potential of these struggles does not lie in the fact that the masses enter their battles with a pre-existing desire for a socialist rupture with the capitalist political and economic order. Such an advanced political mass consciousness does not exist in the Arab world (nor anywhere else, currently). No, the revolutionary potential exists, rather, in the irresolvable contradiction between the desire of the masses for bread and democratic rights and the impossibility of decaying capitalism to satisfy these basic needs.

Formulated on a more theoretical level, it confirms the fundamental assumption of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Simply stated the goals of the democratic

revolution (freedom, agrarian reform, national independence, etc.) cannot be fulfilled as long as the bourgeoisie remains in power. The realization of the democratic revolution requires that the working class, in alliance with the poor peasantry, takes power, expropriates the bourgeoisie and, thereby, opens the road towards the socialist transformation of society.

"No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletariat vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution. (...) The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and, very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution." ²⁸

Without understanding the revolutionary potential of the democratic question and its relationship to the strategy of permanent revolution, one is incapable of finding a correct political orientation in the current events in the Arab world (or anywhere else). Ignoring the challenges of prevailing mass consciousness, with all of its initial petty-bourgeois democratic limitations, leads directly to the cul-de-sac of sectarian isolation. Revolutionaries must champion the democratic question and not leave it to the

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry

The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan.
A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective

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

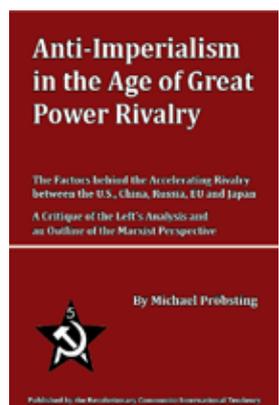
Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry demonstrates the validity of the Marxist analysis of modern imperialism. Using comprehensive material (including 61 Tables and Figures), Michael Pröbsting elaborates that a correct understanding of the rise of China and Russia as new Great Powers is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

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

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

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

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



petty-bourgeois leaders and bourgeois traitors! This was the approach of the Bolsheviks and Leon Trotsky... and this is our approach too!

Unfortunately, the sectarians stand aloof from direct experience in the mass struggles and retain little interest in the teachings of the Marxist classics. The consequences demonstrate how important it is for revolutionaries – even if their numbers are small – to seriously study the scientific program of Marxism and combine that with consistent mass work. Failing that, one ends up with bloodless treatises discussed in isolated circles!

V. Mandelite “Fourth International”: An Opportunist Caricature of the Constituent Assembly Slogan

Looking at the Mandelite “Fourth International”, we see the opposite error. This is one of several international entities claiming to be the “Fourth International”. Actually it is the largest one, although, it hardly functions as an international organization at all. It is rather a pluralistic federation of national organizations lacking democratic centralism. Decisions of the international leadership are not binding on anyone. Historically, it comes from the centrist, post-war tradition of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel. However, today the Mandelite “Fourth International” has moved so far away from Trotskyism that their national organizations have dropped any pretence of building revolutionary parties. Affiliates seek out opportunities to liquidate themselves into reformist or populist formations (“broad parties”). It is no exaggeration to state that the majority of the members of this international do not even regard themselves “Trotskyists”.²⁹

However, there also exists a left opposition inside the Mandelite “Fourth International”. It has the support of sections – or parts of sections (some are already expelled) – in the U.S., France, Spain, Greece and Canada, as well as, individual supporters in other countries. This current calls, inconsistently, for a more orthodox Trotskyism. This tendency is small. At the last world congress of the Mandelite “Fourth International” in spring 2018 it received the support of only 5% of the delegates. Unfortunately, these comrades failed to break with the arch-opportunist Mandelite “Fourth International”, despite the fact that they have been working inside this body for many years and have no prospect of overcoming their status as the small left-fig-leaf of a very right-wing, centrist formation.

The approach of the Mandelite “Fourth International” towards the current events in Algeria and Sudan underlines once more their extraordinary opportunism. In the statements of its international leadership as well as of its Algerian section, the Mandelistas raise the slogan of the Constituent Assembly not as a *tactic* but rather as an *alternative slogan for power*.

“Hence the responsibility of socialist activists to join forces on the basis of a programme of demands with a perspective of class independence that will accompany the mobilization and organization of the working class, youth and women for a sovereign constituent assembly that will ensure a radical democratic regime and an independent economy to meet the basic needs of the population, based on collective ownership and grassroots control. (...) The Fourth International expresses its full solidarity with the struggles of the Algerian people to bring down a regime, of dictatorship, corruption and dependence, and supports

its right to popular sovereignty through a sovereign Constituent Assembly.”

The same statement ends with the final slogans: *“Down with the dictatorship of corruption and archaic dependence, for a sovereign Constituent Assembly!”*³⁰

A similar opportunist spirit characterizes the statement of the “Socialist Workers Party” (PST), the Algerian section of the Mandelites:

*“For the PST, the uprising of the popular masses against the regime that began on 22 February 2019 challenges the entire system, its institutions and its constitution. No superficial tinkering, no transitional subterfuge, no providential man can replace the will of the people, the source of all democratic legitimacy. For the PST, only the election of a sovereign constituent assembly, representative of the democratic and social aspirations of workers, youth, women and all oppressed people in our country, can constitute a real democratic solution to the current crisis. For the PST, the time has come for the Algerian popular masses to self-organize in factories, universities and high schools, neighbourhoods and villages, for women and the unemployed, etc., on the one hand, and, on the other, the priority is winning back our democratic freedoms, in particular the freedoms of expression, organization, demonstration, trade union freedoms and the right to strike.”*³¹

The Mandelite statement on Sudan is no better. It limits itself to give a rosy picture of the bourgeois-Stalinist opposition – which calls for a “transitional government” which takes power for four years without any elections or control, as we showed above.

*“The organisation of the uprising was first and foremost driven by the Sudanese Professional Association (SPA), composed of networks of doctors, teachers and other civil servants and professionals. They kept the principles and memory of class struggle trade unionism alive while the unions were put under the total control of the regime, and progressive militancy severely repressed over long decades (We should remember that the Sudanese Communist Party was one of the most massive in the Arab world). They have been able to combine this memory and give a prominent place to youth but also to women, which allows a strong inventiveness and the necessary size and strength in the current situation. Under this impetus, the revolution adopted a plural political and organizational leadership called Forces of Freedom and Change, with a founding document of the same name that lays the foundations for a democratic break with the regime and its policies.”*³²

Concerning the perspective of struggle, the Mandelite statement on Sudan does not even raise the slogan of a Constituent Assembly but limits itself to some empty well-wishing to the insurrectionary people!

“The Fourth International expresses its full solidarity with this powerful uprising of the Sudanese people, and calls for an end to repression and the release of detainees. We wish them every success in their goal of overthrowing an autocratic regime that has been responsible for the suffering of the Sudanese people for too long. We hope that this dynamic will contribute to the momentum of popular struggles.”

These quotes demonstrate quite clearly how little the Mandelites have in common with Trotskyism. None of their statements on the revolutionary events in Algeria and Sudan raises, or even touches, the issue of the working class, in alliance with the poor peasantry, *taking power!* Not even in disguised form is there a single word about a workers and peasant government! In short, these are not

statements outlining in any way a socialist perspective but only the short cut to a radical democratic dead end.³³

As we have demonstrated above, Marxists raise the slogan of a Constituent Assembly in situations like those that exist today in Algeria and Sudan. But they don't raise it as an *alternative* to the perspective of workers and peasant government. They don't encourage illusions that such an Assembly should take the power and lead the country to freedom and equality! This is the petty-bourgeois, reformist distortion of the Constituent Assembly tactic.

True, Marxist delegates in such an assembly would use it as a platform to advocate the revolutionary road to socialism. But they would not create the illusion that such a Constituent Assembly itself could accomplish this! No, this can be only done by a workers and poor peasant government based on popular councils and militias. Hiding this essential truth, pretending that the same goals could be implemented by such a Constituent Assembly is the worst form of vulgar opportunism! It reflects, once more, the Mandelites' adaption to various petty-bourgeois democratic forces.

Such an adaption is clearly reflected in multiple formulations. Take the statement of the Mandelite's international leadership on Algeria. It does not call for a workers and peasant government but rather for a "*radical democratic regime*." This is the classic formula of a petty-bourgeois nationalist, democratic government but not of a workers and peasant government aiming towards a rupture with capitalism.

Likewise, it is characteristic that the same statement calls for "*an independent economy*" instead of an economy where the bourgeois elite is expropriated and which strives towards socialism. Again, a crucial concession to petty-bourgeois nationalism!

It is also characteristic that Mandelite statements call for the convocation of a "*sovereign Constituent Assembly*" but don't say a word *how* such an assembly could come into existence (nor how it should not come into existence). It is a well-known fact that the bourgeoisie has repeatedly convoked Constituent Assemblies but kept them under their control and manipulated them for their own ends. It is exactly this fact that the sectarians use in order to justify their contempt for this tactic. True, the sectarians "forget" that this is relevant for all democratic demands, i.e. that they can be utilized by the ruling class to pacify revolutionary struggles. Should revolutionaries correspondingly abandon the entire democratic program? That would be foolish. No, revolutionaries must help the working class to see through its limitations and utilize all those democratic rights to advance itself in struggle against the bourgeoisie.

But the opportunist Mandelites make the exact opposite mistake: They pose the slogan of a *Constituent Assembly* not as a revolutionary tactic of the mass struggle but rather as a reformist demand to the ruling class. They don't include a single word about workers and peasant councils and militias that would convoke, control and defend such a Constituent Assembly. Under such conditions a Constituent Assembly will inevitably be controlled by the bourgeoisie and, hence, betray the masses.

This is why the RCIT calls for a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*, i.e. one which is convened and controlled by the fighting masses organized in councils of action and armed militias. In other words, such an assembly will be the re-

sult of a revolutionary upsurge in which the working class and the oppressed have taken power or initiated a period of dual power.

This has also always been the understanding of Lenin and Trotsky as we demonstrated in our pamphlet mentioned above. In an article written in the midst of the 1905 Russian Revolution Lenin explained:

*"The slogan of a popular Constituent Assembly, taken by itself, separately, is at the present time a slogan of the monarchist bourgeoisie, a slogan calling for a deal between the bourgeoisie and the tsarist government. Only the overthrow of the tsarist government and its replacement by a provisional revolutionary government, whose duty it will be to convene the popular Constituent Assembly, can be the slogan of the revolutionary struggle. Let the proletariat of Russia have no illusions on this score; in the din of the general excitation it is being deceived by the use of its own slogans. If we fail to match the armed force of the government with the force of an armed people, if the tsarist government is not utterly defeated and replaced by a provisional revolutionary government, every representative assembly, whatever title—"popular", "constituent", etc.—may be conferred upon it, will in fact be an assembly of representatives of the big bourgeoisie convened for the purpose of bargaining with the tsar for a division of power."*³⁴

Likewise, Trotsky emphasized this principle after the experience of the Chinese Revolution of 1925–27 and the disaster of Stalinist policy:

*"The slogan of the Constituent Assembly becomes an empty abstraction, often simple charlatanry, if one does not add who will convoke it and with what program. Chiang Kai-shek can raise the slogan of a Constituent Assembly against us even tomorrow, just as he has now raised his "workers' and peasants' program" against us. We want a Constituent Assembly convoked not by Chiang Kai-shek but by the executive committee of the workers' and peasants' soviets. That is the only serious and sure road."*³⁵

It is in the same spirit of Lenin and Trotsky with which the RCIT raises the slogan of a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*, i.e. neither isolated nor as an appeal to the ruling class but as a fighting perspective in the context of a program of struggle for working class power.

Finally, we want to state our astonishment that this arch-opportunist statement on Algeria has been republished *without any critical comment* (!) by *Socialist Action* (USA) which is a leading organization of the mentioned above "Left Opposition" within the Mandelite "Fourth International".³⁶

We fear this reflects a thoroughly inconsistent approach of *Socialist Action* (USA) and the whole "Left Opposition" in their relationship with their right-wing centrist international. On one hand, they express themselves in devastating terms about the Mandelite "Fourth International". According to *Socialist Action* (US), the Mandelite "*Fourth International*" is facing a "*long-term and ongoing political and organizational degeneration of this formerly revolutionary world party*". Such degeneration causes the SA(US) to aim "*at re-orienting the FI to its historic rejection of coalition capitalist ("popular front") politics and imperialist wars, unconditional support to the right of oppressed nations and peoples to self-determination, and the construction of disciplined revolutionary parties on the Leninist model aimed at the construction of a world socialist order. Today, most of these founding programmatic principles have been abandoned. FI sections largely shun the construction of Leninist parties in favor of participa-*

tion in “more influential” reformist “broad parties” with an electoralist orientation.”³⁷

But what conclusions do *Socialist Action* (USA) and the whole “Left Opposition” draw from this devastating assessment of the Mandelite “Fourth International”? None! Despite years and years of right-wing opportunist drift, despite years and years of fruitless lamentation as an impotent left opposition within this opportunist current, *Socialist Action* (USA) and the “Left Opposition” don’t demonstrate any serious desire to break with this centrist, pro-popular frontist swamp. As a consequence, they remain a left-wing figleaf to an arch-opportunist current.

No, comrades of *Socialist Action* (USA) and the “Left Opposition”: it is high time to draw conclusions from your criticism and to break with the Mandelite “Fourth International”! Stop acting as constant noodges. Go forward as an independent organization on the basis of a revolutionary Marxist program and democratic centralist principles!

VI. Conclusions

Let us conclude: authentic Marxists have to be the most consistent fighters for a *Revolutionary Constituent Assembly*. They must do so not because such an assembly in itself is the solution to the political and social problems but rather in order to help the masses overcome their illusions in bourgeois democracy. We will apply such democratic tactics – as Lenin demanded – as long as the popular masses retain illusions in bourgeois democracy and until “the masses of the working people are prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to dissolve the bourgeois-democratic parliament.”

At the same time revolutionaries will utilize such a Constituent Assembly as a public forum in which they can unmask the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces and at the same time outline a socialist program. However, authentic Marxists must not reinforce already existing popular illusions in bourgeois democracy. They must not envision a Constituent Assembly creating a workers’ government and facilitating the transition towards socialism. Such a workers’ and peasant government can never emerge as a result of a Constituent Assembly but can only do so on the basis of soviets and armed popular militias. The transformation towards socialism will develop along the road of armed insurrection and civil war in which the working class is led by a revolutionary party. In sum, these differences draw the line between authentic Trotskyism and its sectarian and opportunist distortions.

All these examples of revisionism show once more how crucial it is for authentic revolutionaries around the world to unite on the basis of a clear program. In order to combat the reformist traitors and centrist confusionists, it is urgent to advance the construction of a Revolutionary World Party!

Those comrades who agree with such a perspective must draw the obvious conclusions and break with the opportunist ballast. Those who have already broken must unite internationally with other revolutionaries to avoid the trap of national isolation. Those who are willing to unite internationally should move from words to deeds. This is the way forward that the RCIT proposes! Join us. There is no time to lose!

Footnotes

1 On the RCIT’s assessment of the Algerian and Sudanese Revolutions see: Algeria and Sudan: Two Important Victories and a Warning. No trust in the army command and the old elite! Continue the Revolution! 11 April 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/first-victories-in-algeria-and-sudan/>; Algeria: Bouteflika Retreats! Now Let Us Defeat His System! Organize Committees of Action! For a General Strike and Popular Insurrection to bring down the regime! For a Workers and Poor Peasants Government! 12 March 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/algeria-bouteflika-retreats-now-let-us-defeat-his-system/>; Algeria: Victory to the Popular Insurgency against Bouteflika and his System! 9 March 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/algeria-victory-to-the-popular-insurgency-against-bouteflika-and-his-system/>; Sudan: Bring Down the Regime of Omar al-Bashir! 28 December 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/sudan-bring-down-the-regime-of-omar-al-bashir/>; Report (with Photos and Videos): Sudan: Rally in Solidarity with the Popular Uprising, 6 April 2019, Austrian Section of the RCIT, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/sudan-rally-against-the-dictatorship/>; Report (with Photos and Videos): Sudan: Rally in Solidarity with the Popular Uprising against the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir, 13 January 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/sudan-rally-in-solidarity-with-popular-uprising/>

2 Some of these activities can be viewed on the RCIT’s website in this column: <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/>

3 See on this the numerous documents collected at the following sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>

4 The RCIT has repeatedly assessed the state of the Arab Revolution; see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings (Chapter V), February 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/chapter-v/>; Michael Pröbsting: Is the Syrian Revolution at its End? Is Third Camp Abstentionism Justified? An essay on the organs of popular power in the liberated area of Syria, on the character of the different sectors of the Syrian rebels, and on the failure of those leftists who deserted the Syrian Revolution, 5 April 2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/syrian-revolution-not-dead/>; RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Arab World: An Acid Test for Revolutionaries, 31 May 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-arab-revolution/>. There are also several thoughtful outlooks from a non-Marxist point of view; see e.g. David Hearst: The second Arab Spring? Egypt is the litmus test for revolution in the Middle East, 16 April 2019 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/second-arab-spring-egypt-litmus-test>; There Is No End in Sight for Turmoil in the Middle East, Interview with University Professor Gilbert Achcar, by Dina Yazdani, April 18, 2019 <https://www.fairobserver.com/region/middle-east-north-africa/interview-professor-gilbert-achcar-middle-east-politics-security-hope-16512/>

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[thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/part2/](http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/part2/); Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, Vienna 2013, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/great-robbery-of-the-south/>

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19 V.I. Lenin: 'Left-Wing' Communism— An Infantile Disorder, in: LCW Vol. 31, pp. 59-60

20 V.I. Lenin: 'Left-Wing' Communism— An Infantile Disorder, in: LCW Vol. 31, p. 31

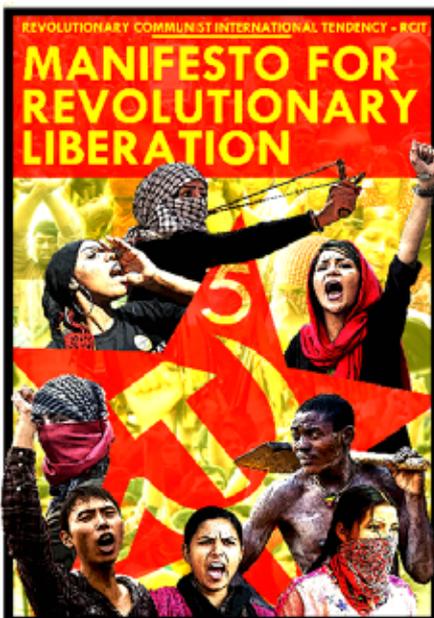
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24 See on this, e.g., RCIT: It is Time to Break with a Wrong Method! Open Letter from the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) to the Members of the Liaison Committee of Communists, July 2015, <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/open-letter-to-lcc/>. In this document readers find references to various documents on the relevant issues.

25 See on this Michael Pröbsting: Patriotic "Anti-Capitalism" for Fools. Yet Again on the CWG/LCC's Support for "Workers" Immigration Control and Protectionism in the US, 30.5.2017, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/part2/>



PROGRAM OF THE RCIT

Manifesto for Revolutionary Liberation

Adopted at the 1st World Congress of the RCIT in October 2016

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 36 pages, A5 Format

thecommunists.net/theory/cwg-lcc-us-protectionism/. In this article readers find references to more articles from the RCIT as well as of our opponents on the issue of migration and “open borders”.

26 CWG(NZ): Algeria and the Arab Revolution, March 2019, <http://redrave.blogspot.com/2019/03/algeria-and-arab-revolution.html>

27 As we have pointed out in the pamphlet mentioned above (“*The Struggle for Democracy in the Imperialist Countries Today*”), the LCC is not the only group rejecting the slogan of a Constituent Assembly. The whole sectarian school of the so-called “Spartacists” in the tradition of the recently passed away James Robertson with their various splitters is also largely opposed to this tactic. Coming from an economist and opportunist approach, Alan Wood’s IMT has also attacked this slogan (for a more detailed discussion of their arguments see chapter 8 of this pamphlet).

28 Leon Trotsky: *The Permanent Revolution* (1929), Pathfinder Press, New York 1969, p. 277

29 For a full analysis of degeneration of the Fourth International and its fragments (including the current of Pablo and Mandel), see our book *Workers Power (Britain) and Irish Workers Group: The Death Agony of the Fourth International*, London 1983, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/death-agonies-of-the-fourth-international-1983/>; see also Michael Pröbsting: *Healy’s Pupils Fail to Break with their Master. The revolutionary tradition of the Fourth International and the centrist tradition of its Epigones Gerry Healy and the “International Committee” – A Reply from the RCIT to “Socialist Fight”*, October 2013, in: *Revolutionary Communism* No. 16, November 2013, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/healy-and-fourth-international/>

30 Solidarity with the Algerian people in their struggle for popular sovereignty! Renaissance of the Algerian revolution!, *Statement of Fourth International Bureau*, 28 March 2019, <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6004>

31 PST (Algeria): For a sovereign constituent assembly, the struggle continues! Algiers, 3 April 2019, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6015>

32 Solidarity with the Sudanese revolution! Adopted unanimously by the International Committee of the Fourth International, 5 March 2019, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article5981>

33 The Mandelites are not the only centrist force that demonstrates their opportunism in face of the second wave of the Arab Revolution. To give another example from the centrist Cabinet of Curiosities we refer to the “League for the Fifth International” – the organization from which the founding cadres of the RCIT were expelled in 2011. This organization adapts to the bourgeois-Stalinist opposition in Sudan to such a degree that it takes up and raises its slogan for a bourgeois civilian government! (“*For a democratic all-civilian provisional government, not under the tutelage of the generals!*”; L5I: *Revolution in Sudan*, 11/04/2019 <http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/revolution-sudan>) After its “critical” preference for imperialist free trade agreements instead of imperialist protectionism, after its support for Britain to stay in the EU, and after its illusionary program for the socialist reform of the EU, this is just another example of opportunist adaptation to petty-bourgeois liberalism by this ex-Trotskyist organization. (For a critique see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: *The Reformist Pipe Dream of a “Socialist” European Union. Is A Socialist Transformation of the Imperialist EU Possible? A Marxist Analysis on the L5I’s Latest Opportunistic Adaptation to Labour Reformism*, 01.10.2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/is-a-socialist-transformation-of-the-imperialist-eu-possible/>; *Marxism, the European Union and Brexit. The L5I and the European Union: A Right Turn away from Marxism. The recent change in the L5I’s position towards the support for EU membership represents a shift away from its own tradition, of the Marxist method, and of the facts*; August 2016, in: *Revolutionary Communist* No. 55, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-and-brexite/>; Does the EU Represent “Bourgeois Democratic Progress”? Once again, on the EU and the Tactics of the Working Class, 16.09.2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/eu-brexite-article/>.

34 V. I. Lenin: *The Democratic Tasks of the Revolutionary Proletariat* (1905); in: *LCW* Vol. 8, p. 517

35 Leon Trotsky: *The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin*, in: *Leon Trotsky: Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, Pioneer Publisher, New York 1932, p. 32

36 <https://socialistaction.org/2019/03/28/solidarity-with-the-algerian-people-in-their-struggle-for-popular-sovereignty/>

37 (12) *Socialist Action National Convention registers gains*, *The Editors*, January 16, 2019, <https://socialistaction.org/2019/01/16/socialist-action-national-convention-registers-gains/>

Books of the RCIT

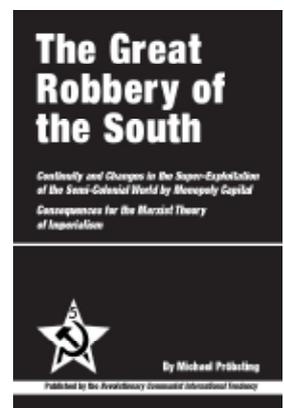
Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South* Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

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



What the RCIT Stands for

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No future without socialism!

No socialism without a revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

