



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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COVID-19 Counterrevolution: Popular Resistance is Growing!

War between Armenia-Azerbaijan * Boko Haram in Nigeria
Air Pollution Kills Half a Million Babies Every Year

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.46, November 2020

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Picture on the cover: Police in Madrid gets tested (Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8c/02El_Ayuntamiento_hace_desde_hoy_pruebas_diagn%C3%B3sticas_del_COVID-19_a_los_servicios_esenciales_municipales.jpg)

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

Armenia-Azerbaijan: A New War in the South Caucasus

Reactionary regimes in crisis wage a chauvinist war against each other.

Russia's intervention would transform it into an imperialist war.

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 30 September 2020

1. A new war between Armenia and Azerbaijan erupted on 27 September. Both sides claim to have killed hundreds of their opponents and destroyed dozens of tanks, drones, etc. Armenia also announced that a Turkish F-16 fighter jet shot down one of its SU-25 warplanes, a claim denied by Ankara. While the conflict currently focuses on the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, fighting is also reported from other border regions (e.g. Dashkasan). There is no doubt that this is the bloodiest conflict since the end of the years-long war between the countries in 1994.

2. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has its historic roots in the occupation of the region by the Russian Empire since the early 19th century. The Tsarist rulers established a policy of playing various Caucasian people against each other. Moscow often instrumentalized religious tensions between the Christian Armenians and the Muslim Azeris. In addition, parts of Armenia remained under occupation of the Ottoman Empire where they faced brutal oppression since the late 19th century. This oppression culminated in the notorious genocide during World War I when up to 1,5 million Armenians were killed. During the Soviet period in the 20th century the Stalinist regime – known for its infamous policy of deportation of whole people like the Chechens or the Crimean Tatars – was incapable of solving the national conflicts in the Caucasus. When the bureaucratic dictatorship crumbled in the early 1990s, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan resulted in a bloody war with about 30,000 dead and more than three-quarter million Azeris as well as half a million Armenians displaced. This war ended in 1994 with a victory of Armenia. Yerevan not only brought Nagorno-Karabakh – an enclave in south-western Azerbaijan with an ethnic Armenian majority population – under control but it also occupied about 9% of Azerbaijan's territory outside of this enclave.

3. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan are poor capitalist semi-colonies. Armenia – being part of both the *Eurasian Economic Union* as well as the *Collective Security Treaty Organization* – belongs to the sphere of influence of Russian imperialism. It also hosts a Russian military base (in Gyumri) and an airbase (in Erebuni). Azerbaijan – which has traditionally close relations with Turkey – is rich in oil and natural gas and depends on the export of these raw materials. Hence, it suffers strongly from the ups and downs of the prices on the world market. Azerbaijan has been under the authoritarian grip of a single family – the notorious Aliyev clan – since 1993. First the father, then the son, have brutally ruled the country and shared the country's wealth only between themselves and imperialist oil corporations.

4. However, both regimes face increasing domestic problems. The beginning of the Great Depression of the capitalist world economy in late 2019, later accelerated by the collapse of globalization because of the COVID-19 crisis, has dramatic repercussions for the two Caucasian countries. For that reason we have seen acceleration of

military tensions and the danger of war in various regions in the last 12 months (e.g. Eastern Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, Egypt-Libya, Indian-China). The collapse of energy prices has dramatic consequences for the Aliyev regime and it faced an unprecedented crisis last summer when the foreign minister was sacked and demonstrators stormed the parliament in Baku. Domestic politics in Armenia is traditionally conflict-ridden with the current regime coming to power after the so-called "*Velvet Revolution*" in April-May 2018. Hence, both regimes have an interest to deflect public attention from domestic problems by wiping-up chauvinism and military tensions. For these reasons, fighting at the Armenia-Azerbaijan border erupted already briefly in July this year.

5. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) considers the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in its current stage as reactionary on both sides. Neither the Aliyev regime nor the Pashinyan government have legitimate objectives of war. Baku strives to re-conquer the Armenian majority region of Nagorno-Karabakh. And Yerevan wants to keep its Azeris-populated territories. Socialists must oppose chauvinism on both sides and refuse any support for the war efforts. They must declare that the enemy is not the other people but their own ruling class.

6. The new war in the South Caucasus is also marked by the intervention of foreign powers. As mentioned before, Russia has been the dominant power in Armenia since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Iran has also sided with Armenia. Likewise, several European governments have indicated sympathy with Armenia. On 29 September French President Emmanuel Macron denounced Turkey's statements backing Azerbaijan as "*reckless and dangerous*". He also appears to voice support of French imperialism for Yerevan: "*I say to Armenia and to the Armenians, France will play its role.*"

7. On the other hand, Turkey has declared its full solidarity with Azerbaijan (as did the *Organization of Islamic Cooperation*). There are indications that Armenia is recruiting mercenaries from the Kurdish PKK/YPG and Azerbaijan from Syrian militias which are close to Turkey. Sheikh Abu al-Yaqdhan al-Masri, a well-known independent cleric based in Idlib who used to be part of petty-bourgeois Islamist HTS – a leading force in the Syrian liberation struggle against the Russian-Iranian-Assad occupation – has issued a fatwa which rightly condemned participation in this war by Syrian fighters.

8. Turkey's support for Azerbaijan is motivated, on one hand, by political reasons as it hopes to consolidate support for the Erdoğan regime both at home as well as in the Muslim world. In addition, Turkey is highly dependent on energy imports which account for three-quarters of its current account deficit. It is heavily reliant on Russian gas – accounting for 33% of Turkey's gas imports – and, moreover, on price that is double of what Europeans pay. It hopes to reduce its dependence of Russia by importing oil and gas via the newly built *Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas*

Pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.

9. In contrast, Russia aims to keep its strong influence in the Caucasus so that it can control the energy exports to Turkey as well as to Europe. Moscow wants to prevent the construction of the Trans-Caspian pipeline, as well as Southern Gas Corridor, as such projects would bypass Russian territory.

10. However, at the current stage, the element of intervention by foreign powers is not the dominant aspect in the war. At the moment, this conflict is primarily driven by domestic factors – both in Armenia as well as Azerbaijan. In case, Russia – or any other imperialist Great Powers – intervenes in this conflict, the character of the war would change. In such a case, socialists must alter their tactic. They would have to take no longer a defeatist position on both sides but rather support the camp of Azerbaijan and Turkey against the Armenian-Russian side. Naturally, such support must be limited to the military conflict. We refuse political support for the regimes in Baku and Ankara under any circumstances. The RCIT calls socialists in Russia as well as in other imperialist states to intransigently oppose any steps towards military intervention in the South Caucasian war.

11. As the RCIT has elaborated in a number of documents, Russia has become an imperialist oppressor state in the past two decades. Chechnya is a typical example for the Russia's nature as a robber state. The Chechen people have been nationally oppressed for most of the time since the Caucasus was conquered by Russia in the 19th century. They demonstrated their desire to separate from Russia twice after the collapse of Stalinism in 1991. In two heroic civil wars in 1994-96 and 1999-2009, the Chechen people fought for an independent state. Ultimately, Russian imperialism was able to crush this liberation struggle only with the most barbaric methods and heavy losses among its own army. It is estimated that the two wars have resulted in the killing of hundreds of thousands of Chechens (out of a total population of Chechnya of little more than one million people!) and the displacement of the majority of the population! The RCIT unconditional supports the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people who are striving to achieve an independent state.

12. In contrast to Russia, Turkey is an advanced semi-colony. Sure, the political nature of the Erdoğan regime

is clearly bourgeois and reactionary. Likewise, it oppresses the Kurdish people. It has also global ambitions as it would like to play the role of the guardian of the Muslim world. However, the class character of a state is not determined by the wishes of its rulers but by its objective political and economic position within the imperialist world order. As a matter of fact, Turkey has an increasing external debt, reaching 444.9 billion (or 56.7% of its GDP) at the end of 2018. Its Net International Investment Position is continuously deteriorating with its external liabilities (\$611 billion) nearly three times as high than its assets abroad (\$232 billion) by July 2020. Likewise, the foreign direct investment stock of Turkish capital is much lower (6% of GDP) than the FDI stock of foreign capitalists in Turkey (21% of GDP). Large parts of Turkey's banking sector are dominated by foreign capitalists. In short, Turkey is not an imperialist but an (advanced) semi-colonial country.

13. Hence, the RCIT rejects the designation of Turkey as "sub-imperialist". The wrong theory of "sub-imperialism" is not only based on an anti-Marxist method but has also been utilized numerous times by pseudo-Trotskyists (e.g. the tradition of Tony Cliff) as an excuse for the refusal of defending semi-colonial countries against imperialist powers (e.g. of Argentina against Britain in 1982, of Iraq against the U.S.). In other words, the concept of "sub-imperialism" is revisionist in theory and social-imperialist in its practical consequences.

14. We call socialists to join the RCIT in building a *Revolutionary World Party* which fights against imperialist wars and capitalist exploitation via preparing the socialist overthrow of the ruling class!

** Down with the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan! This is a reactionary war on both sides!*

** No to all forms of chauvinism and war-mongering!*

** Oppose all forms of intervention by Russia as well as any other imperialist power!*

** In case Russia supports Armenia, socialists need to side with the camp of Azerbaijan and Turkey!*

** Support the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people! Independence for Chechnya!*

** International solidarity with the Syrian Revolution against the Russian-Iranian-Assad occupation!*

** For a workers and peasants republics in Armenia and Azerbaijan! For a socialist federation in the Caucasus!*

The Rise of Russia as an Imperialist Great Power

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

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

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

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

Nigeria: Defeat Boko Haram & ISWAP!

Down with the Sharia order and Islamic Hegemony in the North!

Form Popular Militias for the Defense of the Northern People!

Statement of the Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard (Nigerian Section of the RCIT), 28.08.2020

The Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), a splinter from the Boko Haram, on 19th August, took hundreds of hostages in Kukuwa town, Borno State. This takes place during unabated killings by terrorist groups which have led to the death of more than 300 civilians in Southern Kaduna, since this year began. Just days ago another attack occurred in Chikun Local government, Kaduna state where some school children were abducted. This has in turn sparked protests in Southern Kaduna.[1] The Northern governors have manufactured many narratives to down play the significance of the situation by calling the attackers “bandits”. They again try to deny the organized nature of the killings by reducing it to inter-ethnic violence. However the facts show a high level of organization amongst the assailants that betray such narratives.

In all these, it seems like there is some sort of synchronization between the easing of restrictions and the resurgence of Boko Haram terrorists in Northern Nigeria, it is as though both events were triggered simultaneously. Like every other thing the global economic downturn reveals more clearly through the government imposed emergency measures to ‘prevent’ the spread of COVID-19, the strong connection, either deliberate or accidental, between the Nigerian bourgeoisie and the plague of armed insurgency that has afflicted the people for more than a decade since the return to ‘civilian rule’ in 1999. The whole COVID-19 restriction and lock down saga does not only reveal the cordiality between Boko Haram terrorists and the arch-reactionary Nigerian ruling elite but it also demonstrates the revolutionary nature of the period.

Since during and after the lock downs the state bonapartist apparatus intensified its attacks against the masses economically through wage cuts, mass retrenchments, evictions and evacuation of small businesses etc., the henchmen of this government must also step-up its attacks. Albeit, to understand how the increase in terrorist activity fits into this context one must first correctly characterize the Boko Haram and its many splinters and outfits such as ISWAP and the so-called Fulani herdsmen. Boko Haram started in 2009 under the leadership of Bashir Ahmed, as an Islamist force to overthrow the Nigerian government and establish an Islamic caliphate.

The persuasion for such armed insurrection was the same as the conditions of abject poverty which served as a breeding ground for the north eastern people who saw Bashir as a saviour and about 800 of them were willing to follow him into a failed rebellion. After the unsuccessful rebellion Boko Haram has been hijacked by different Northern power brokers which constitute a large section of the Nigerian ruling class to fight amongst themselves and to subjugate the Nigerian masses. Hence the Boko Haram and all its resulting splinters and outfits are at present only appendages of ruling class interests.

The recent mass killings may not give a very clear picture of why these terrorist attacks have not only resur-

ged with greater tempo and frequency but are also counter-revolutionary. The indictments according to Sharia law which have risen in like manner, on the other hand, does. While the condemnations of the abduction of Bala Mubarak that was sanctioned by a Sharia court was still on-going, 22-year-old, Aminu Sharif, a secular musician was sentenced to death for blasphemy against the prophet Muhammad. Now the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria has said the only way for peace to reign in Southern Kaduna is for the government to execute ex-Major General, Zamani Lekwot and other leaders sentenced to death over the Zango-Kataf riot in 1992.[2] We will not go into the details of the riot neither do we take the side of Zamani Lekwot as a progressive, rather we point to the fact that all of these are fight backs by the Northern power brokers against a northern mass that is awakening to the reality that in order for them to have better living standards they must break free from the tight grip of Islamic hegemony.

The northern liberals and masses alike recognize that the power given to the Islamic institutions are nothing but mechanisms to keep them subservient to the rule of the northern oligarchs, so the northern elite fight back to sustain their hegemony even with mass killings. Of a truth, some of these skirmishes begin as inter-ethnic violence since the Northern region has a great many ethnic minorities, yet the escalation of those skirmishes can only be at the behest of some organized local or local traditional authority which is often interwoven with religious strongholds. More so, these inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflicts are sharpened by a deepening economic crisis that at every instant prompts the subjugated party to seek liberation and the oppressing party to try to consolidate its position. Thus the whole pale of the massacre in the north still boils down to the will of the traditional/ethnic, local rulers, Islamic bureaucracies and the ruling elite to maintain their economic privilege, only now they face an immediate threat. This is further proven by the confession of the governor of Kaduna state, Nasir El-Rufai that Southern Kaduna (ethnic) leaders want “brown envelopes” that is why the killings have continued.[3]

Another factor that could have led to such an awakening not just of the northern people but of the whole Nigerian masses to the unholy alliance of the Nigerian government with organized terrorism is the so-called rehabilitation and re-integration of “repentant” terrorists. Some of these “repentant” or “captured” terrorists are even sent abroad for re-education.[4] Fortunately, an event like this occurs rather concomitantly with the release of Taliban prisoners by the Afghan government at the behest of the White House. This demonstrates to the world that some form of agreement must be reached with such armed groups before any prisoners or captured fighters can be released. Sure, Donald Trump is only pressurizing the Afghan government to release the remaining Taliban fighters because of his election bid in November, nevertheless, prisoner exchanges are but surface indications of more, would be,

thorough going concessions/alliance between the negotiating parties.[5]

The Nigerian case is more than just agreements and concessions it is rather a decade long unholy alliance between the Boko Haram and the ruling elite/Nigerian government especially in the North. In any case the re-habilitation and release of repentant Boko Haram fighters happens because of the power shift to the North which finds its most effective agent in President Buhari who is a strong apologist of extreme Islamism or even the Islamic caliphate.

Although certain elements of the Northern ruling class do not want to continue extreme Islamism and Sharia as a means to subjugate the people, even though they are thoroughly bourgeois. They wish to rule the North through more liberal means, maybe because the failing economy makes it more difficult to continue to bribe the traditional/religious leaders, however they are handicapped as they form only a meagre number amongst the Northern ruling elite. To this camp belongs Nasir El-rufai, the governor of Kaduna state; the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and deposed Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi; and now Mailafia, who was brought in for questioning by the Department of State Services (DSS) after he alleged that the leader of Boko Haram was one of the Northern governors.[6]

We are not against rehabilitation of prisoners, however for a force like Boko Haram without a thorough going war against respectively a defeat of the sect, any rehabilitation is just a scheme of the same ruling class which is in cahoots with the terrorists. More so, the specific conditions which engender the birth of the extremist group are still very much prevalent in Nigeria, the common Nigerian folk is bedeviled with incisive poverty, homelessness, unemployment etc. which is worsened now by the anti-people economic policies and attacks. The Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps are left deteriorating with shortages in food and other basic supplies. The rehabilitation is just a resting phase for the henchmen of the Nigerian mostly northern ruling caste.

This whole piece has no intention of implying any danger in the "spread of Islam" as many Islamophobic governments and organizations do. In contrast, we wish to show that all religious provisions in law and government are only stratagems for economic interests of capitalists respectively imperialist. This means it is very possible that armed insurgencies up to the scale of Boko Haram can emanate from any other part of the country since they have underlying economic factors. It would be a careless misplacement of facts and history to assume that these trend is peculiar to Northern Nigeria as the set of gang violence, and mob raids that occurred during the lock downs especially in Lagos should create a more convincing picture of the possibility of terrorism in any part of the country irrespective of religious predominance in that region. We advocate full right to religion as far as it is separated from the state.

For us the fight against Islamic hegemony and the Sharia institutions along with its offsprings in terrorism and insecurity is an integral part of the socialist struggle in Nigeria as it is impossible to end the insurgency without vanquishing Nigerian ruling class and state including all remnants of feudal rule. Hence the protests against the skirmishes in Southern Kaduna must be linked with the campaign

against state bonapartist attacks of wage cuts, mass sackings, evictions, hikes in prices of social amenities like PMS and electricity; imposition of stamp duty; poor funding of the educational and health sectors etc. It goes without saying that this struggle must combined with an intransigent struggle against the corrupt and compromised trade union bureaucracy.

** For an end to Sharia Law! Release with immediate effect and without condition Bala Mubarak, Aminu Sharif and all persons arrested or detained by Sharia courts. Free all persons imprisoned & cancel all sentences imposed by Sharia Law! Drop all charges against El-Zakzaky and all detained Shi'ites!*

** For a national/ethnic program in which all ethnic groups/nations will have the right to freedom of cultural expression through language and association.*

** The popular masses must form with authentic revolutionaries, sincere progressives, trade unionists a publicly governed workers and peasant armed militia to defeat Boko Haram, ISWAP, Fulani herdsmen and all puppet hench men of the Nigerian state. Naturally this militia can work with existing national/ethnic associations Arewa Youth Forum based on concrete goals and ultimately defend the people against the uniformed hooligans of the Nigerian state — police and army.*

** For a food and housing program for the poor, homeless and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) in the North and all over Nigeria. This program must be funded with the taxes of the rich. Occupy all unused estates and edifices of the rich!*

** Fund education and healthcare properly with at least 26% and 15% of the budgetary allocation. Expropriate the big private firms in the oil and energy industry. Put the commanding heights of the economy and the big banks under workers and popular control. For a democratically controlled nationwide employment program planned and determined by the workers and popular masses!*

Onward to a socialist future!

Signed: Oladipupo Jimoh, International Liaison Personnel, Revolutionary Socialist Vanguard [RCIT Nigeria].

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[2] <http://saharareporters.com/2020/07/09/re-%E2%80%9Cpolice-detain-atheist-40-days-insulting-prophet-mohammed%E2%80%9D-leo-igwe>
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[3] <https://punchng.com/killings-southern-kaduna-leaders-want-brown-envelopes-says-el-rufai/>

[4] <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/397187-603-repentant-boko-haram-fighters-to-be-reintegrated-into-communities.html>

[5] <https://allafrica.com/stories/202008060591.html>
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[6] <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/09/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-prisoners-peace-talks.html>
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[6] <http://saharareporters.com/2020/08/11/repentant-terrorists-named-one-northern-governor-boko-haram-commander-says-former-cbn>

Air Pollution Kills Half a Million Babies Every Year ... But Who Cares, it is not COVID-19! Diseases which can't be exploited for their political and economic interests are not relevant for the ruling class

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23 October 2020

A new global study, *State of Global Air 2020*, shows the devastating effects of air pollution for public health. ¹ The report, published by the *Health Effects Institute*, concludes: "In 2019, air pollution ranked 4th among major mortality risk factors globally, accounting for nearly 6.75 million early deaths." Particularly shocking is the fact "that 476,000 newborns worldwide died in 2019 as a result of air pollution exposure."

The study elaborates in detail that long-term exposure to outdoor and household air pollution contributed to millions of annual deaths from stroke, heart attack, diabetes, lung cancer, chronic lung diseases, and neonatal diseases. It finds, among others, that nearly two-thirds of the deaths of infants were linked to use of solid fuels such as charcoal, wood, and animal dung for cooking. This is the result of the fact that "49% of the world's population – about 3.8 billion people – [is] exposed to household air pollution from the burning of solid fuels."

Most of these babies who died from air pollution within one month after birth are from India (116,000) and Sub-Saharan Africa (236,000).

This report is shocking, first, because it shows the extraordinary large number of preventable deaths worldwide. Air pollution is not a "natural disease" but a result of the reckless capitalist mode of production which, on one

hand, destroys nature by widespread burning of fossil fuel and the resulting ozone pollution. On the other hand, the global capitalist system forces large sectors of humanity to live under poor conditions without the possibility of proper living and cooking conditions.

Under "normal" conditions, this report should provoke a public outcry. But, investigate yourself and go to the internet or open the daily newspaper. You will hardly find any mention of this report about the consequences of air pollution. However, you will find an endless amount of dramatic reports about COVID-19 ("the worst pandemic in modern history" as they like to call it). Until now, a bit more than one million people have died because of the Corona Virus. Surely, this is a tragedy. But then it is at least six times as much of a tragedy if 6,75 million people die every year because of air pollution. And even more so since this includes not only people in their 70s, 80s and 90s but also half a million infants who were just beginning their lives!

So, we have to ask ourselves how it is possible that the governments and the bourgeois media raise such a hue and cry about the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic but not the slightest peep about the many more victims of air pollution?

After all, the governments – and their willing tools among the scientists and journalists – are not becoming tired to

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Marxism and the United Front Tactic Today

The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today.

The RCIT is proud to announce the publication of a new English-language book – MARXISM AND THE UNITED FRONT TACTIC TODAY. The book's subtitle is: The Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony in the Liberation Movement and the United Front Tactic Today. On the Application of the Marxist United Front Tactic in Semi-Colonial and Imperialist Countries in the Present Period. It contains eight chapters plus an appendix (172 pages) and includes 9 tables and 5 figures. The author of the book is Michael Pröbsting who serves as the International Secretary of the RCIT.

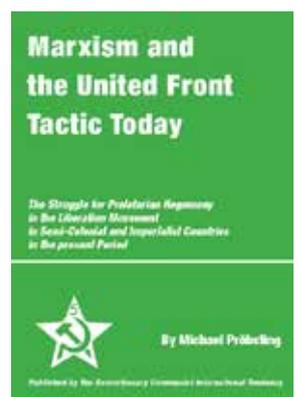
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which give an overview of its content.

The united front tactic is a crucial instrument for revolutionaries under today's circumstances in which the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed are dominated by social democratic, Stalinist and petty-bourgeois-populist forces.

The purpose of this document is both to summarize the main ideas of the Marxist united front tactic while at the same time explaining its development and modification which have become necessary due to political changes which have transpired in the

working class liberation movement since the tactic's original formulation.

In this book we initially summarize the main characteristics of the united front tactic and elaborate the approach of the Marxist classics to this issue. We then outline important social developments in the working class and the popular masses as well as in their political formations in recent decades. From there we will discuss how the united front tactic should be applied in light of a number of new developments (the rise of petty-bourgeois populist parties, the decline of the classic reformist parties, the role of national minorities and migrants in imperialist countries, etc.). The eight chapters of the book are accompanied by nine tables and five figures.



claim that their primary goal is saving lives. This is supposedly the reason why they are imposing Lockdowns, imprisoning millions and millions of people to stay at home, wrecking small businesses, limiting the right to assembly and demonstrate, expanding the police and surveillance state, etc. But while the bourgeois governments are ready to accept extraordinary economic losses, resulting from these measures, and spending billions and billions of dollars to support the pharmaceutical industry for the production of new vaccines, they show no interest to invest a significant amount of money in order to help reducing air pollution.

However, the reasons for this obscene hypocrisy are not so difficult to understand. As the RCIT has elaborated in numerous documents, the ruling class massively exploits COVID-19 pandemic to advance their political and economic interests.² In contrast, air pollution can not serve such a purpose.

1) The COVID-19 pandemic can be utilized as excuse to explain the Third Depression of the capitalist world economy (which in fact has begun in late 2019 and has been caused by the inner contradictions of the profit-driven system)³; Air pollution can not be utilized for such a ideological manoeuvre.

2) The COVID-19 pandemic serves the ruling class to provoke fear and panic and to utilize such a climate for political objectives like justifying the expansion of the police and surveillance state, the attacks on democratic rights, etc.;⁴

3) Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic offers extraordinary business opportunities for capitalist corporations – in industries like drugs, biotechnology, robotics, Artificially Intelligence and the whole IT industry, the military-industrial complex, the whole online retail sector, etc.;

4) Finally, air pollution kills mostly people in China and the semi-colonial countries – not in the imperialist West. “Their” babies die, not “ours”! So why should the governments and the monopolies of the imperialist metropolises spend money in order to save the lives of babies in the poor countries?!

This is the cynical logic of the capitalist rulers and business captains! The task of socialists is not to support the ruling elite, their Lockdown madness and their hypercritical propaganda but rather to overthrow these power-hungry parasites. We can only stop the unnecessary deaths of millions of people if we kill capitalism!

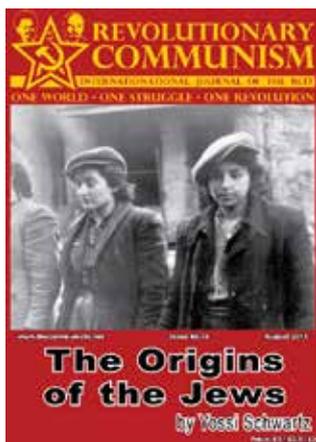
Footnotes

1 Health Effects Institute: State of Global Air 2020. Special Report, Boston 2020. All quotes in this article are from this study.

2 The RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February we have published more than fifty documents which are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-coronavirus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>; see also Michael Pröbsting’s book: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>. In addition, we draw attention to our very first article on this issue by Almedina Gunić: Coronavirus: “I am not a Virus”... but WE will be the Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the “Wuhan Coronavirus” hysteria and the revolutionary answer, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>; See also by Michael Pröbsting: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>. Our latest article is by Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: Watch Your Back, Lockdown Gangsters! A new wave of draconic Lockdowns sweeps Europe but popular resistance and criticism of medical scientists are increasing, 21 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-watch-your-back-lockdown-gangsters/>

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4 See on this e.g. Michael Pröbsting: The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class’s plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>



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

COVID-19: Watch Your Back, Lockdown Gangsters!

A new wave of draconic Lockdowns sweeps Europe but popular resistance and criticism of medical scientists are increasing

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 21 October 2020

A new wave of anti-democratic lockdowns sweeps Europe. Ireland has shut down all “non-essential business” for six weeks; people are not allowed to visit family and friends at their homes. Furthermore, people are required to stay home and, if they do so, they must remain within 5km of their home. Wales and Northern Ireland have also imposed similar attacks for the next two weeks.

Governmental advisers in other countries like Belgium and England are pushing for similar measures. Already now, people from different households in London are not allowed to visit each other. France and Spain have already imposed draconic restrictions including curfews between 9pm and 6am in big cities. An increasing number of countries made the wearing of face masks mandatory outdoors.

Portugal’s “socialist” government even went so far to draft a law that would make it mandatory for every citizen to use a “StayAway” Covid App with potential fines of between €100 and €500 for those who fail to download the app. Unsurprisingly, this has provoked such a massive public outcry that Prime Minister Antonio Costa was forced to suspend this plan for now. ¹ Nevertheless, such an authoritarian foray confirms once more – as we have warned since March this year – that the ruling class is determined to utilize the COVID-19 crisis for a massive expansion of the police and surveillance state. ² Germany’s Robert Koch-Institut – the federal government agency and research institute responsible for disease control and prevention – has already announced plans to continue various measures (the notorious “social distancing” which obstructs large gathering of the masses, mandatory wearing of masks, etc.) even if a vaccination against the Corona Virus has become available! ³ Clearly, Europe’s ruling elites are inspired by the “successful” dictatorship in China – the rising star among the imperialist Great Powers. ⁴

Hypocrites and falsifiers

Why are Europe’s governments doing this? Because they want “to save lives”, as they claim in their daily press briefings? But, the Lockdown is not a particularly new invention. We all had this in spring. Nevertheless, Spain, France, Italy and United Kingdom were all global record-breakers in numbers of deaths. In addition, as we did report in past articles, there are various international studies which demonstrate that the curve of the pandemic was not particularly affected by such measures. ⁵

And, if the ruling class is really so concerned about our health, why did they not use the past six months to massively expand the public health sector, recruit large numbers of new doctors and nurses, improve the working condition and raise the wages of hospital workers, massively increase the number of ICU’s, etc.?! But, as it is widely known, the European governments did nothing in this regard. According to a study in France nursing staff is so overworked and exhausted that 40% of them want to leave

their job. ⁶

In addition, one has to question if there really exists such an alarming emergency situation in Europe. True, the number of infections is rising. In various countries, the number of officially confirmed infected is as high, or even higher, than it was during the spring period. However, most people infected have no or only mild symptoms. In order to judge the seriousness of the pandemic, one has to look at the really important figure – the number of serious cases in hospitals and the number of death. And here we can see that the pandemic – in contrast to the official propaganda of the capitalist governments – is not at all particularly dangerous. In Ireland there are between 1-8 deaths a day. ⁷ Things are similar in most other countries. Of course, this number will rise in winter. In the end, it is also the typical development curve of influenza that it spreads more rapidly in the cold season.

But, as we have pointed out so often and demonstrated with various facts and figures, the COVID-19 pandemic is not an extraordinary danger. Unfortunately, humanity has faced repeatedly various pandemics and diseases in past decades which have claimed hundreds of thousands or millions of lives a year. Examples for this are e.g. the so-called *Asia Flu* in 1957-58, the so-called *Hong Kong flu* in 1968, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, severe Influenza seasons, etc. In addition, one should not forget to view the COVID-19 crisis in proportion to other diseases and preventable health risks (respiratory infections, tobacco, alcohol, etc.) which also cause millions of death every year. Furthermore, we also refer to the fact that Sweden, a country which did not impose any Lockdown, has not experienced any excess mortality this year if one compares the figures of the first half of 2020 with those of the same period in past decades. ⁸

Naturally, the ideological servants of the ruling class – conservatives, liberals and so-called “left-wingers” – ignore these facts and continue their support for the lockdown policy. If they have any criticism of the governments, it is that they use the “hammer” (as they call it) of the lockdown not fast and furious enough. They denounce the critics of the lockdown as “mad” and supporters of “conspiracy theories”.

Who is worse?

However – despite the never-ending propaganda offensive of governments, “scientists” in their service, the bourgeois media etc. – less and less ordinary people trust and believe this propaganda. Among them are people who are more progressive, less progressive and also outright reactionaries.

As readers of our publications will be aware, the RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 pandemic from the very beginning and pointed out the real political and economic interests of the ruling class. ⁹ At the beginning, we were part of a very small minority which was prepared to swim against

the all-powerful stream of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. But things are changing. In the past weeks we have seen various smaller and larger popular protests. In addition there are also a growing number of medical scientists who withstand the pressure of the governments. In various studies and public statements, they criticize the brainless COVID hysteria and the anti-democratic Lockdown policy (see e.g. the so-called *Great Barrington Declaration* with which we have dealt in a recently published essay).¹⁰

Yes, there are also some people who spread silly or even arch-reactionary ideas. But one has to ask: Who is worse? The one who imagine a conspiracy behind the pandemic – or the people in power who falsely claim that this is “*the worst pandemic in modern history*”, that the Lockdown policy would be effective to save lives, who spend billions of dollars for contracts with drug corporations, who crush democratic rights, who order police and military on the streets and who lock up people in their homes?!

Who is crazier: The tin foil hats ... or the prime minister who tells us that “*soon everyone of us will know someone who has died of COVID-19*” (like the Austria Prime Minister Sebastian Kurz) or that “*millions of Germans will die because of the Corona Virus*” (like Germany’s Prime Minister Angela Merkel)?! Or the “*scientists*” who tell us that we should put ourselves in self-quarantine for several days before we visit our grandma (like the chief virologist/ideologist of the German government Christian Drosten)? To put it diplomatically, the tin foil hats are certainly not the only nuts!

However, it would be wrong to reduce the problem to the idiot-factor among the elite. While there is not a small number of dumbass among the rulers (just think about the White House and Downing Street No. 10), the majority of the ruling class is not stupid – or at least they are clever enough to listen to people with brain. These people spread the hysteria about COVID-19 not so much because they seriously believe in this. They rather create popular fear in order to utilize this situation to promote specific political and economic interests of the top tier of the capitalist class. They provoke fear and panic in order to utilize such a climate for political objectives like justifying the expansion of the police and surveillance state, finding a scapegoat for the Third Depression of the capitalist world economy (which began in late 2019), using it as an instrument against Great Power rivals, etc. Furthermore, the capitalists in important industrial sectors have been keen to exploit such a crisis as an extraordinary business opportunity. Not without reason, numerous corporations – in industries like drugs, biotechnology, robotics, Artificially Intelligence and the whole IT industry, the military-industrial complex, the whole online retail sector, etc – expect massive extra profits.

Resistance and criticism is growing

For now, we have to accept the fact that the ruling class is in power. They control the media in order to manipulate public opinion and they also possess a fully-armed repression apparatus imposing their local and national lockdowns. Currently, the workers and oppressed are too weak to break down the walls of this new prison.

We have often pointed out the similarities of the “*shock-and-awe*” policy of the ruling class in the present period of COVID-19 Counterrevolution with the situation at the

beginning of World War I in 1914. In one of his writings at that time, Lenin stated: “*The proletarian masses – probably about nine-tenths of whose former leaders have gone over to the bourgeoisie – have found themselves disunited and helpless amid a spate of chauvinism and under the pressure of martial law and the war censorship.*”¹¹ To a certain degree, we are also in such a situation at the moment.

But, as it was the case in summer and autumn 1915 when mass demonstrations and strikes erupted against the consequences of the imperialist war, popular protests have also begun now in Europe. Times are changing and autumn is not spring. In spring, people were in a state of shock and there was hardly any resistance on the streets in Europe. Today, the situation is different. 20,000 people marched in Berlin on 10 October against the reactionary Lockdown policy under the slogan “*Silent March against Racism and for Human Rights*”.¹² There were also many demonstrations of workers and poor in Madrid against the Lockdown policy.¹³ And three days ago, 2,000 fans of football and ice hockey clubs demonstrated in Prague and fought street battles against the Czech police.

So, yes, the hammer of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution is hitting our heads again. But times are changing and popular resistance is growing. Below the climate of fear, popular anger and hatred is silently accumulating. Sooner or later, this will explode. And then, Lockdown gangster – all you minister, ideologists, virologists, journalists, and all the other lackeys of the ruling class – then you better watch your back! The working people and poor will rise up and drive you out of power! Then, it will not be the working people who have to live in prison but rather you!

Footnotes

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2 See e.g. RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a warlike atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. See also chapter II in our book by Michael Pröbsting: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle*, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>. An updated survey by the same author is: *The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class’s plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis*, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>

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www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-russia-as-imperialist-powers/. In particular we refer to the book by Michael Pröbsting: *Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry. The Factors behind the Accelerating Rivalry between the U.S., China, Russia, EU and Japan. A Critique of the Left's Analysis and an Outline of the Marxist Perspective*, RCIT Books, January 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/anti-imperialism-in-the-age-of-great-power-rivalry/>. In addition, we refer readers in particular to the following works by the same author: *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?* 18 August 2017, *Revolutionary Communism* No. 71, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/china-india-rivalry/>; *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>; see also Michael Pröbsting: *Chinese Imperialism and the World Economy. An Essay published in the second edition of The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020, https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-91206-6_179-1.

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9 The RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February we have published more than fifty documents which are all compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-the-great-barrington-declaration-is-indeed-great/>.

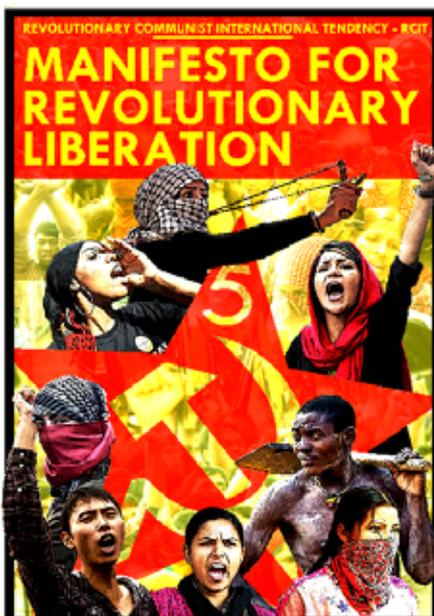
www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/. In particular we refer readers to the above-mentioned RCIT Manifesto: *COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive* as well as Michael Pröbsting's book: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It*. In addition, we draw attention to our very first article on this issue by Almedina Gunić: *Coronavirus: "I am not a Virus"... but WE will be the Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the "Wuhan Coronavirus" hysteria and the revolutionary answer*, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>; See also by Michael Pröbsting: *The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance*, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>.

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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

Confirmation by the Class Enemy

A new IMF report discusses the global class struggle and its relationship to the COVID-19 crisis

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 14 October 2020

The latest edition of the *World Economic Outlook*, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) publishes twice a year, contains some highly interesting material.¹ As is well known, the IMF is one of the key institutions of global capitalism. Hence, its statements and ideas are quite representative for the political thinking within the imperialist monopoly bourgeoisie.

Usually, the publications of the IMF focus on the analysis of the state of the world economy, its short- and long-term trends as well as on proposals for reforms – naturally all from the point of view of capitalism. However, the latest edition of the *World Economic Outlook* contains also a section which does not deal so much with economic issues but rather with the international class struggle. Titled “*Social Unrest during COVID-19*”, the IMF authors discuss the development of global mass protests before the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the consequences which the later had and has of the class struggle as well as future prospects.²

“Social unrest has decreased in recent months as mobility has declined. This is consistent with past experience immediately following epidemics. However, unrest was high and rising before the COVID-19 crisis started. As the crisis passes, unrest may yet reemerge in countries where progress on underlying social and political issues has stalled and where the crisis exposes or exacerbates preexisting problems. Social unrest has fallen markedly as lockdowns and social distancing have been introduced. The Reported Social Unrest Index (RSUI), which counts media reports of social unrest, has fallen dramatically since March 2020. The frequency of major unrest events – defined by country-specific spikes in the RSUI – fell to its lowest in almost five years. The decline in social unrest corresponds closely with a generalized decline in mobility driven by regulations, such as shelter-in-place orders and voluntary social distancing. (...) Notable exceptions include the United States, where protests against police violence grew rapidly at the start of June and Lebanon. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, unrest had been rising for several years. Late 2019 and early 2020 saw major protests, most notably in the Middle East and South America but also elsewhere, including in Belarus, Bolivia, Chile, France, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, India, Iran, and Iraq. This was the continuation of a longer trend since 2016, which itself reversed a gradual decline in unrest following a peak after the Arab Spring of 2011.”

To underline their theses the IMF authors also reproduce two graphs. (See the Appendix below) One demonstrates the rise of global class struggle in the years 2016-19 as well as the abrupt and dramatic decline in spring 2020 with the beginning of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution and the Lockdown policy. The second graph shows the explosion of mass protests in the U.S. since early June 2020 after the brutal killing of George Floyd by the police.

These statements by a leading imperialist institution are in several aspects a powerful confirmation of the analysis which the RCIT has elaborated in the recent past. We have repeatedly pointed out in our works that the current

historic period which began in 2008 has a “*revolutionary*” character. In summary, it is a period distinguished by the decay of capitalism which inevitable provokes economic crises, political instability and the incessant danger of war. Such conditions continually generate mass protests, popular uprisings and revolutionary situations as well as counterrevolutionary dangers. In other words, this historic period lacks any equilibrium on the world stage.³

Three dramatic shifts in the world situation in the past 12 months

In October 2019, the RCIT recognized a dramatic upsurge in the global class struggle which opened a global pre-revolutionary situation.⁴ It is noteworthy that the IMF authors – in their own words – also recognize this development. This explosion of popular uprisings went hand in hand with the beginning of the global recession in late 2019.⁵

The above-mentioned quotes from the new IMF report also show that this imperialist institution confirms another key thesis of the RCIT: that the COVID-19 crisis and the policy of Lockdowns had dramatic negative consequences for the global class struggle. It ended – with one stroke – the wave of popular uprisings. This is why we speak about the *COVID-19 Counterrevolution* and the massive *reactionary character* of the Lockdown policy.⁶

We immediately recognized the consequences of this crisis and the desire of the ruling class to utilize it for their reactionary political and economic goals. In the RCIT Manifesto, published in March this year, we stated that the “*global COVID-19 crisis is a major turning point in the world situation*” which “*means that the pre-revolutionary world situation has ended for now and a global counter-revolutionary situation has opened up.*”⁷

Furthermore, the IMF reports also confirms the RCIT analysis that the explosion of mass protests in the U.S. in early June – under the slogan “*Black Lives Matter*” – has provoked another shift in the world situation. As we elaborated in various documents, this popular uprising in the heart of the imperialist beast brought the global counter-revolutionary situation to an end and opened a new phase of struggle. However, the global class struggle has not yet reached the level of late 2019 and early 2020, i.e. before the beginning of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution.⁸

Short- and long-term prospects of the global class struggle

Finally, it is noteworthy, how the IMF assesses the short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 crisis for the global class struggle. In the short term, the authors estimate that there will be no massive surge in the mass protests. They cite historical studies for their – from the imperialist point of view – optimistic outlook. “*The results (of the IMF’s analysis, Ed.) show very weak statistical evidence*

of a higher likelihood of unrest following epidemics. On the contrary, in any given country, the likelihood of social unrest drops slightly following epidemics.”

However, in the longer term, the imperialist analysts are not so confident. They fear that there will be another upsurge of mass struggles since the COVID-19 crisis not only did not remove the social and economic hardship for the masses but rather massively worsened their living conditions. “Unrest is likely to reemerge as the pandemic eases. This analysis shows that unrest was elevated before the COVID-19 crisis began but has declined as the crisis has continued. It is reasonable to expect that, as the crisis fades, unrest may reemerge in locations where it previously existed, not because of the COVID-19 crisis per se, but simply because underlying social and political issues have not been tackled. The threats may also be bigger where the crisis exposes or exacerbates problems, such as a lack of trust in institutions, poor governance, poverty, or inequality.”

In other words, the IMF analysts hope that there will be no repetition of the global wave of popular uprisings – similar to the situation in late 2019 – in the near future. However, they are worried that such developments will occur in the longer term as it is impossible to overcome the capitalist crisis with all the dramatic social consequences for the popular masses.

It is evident that the IMF – as a leading institution of glob-

al imperialism – does not study issues like the global class struggle and the consequences which the COVID-19 crisis has on it for purely academic reasons. The leaders of the IMF are appointed by the governments of the Great Powers. The academics who elaborate studies for the IMF are selected and paid by these leaders. They want to see results for such investments. Only the most naïve observer could ignore that the IMF is highly worried by an upsurge of popular uprisings and, on the other hand, observes with relief any downturn of such mass movements.

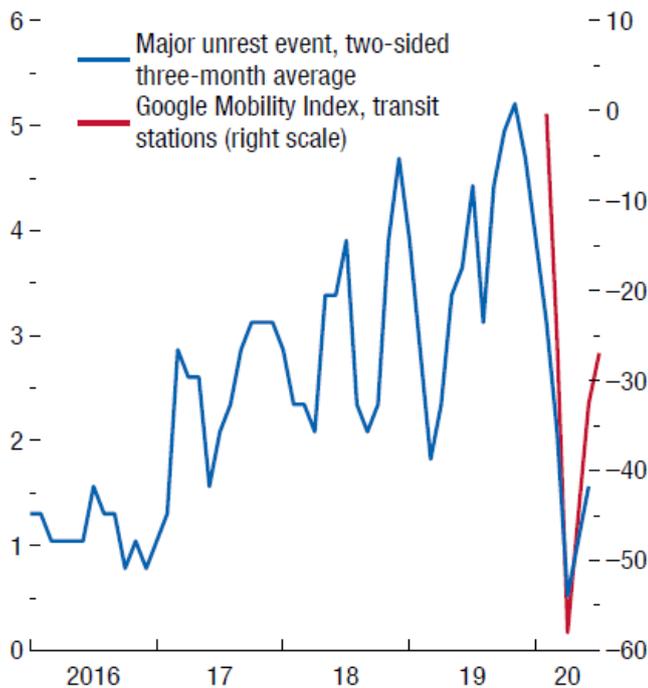
How can the Lockdown Left continue denying the counterrevolutionary nature of the COVID-19 policy?!

As we have repeatedly pointed out in our works, the organizations of the social democratic, Bolivarian, Stalinist and centrist left shamefully were nearly unanimously united in their support for the counterrevolutionary lockdown policy of the ruling class. They all jumped the wagon of the bourgeois propaganda that COVID-19 would constitute “the worst pandemic in modern history” and denied – and continue denying – the reactionary nature of these attacks on democratic rights.⁹

At this point we will not repeat our analysis of the pandemic which is – as we elaborated in detail in our works – neither a “hoax” nor an “unprecedented catastrophe” which

Figure 1.4.1. Monthly Share of Countries Experiencing Unrest Implied by the Reported Social Unrest Index

(Percent; percent deviation from baseline on right scale)

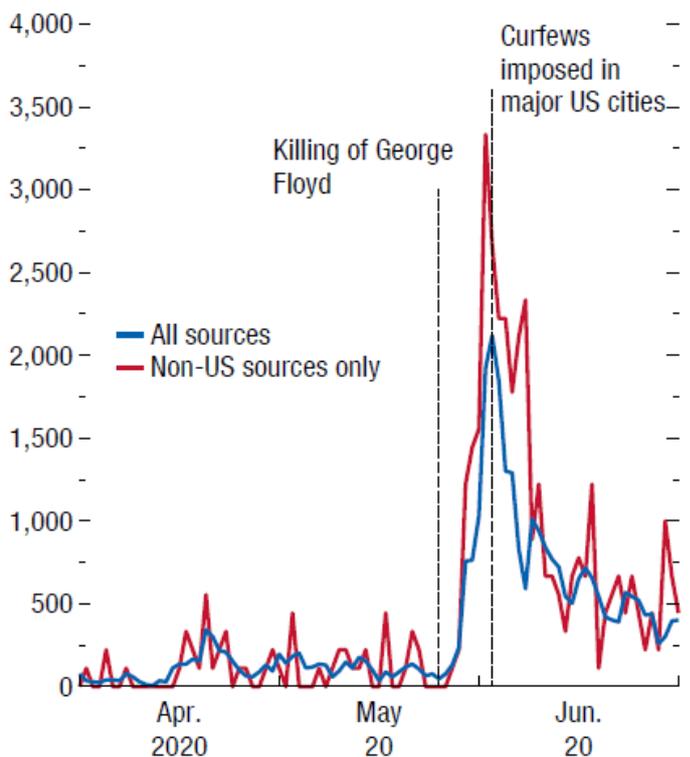


Sources: Factiva; Google Community Mobility Reports; and IMF staff calculations.

Note: The Google mobility index is a simple average of all countries’ transit mobility deviation from baseline, expressed monthly.

Figure 1.4.2. Daily Protest Articles for the United States, April–June 2020

(Index, April 2020 = 100)



Sources: Factiva; and IMF staff calculations.

could in any way justify the extremely anti-democratic and socially destructive Lockdown policy.¹⁰ Here, we will rather limit ourselves to ask the “left-wing” supporters of the Lockdown policy to consider the following.

1) Is it not telling that the Lockdown policy (including the banning of larger demonstrations and meetings) provoked a collapse of the global mass struggles?! For a Marxists, this is clearly a reactionary – and not a progressive – consequence!

2) Is it not telling that the clever analysts of the bourgeoisie – like those in the IMF staff – are fully aware of such reactionary consequences of the Lockdown policy?! Can anyone seriously believe that the ruling class did not think about such consequences already in spring this year when they imposed the Lockdown policy?! We remind those – who still have doubts – to the statement of a former IMF adviser in mid March who said, referring to the COVID-19 crisis: “Only in a crisis are governments able to rally people to accept necessary but painful reforms. Every crisis is also an opportunity.”¹¹

3) Is it not telling that, as a leading medical scientist pointed out, nearly all governments deliberately ignored the existing pandemic plans which had been prepared for years and instead opted for the authoritarian Lockdown policy which had been newly invented by the Stalinist-capitalist regime in China?!¹² In other words, this is a policy which had been invented not for public health reasons but for from political reasons.

As long as the so-called “left” is incapable to understand the real nature of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution and does not break completely with their social-bonapartist support for the bourgeois Lockdown policy, as long it is doomed to play a reactionary role in the class struggle. We appeal to all authentic socialists to break with such a policy and to join us in the struggle for a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism – a system which inevitable pushes humanity into economic, social, health and ecological collapse!

Footnotes

1 International Monetary Fund: World Economic Outlook: A Long and Difficult Ascent. Washington, DC, October 2020

2 Ibid, pp. 40-41

3 See e.g. chapter 14 in Michael Pröbsting: *The Great Robbery of the South. Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*, RCIT Books, Vienna 2013, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net/>. See also the annual World Perspective documents which the RCIT has published in the past years: RCIT: World Perspectives 2020: A Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, 8 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2020/>; RCIT: World Perspectives 2019: Heading Towards a Volcanic Political Eruption. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, 2 March 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2019/>; Michael Pröbsting: World Perspectives 2018: A World Pregnant with Wars and Popular Uprisings. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, RCIT Books, Vienna 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2018/>; RCIT: World Perspectives 2017: The Struggle against the Reactionary Offensive in the Era of Trumpism, 18 December 2016, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2017/>; RCIT: World Perspectives 2016: Advancing Counterrevolution and Acceleration of Class Contradictions Mark the

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book by Michael Pröbsting: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It*. See also the following essays by the same author: *The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution*. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; *The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase*. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>.

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8 See the RCIT statement: *The Global Popular Uprising against Racism and Police Violence*. This is a turning point ending the global counterrevolutionary situation. But workers and oppressed need to prepare for an ongoing reactionary offensive of the ruling class! 8 June 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-global-popular-uprising-against-racism-and-police-violence/>; See also numerous statements and articles of the RCIT on the Black Lives Matter protests since early June which have been compiled on a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/articles-on-uprising-after-murder-of-george-floyd/>.

9 See on this e.g. chapter V of our book by Michael Pröbsting: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It*. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>; see also by the same author the last chapters in the above mentioned essay: *The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution*; *COVID-19 and the Lockdown Left: The Example of PODEMOS and Stalinism in Spain*, 24 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-lockdown-left-podemoss-and-stalinism-in-spain/>; *Social-Bonapartism in Argentina*. *The Partido Obrero (Tendencia) of Jorge Altamira supports the State of Emergency*, 29 April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/social-bonapartism-in-argentina/>; *When Ultra-Leftism marries Social-Bonapartism and Gives Birth*

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Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution*

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

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

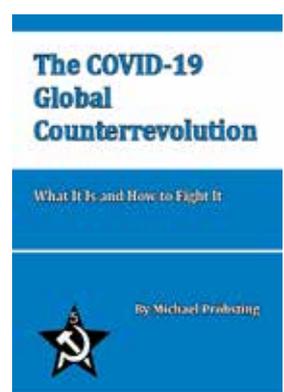
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

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

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

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

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



COVID-19: The Great Barrington Declaration is indeed Great!

Numerous medical scientists protest against the reactionary lockdown policy

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 11 October 2020

Three prestigious epidemiologists and university professors have initiated the so-called “Great Barrington Declaration” on 4 October.¹ This statement – a powerful refutation of the arguments which have been used by the ruling class to justify the reactionary Lockdown policy – received massive support by scientists and professionals around the world. Within days, it has been signed by nearly 6,000 medical experts according to the BBC.²

As Marxists we strongly welcome this initiative! It lends support to the democratic and progressive opposition against the extraordinary expansion of the bonapartist power of the capitalist state. Furthermore, it destroys the myth spread by the ruling class and its media about the alleged “broad consensus” among scientists that there would be no alternative to the never-ending lockdown policy.

What does the Great Barrington Declaration say?

The “Great Barrington Declaration” states that the “current lockdown policies are producing devastating effects on short and long-term public health. The results (to name a few) include lower childhood vaccination rates, worsening cardiovascular disease outcomes, fewer cancer screenings and deteriorating mental health – leading to greater excess mortality in years to come, with the working class and younger members of society carrying the heaviest burden. Keeping students out of school is a grave injustice. Keeping these measures in place until a vaccine is available will cause irreparable damage, with the underprivileged disproportionately harmed.”

It also explains the massive difference in how the virus affects young and old. “We know that vulnerability to death from COVID-19 is more than a thousand-fold higher in the old and infirm than the young. Indeed, for children, COVID-19 is less dangerous than many other harms, including influenza.”

They summarize their strategy as follows: “As immunity builds in the population, the risk of infection to all – including the vulnerable – falls. We know that all populations will eventually reach herd immunity – i.e. the point at which the rate of new infections is stable – and that this can be assisted by (but is not dependent upon) a vaccine. Our goal should therefore be to minimize mortality and social harm until we reach herd immunity. The most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk. We call this Focused Protection.”

Hence they make several proposals in order to improve the protection of the vulnerable. “Adopting measures to protect the vulnerable should be the central aim of public health responses to COVID-19. By way of example, nursing homes should use staff with acquired immunity and perform frequent PCR testing of other staff and all visitors. Staff rotation should be minimized. Retired people living at home should have groceries and other essentials delivered to their home. When possible, they should meet family members outside rather than inside.”

At the same time, the initiators demand that draconic restrictions for the rest of the population should be abolished. “Those who are not vulnerable should immediately be allowed to resume life as normal. Simple hygiene measures, such as hand washing and staying home when sick should be practiced by everyone to reduce the herd immunity threshold. Schools and universities should be open for in-person teaching. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, should be resumed. Young low-risk adults should work normally, rather than from home. Restaurants and other businesses should open. Arts, music, sport and other cultural activities should resume. People who are more at risk may participate if they wish, while society as a whole enjoys the protection conferred upon the vulnerable by those who have built up herd immunity.”

Who are the initiators?

The three initiators of the declaration, Dr. Martin Kulldorff, Dr. Sunetra Gupta and Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, are all highly respectable medical scientists. Kulldorff is a professor of medicine at Harvard University, a biostatistician, and epidemiologist with expertise in detecting and monitoring of infectious disease outbreaks and vaccine safety evaluations. Gupta is a professor at Oxford University, an epidemiologist with expertise in immunology, vaccine development, and mathematical modeling of infectious diseases. And Bhattacharya is a professor at Stanford University Medical School, a physician, epidemiologist, health economist, and public health policy expert focusing on infectious diseases and vulnerable populations.

Dr. Martin Kulldorff, a Swede by origin, has explained this approach in various interviews in recent past. In one of them he emphasized the necessity to approach the COVID-19 pandemic from a public health point of view. “What’s really missing here is proper public health thinking. A doctor has one patient in front of him or her. His or her responsibility is to this one patient. That is the doctor’s primary concern at that moment. For example, an oncologist will be concerned about a cancer that the cancer patient has. Even if you can prolong the life of a cancer patient by three to six months that is a very good outcome. But public health is different. In public health you cannot only think of one disease like Covid-19. You have to look at public health overall. If we do a lockdown, that has consequences on other diseases and creates other public health issues. It creates collateral damage.”³

In another interview which Kulldorff gave – together with Dr. Katherine Yih, a biologist and epidemiologist at Harvard – to the left-wing magazine *Jacobin* he drew attention to the hypocrisy of the liberal elites. “Question: “Experts say black and Hispanic Americans have been hit harder by the coronavirus in terms of illness and death, but they’ve also suffered more as a result of the lockdown in terms of job loss and food and housing insecurity. This creates a policy dilemma for progressives. What are your thoughts on how to deal with this dilemma?”

Answer: First, the main reason for this is that black and Hispanic Americans are overrepresented among the urban working

class. Second, it is not a policy dilemma, since the solution is the same for the two problems. With an age-targeted approach that protects older people while younger adults live more normal lives, older working-class people will be better protected, and the devastating effect of the lockdowns on working-class families will be much less severe. For the working class, the age-targeted approach is a win-win strategy. The dilemma is for the managerial class. Many of us pay lip service to equality and anti-racism, but we have chosen lockdowns to protect ourselves while throwing the working class under the bus.”⁴

Katherine Yih, a long-time activist in farm labor and anti-imperialist struggles and a founding member of the *New World Agriculture and Ecology Group* as well as of *Science for the People*, said in the same interview with *Jacobin*: “Progressives need to reject the unquestioning lockdown approach, which is simply inappropriate unless and until hospitals and other health care facilities are in danger of being overwhelmed. We need to be scrupulous about protecting the elderly and other high-risk groups. Others should be permitted to go about their business and keep society functioning. Workers must have access to personal protective equipment, COVID-19 testing, and sick pay. (...) Progressives should be advocating for a sustainable, communitarian approach that is informed by the knowledge that the virus will spread until herd immunity is achieved, acknowledges the need for stringent protections of the vulnerable in order to minimize deaths, and recognizes the harm caused by crude across-the-board lockdowns and their disproportionate impact on workers and people of color. The pandemic has laid bare the glaring and growing inequalities in our society, if they weren’t evident before. We must continue to fight for a radically fairer society, including, of course, Medicare for All. The need is greater than ever.”

We have provided such extensive excerpts from the dec-

laration and interviews in order to make readers familiar with their approach. In addition, these long quotes demonstrate that the protagonists are not academic tin foil hat idiots who deny the existence of the Corona Virus. Neither are they right-wing neo-liberals who put business interests before public health. This does not mean that they share our world view. In fact, it seems that the signatories of the “*Great Barrington Declaration*” are ideologically heterogeneous. But there can be no doubt that this large group of experts approach the COVID-19 crisis from a scientific point of view.

A powerful confirmation of the Marxist approach

The “*Great Barrington Declaration*” is a powerful and welcomed confirmation of the Marxist approach which the RCIT has advocated from the very beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. Since early February, we have denounced the hysteria which the ruling class has spread (and continues to spread), claiming that this would be “*the worst pandemic in modern history of humanity*”.⁵ We explained that while COVID-19 is a serious pandemic (and not a hoax like the Trumpian muddleheads claim), it is, however, not unique. We pointed out in our documents that humanity, unfortunately, has faced repeatedly various pandemics and diseases in past decades which have claimed hundreds of thousands or millions of lives a year. Examples for this are e.g. the so-called *Asia Flu* in 1957-58, the so-called *Hong Kong flu* in 1968, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, severe Influenza seasons, etc. In addition, one should not forget to view the COVID-19 crisis in proportion to other diseases and preventable health risks (respiratory infections, tobacco, alcohol, etc.) which also cause millions of death every year.

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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

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

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

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

25 years.

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

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

Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice

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



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

Furthermore, we also referred to the fact that Sweden, a country which did not impose any Lockdown, has not experienced excess mortality this year if one compares the figures of the first half of 2020 with those of the past decades.⁶

Against the reactionary Lockdown propaganda, the RCIT elaborated a detailed analysis of this development in more than 50 essays, statements and articles as well as a new book *"The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution"*. All of them are publicly available on a special subpage on our website and the most important of them have been translated in various languages.⁷

As readers can follow our detailed analysis in these documents we will not repeat our arguments at this point. We rather limit ourselves to refer to some of the latest evidence which confirm both that the COVID-19 pandemic is *not* a unique catastrophe and that the Lockdown policy is not an effective instrument to combat it.

A few days ago, Dr. Michael Ryan, the head of emergencies at the *World Health Organization*, said that the "best estimates" indicate roughly 1 in 10 people worldwide may have been infected by the coronavirus. This estimate would amount to more than 760 million people based on a current world population of about 7.6 billion.⁸ Since the global number of death caused by the virus is currently 1.07 million, this would amount to a mortality rate of 0.14%. This is similar to the widely acknowledged mortality rate of influenza (0.1%). In other words, all the so-called "scientific" arguments claiming that the COVID-19 crisis is something completely different from past pandemics and hence would necessitate an approach which has been in complete contradiction to all reactions to other pandemics, lack any serious basis.

Other studies have pointed out the dramatic consequences of the Lockdown policy which will result in large numbers of death. *Oxfam*, a well-known non-profit organization focusing on global poverty, recently published a report showing that 121 million more people could be pushed to the brink of starvation this year as a result of the crisis. *"As many as 12,000 people could die per day by the end of the year as a result of hunger linked to COVID-19, potentially more than could die from the disease, warned Oxfam in a new briefing published today. The global observed daily mortality rate for COVID-19 reached its highest recorded point in April 2020 at just over 10,000 deaths per day."*⁹

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that *"there have been 93,814 non-COVID "excess deaths" this year, including 42,427 from cardiovascular conditions, 10,686 from diabetes and 3,646 from cancer. Many are due to government shutdowns of non-essential medical care."*¹⁰

Another recently published study analyzed the effects of "non-pharmaceutical interventions" (lockdowns as well as other restrictions) in 23 countries and 25 U.S. states with more than 1,000 COVID deaths. The authors – Andrew Atkeson, Karen Kopecky, and Tao Zha – arrived at the conclusion that the lockdown policy and other restrictions were not relevant for the evolution of COVID-19 transmission rates. *"Our findings in Fact 2 and Fact 3 further raise doubt about the importance in NPI's (lockdown policies in particular) in accounting for the evolution of COVID-19 transmission rates over time and across locations. Many of the regions in our sample that instated lockdown policies early on in their local epidemic, removed them later on in our estimation period,*

*or have have not relied on mandated NPI's much at all. Yet, effective reproduction numbers in all regions have continued to remain low relative to initial levels indicating that the removal of lockdown policies has had little effective on transmission rates. The existing literature has concluded that NPI policy and social distancing have been essential to reducing the spread of COVID-19 and the number of deaths due to this deadly pandemic. The stylized facts established in this paper challenge this conclusion."*¹¹

The *"Great Barrington Declaration"* focus on protecting the elder and vulnerable people – instead of locking up the whole population – is absolutely correct. We ourselves have already pointed this out in past works and discussed possible measures to limit the effects of the pandemic to these sectors of the population.¹² According to official data, 2,694, or more than 45% of Sweden's COVID death had been among those living in nursing homes. In the United States, some 40% of total coronavirus deaths have been linked to nursing homes, according to a New York Times database. In Britain, Covid has been directly blamed in more than 15,000 nursing home deaths, according to government data.¹³ In short, in order to reduce the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, a special program for those in nursing homes in central – not a shutdown of the whole society!

An instrument to justify the political and economic capitalist counterrevolution

We have explained from the beginning of this crisis that the objective main role of the reactionary Lockdown policy of the ruling class was not to combat the pandemic but rather to promote specific political and economic interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie. They consciously generated fear and panic in order to utilize such a climate for political objectives like justifying the expansion of the police and surveillance state, finding a scapegoat for the Third Depression of the capitalist world economy (which began in late 2019), using it as an instrument against Great Power rivals, etc. Furthermore, the capitalists in important industrial sectors have been keen to exploit such a crisis as an extraordinary business opportunity. No doubt, numerous corporations – in industries like drugs, biotechnology, robotics, Artificially Intelligence and the whole IT industry, the whole online retail sector, etc – expect massive profits.

Against such *COVID-19 Counterrevolution* we have always advocated a bold program which combined demands in defense of public health, living standard and democratic rights. In order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCIT calls for a serious program of mass testing, free health care, free provision of protective gear and hygiene articles at workplaces and public places, and the expansion of the public health sector under workers and popular control. Such an expansion must include substantial wage increases for health and care workers and a massive campaign to recruit and train additional personal. It should also include the nationalization of all private corporations in the care industry without compensation and the building of additional care homes. We combined such a program with a comprehensive strategy against the capitalist austerity policy as well as for the defense of democratic rights against the bonapartist state apparatus.¹⁴

In this context, we want to draw attention to a remark of

Dr. Kulldorff which he made in one of his interviews. He explained that the Lockdown policy in spring could not have been motivated by scientific insight. *“As a scientist I have worked with infectious disease outbreaks for a couple of decades. Then suddenly in the spring, I was hearing that we should “follow the science” by doing something that I think is contrary to science. That was absolutely stunning to me. I could not understand it. Maybe what happened was one or two epidemiologists would say something and then the media and politicians would fall on it and claim that that is “the science” and then one or two other scientists outside of the field of infectious disease epidemiology might agree to it.”*¹⁵

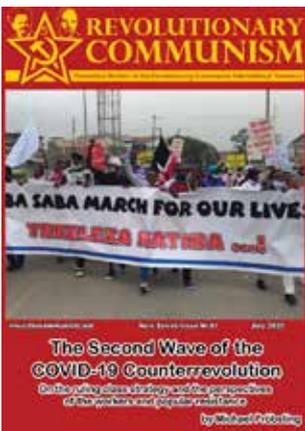
He also added that the Lockdown policy has been in clear contradiction to the established public health approach. *“Lockdown is a new invention of 2020. Every European country had prepared pandemic plans. We knew one was going to come along. Except for Sweden, all the countries threw it out of the window when Covid-19 arrived. Of course, we don’t know the specific nature of the next pandemic so the plans have to be adjusted accordingly. But basic public health practice was ignored.”*

Naturally, Dr. Kulldorff is no Marxist so he does not draw the necessary conclusions from his statement, i.e. that the bonapartist Lockdown policy of most governments around the world, contrary to their official propaganda, was motivated by political and economic interests of the of the ruling capitalist class. But his statement confirms that the Lockdown policy does not have its origin in the scientific community but rather in the ruling political elite. It was *not* the scientists which asked the governments to impose the policy of Lockdown. Quite contrary, *it was the governments which initiated the policy of Lockdown and which demanded from medical scientists to legitimize it!*

The Lockdown Left looks crestfallen

At the beginning of the COVID-19 global crisis in February/March 2020, the RCIT was an isolated voice in the wilderness. Given the tremendous pressure of the ruling class and the bourgeois media only very few medical scientists had the courage to speak out against the Lockdown policy and the COVID-19 hysteria. Among the self-proclaimed “Marxist” international organizations, not a single one passed the tests and stood up against the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. All of them, *without exception*, capitulated to the reactionary offensive of the ruling class – similar to social democracy in August 1914 when World War I began. They all accepted the official bonapartist hysteria about the *“worst pandemic for a century”* and they all defended the Lockdown policy with “socialist” phrases. In other words, these pseudo-Marxists succumbed to the shameful ideology of social-bonapartism and became part of the Lockdown Left. Wherever they were in government they imposed the draconic and anti-poor Lockdown policy (e.g. PODEMOS and the Stalinist PCE in Spain, the “Communist” Party in South Africa).¹⁶

One of the key objections of social-bonapartist leftists against our position has been that *“you are like the right-wing Trump supporters who also oppose the Lockdown policy.”* However, this is silly argument which bears the well-known slanderous logic which social democracy and Stalinism so often employ. There have been numerous occasions in history where not only revolutionaries opposed a government and its policy but also right-wing forces. Take the coalition government of social democrats and bourgeois forces in Germany in 1919-20 which signed the devastating Versailles Treaty with the Entente Powers. Take the workers and popular uprisings against the Stalin-



Publications of the RCIT

The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution

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

By Michael Pröbsting, July 2020

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

A RCIT Pamphlet, 20 pages, A4 Format

ist dictatorships (e.g. Eastern Germany 1953, Hungary 1956, Poland 1980). Take the Iraq War in 1991. In all these cases it was not only revolutionary forces which opposed the respective governments but also right-wing and fascist forces. Likewise, the Nazis also hypocritically denounced the oppression of the Indians by the British colonial empire. Should revolutionaries have refrained from opposing all these reactionary governments and their policy just because fascists also opposed them rhetorically?! Of course, not!

The point is that Marxists, in contrast to fascists, denounce such reactionary policy from a progressive point of view and advocate methods of class struggle. Revolutionaries oppose the Lockdown policy because they *oppose* the increasing power of the bonapartist state apparatus. The Trumpians strive to *increase* the power of the bonapartist state apparatus (e.g. see the policy of the White House to send federal special units to Portland and other cities in order to smash the Black Lives Matter movement). Revolutionaries combine the struggle for democratic rights with a program against neoliberal austerity policy and for the expansion of public health. The Trumpians do the opposite. In short, the “argument” of the social-bonapartists against our position is nothing but idiotic slander.

However, with the deepening of the capitalist decay, the crisis and confusion among the bourgeoisie as well as their ideologists are also increasing. In spring we faced a nearly monolithic bloc of the bourgeoisie, the liberal middle class and the reformist left – all advocating the Lockdown policy, all spreading fear and panic. But the change in the world situation with popular uprisings in a number of countries – most importantly the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. – has shattered this reactionary phalanx.¹⁷

Times are changing

Currently, as the RCIT predicted in July, we see a new offensive of the ruling class in imperialist countries to impose local and regional lockdowns.¹⁸ However, it becomes increasingly difficult for governments to justify these measures. It is obvious that the Corona Virus is, firstly, not such a dangerous pandemic that it would justify such massive restrictions and, secondly, that the Lockdown policy is an impotent instrument to combat it. Nevertheless, governments try again to spread fear by referring to the rising number of infections; at the same time they hide the fact that – at least until now – the number of deaths remain low in most European countries and increases not at all or only slightly (this is the case in France, Britain, Italy, Sweden, and Germany, while in Spain there is a certain increase of mortality).¹⁹

As a result, popular trust in the government propaganda has declined massively. We see now an increasing number of democratic protests by workers and the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie against the Lockdown policy not only in the semi-colonial countries but also in the imperialist metropolises. Due to the nearly total capitulation of the leadership of the workers movement and the left, these forces could not play any role in the protests against the Lockdown policy. As a result, various demonstrations in Britain, Germany, U.S. and other countries had a petty-bourgeois populist character. This offered space for right-wing provocateurs and weirdos in tin foil hats who

try to exploit the legitimate popular outrage against anti-democratic attacks for their reactionary policy. However, the rebellion in Madrid in the past weeks are a promising sign that even the worst treachery of the reformists can not break the spirit of resistance of the workers and poor!²⁰

In addition, an interesting mass protest took place in Berlin on 10 October. Under the slogan “*Silent March against Racism and for Human Rights*”, 20,000 people demonstrated against the reactionary Lockdown policy. Unsurprisingly, this protest was not called by any “left-wing” forces as they strongly support the Lockdown policy. The organizers rather come from the peace movement and their pacifist-democratic call bears a strong petty-bourgeois character.²¹ Nevertheless, such initiatives are a promising sign as they reflect a healthy democratic mass protest against the bonapartist government policy. They also denounced all forms of infiltration by right-wing forces and expelled such people when detected.²²

In other words, there are strong indications that the second wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution will meet much stronger resistance in the imperialist countries than the first wave in spring when the ruling class was able to paralyze the popular masses with their shock and awe policy of spreading panic and imposing draconic Lockdowns.

This rupture in the capitalist unholy alliance has also opened up the space for critical scientists. The “*Great Barrington Declaration*” is a clear indication for this development. Of course, we have no illusion. The reckless reactionary offensive of the ruling class under the cover of the pandemic will not end soon. We expect that the pandemic will be exploited by the bourgeoisie for years since it is a useful instrument to terrify people, to justify the expansion of state power and to create new business opportunities for capitalist corporations. Likewise, the Lockdown Left will continue clinging to the capitalists’ coat-tails and advocate their program of social-bonapartism.

However, until now the ruling class and the Lockdown Left could hide behind an alleged “consensus” of the scientists. With the “*Great Barrington Declaration*” this is no longer possible.

Footnotes

1 The Great Barrington Declaration, <https://gbdeclaration.org/>

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4 Jacobin: We Need a Radically Different Approach to the Pandemic and Our Economy as a Whole, An interview with Katherine Yih, Martin Kulldorff, 19.9.2020, <https://www.jacobin-mag.com/2020/09/covid-19-pandemic-economy-us-response-in-equality>

5 We recognized this nature of the COVID-19 crisis already in our very first article on this issue. See Almedina Gunić: Coronavirus: “I am not a Virus” ... but WE will be the Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the “Wuhan Coronavirus” hysteria and the revolutionary answer, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecomunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>.

6 See e.g. Wikipedia: COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Sweden#Excess_mortality

7 See <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. In addition, we draw attention to our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>. See also the following essays by the same author: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>.

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[5869c9ae4ee623497691e796083](https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-archive-united-nations-54a3a-5869c9ae4ee623497691e796083); Al Jazeera: Ten percent of world's population may have had COVID-19, WHO says, 5 October 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/5/who-10-percent-of-worlds-population-may-have-had-coronavirus>

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10 The Wall Street Journal: World may need to learn how to live with COVID, 9 October 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-covid-and-reason-11602026102>

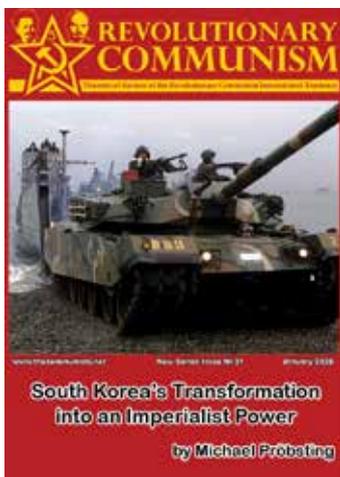
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12 See chapter "Capitalism and care homes as deadly traps for old people" in our above-mentioned essay "The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution".

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

15 See the above-mentioned interview by Alastair Benn: We are throwing the working class under the bus – an interview with Professor Martin Kulldorff



Publications of the RCIT

South Korea's Transformation into an Imperialist Power

On the nature of South Korean monopoly capital and the ensuing programmatic tasks of the workers vanguard

By Michael Pröbsting, December 2019

The Relevance of the Issue * Definition: What Constitutes a State as Imperialist? * Historical Background: Extraordinary Conditions Allow for Rapid Industrialization * South Korea as a Highly Industrialized, Modern Capitalist Country * South Korean Monopoly Capital: Domination of Domestic Market * South Korean Monopoly Capital: Global Players on the World Market * South Korean Monopoly Capital: The Role of Capital Export * On Some Political Issues Resulting from South Korea's Imperialist Transformation * The Emergence of a Labor Aristocracy and Inequality within the South Korean Working Class * The Political Role of South Korean Imperialism and its Limited Independence * The Stalinist Myth of South Korea Being Still a Neo-Colony of U.S. Imperialism * The Mistaken Conception of Sub-Imperialism * The Program of Revolutionary Defeatism * Anti-Imperialist Tasks in South Korea Today * Appendix: A Historic Analogy: Marxist Tactics in Germany in 1891 and 1914 * Capitalist Development in South Korea and Taiwan (1996)

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17 See the RCIT statement: *The Global Popular Uprising against Racism and Police Violence. This is a turning point ending the global counterrevolutionary situation. But workers and oppressed need to prepare for an ongoing reactionary offensive of the ruling class!* 8 June 2020, [https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-global-popular-uprising-against-rac-](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-global-popular-uprising-against-racism-and-police-violence/)

[ism-and-police-violence/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-global-popular-uprising-against-racism-and-police-violence/); See also numerous statements and articles of the RCIT on the Black Lives Matter protests since early June which have been compiled on a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/north-america/articles-on-uprising-after-murder-of-george-floyd/>.

18 See the above mentioned essay: *The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution*.

19 See on this the respective Wikipedia entries as well as the official EU website on mortality (<https://www.euromomo.eu/graphs-and-maps/>).

20 We refer to our latest statement: *COVID-19: Madrid's Workers and Poor Protest against the Reactionary Lockdown Regime! Support the struggle against anti-democratic attacks and for expansion of the public health service!* 2 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/madrid-workers-and-poor-protest-against-the-reactionary-lockdown-regime/>. There are also ongoing protests in Israel against the corrupt Netanyahu government and its anti-democratic Lockdown policy albeit they are of a more contradictory nature. see on this e.g. Yossi Schwartz: *Israel: Draconian Law against the Right to Demonstrate*, 01.10.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/draconian-law-against-the-right-to-demonstrate-in-israel/> and Adam Smith: *Israel: What is behind a Second Lockdown?* 19.09.2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/what-is-behind-a-second-lockdown-in-israel/>.

21 The call for the demonstration can be viewed on the website of the organizers: <https://der-schweigemarsch.de/>.

22 See e.g. *Gegner der Corona-Maßnahmen demonstrieren in Berlin*, 10.10.2020, https://www.rbb24.de/politik/thema/2020/coronavirus/beitraege_neu/2020/10/demo-corona-massnahmen-schweigemarsch-menschenrechte-berlin-adenauerplatz-grosser-stern.html.

Books of the RCIT

Yossi Schwartz: Palestine and Zionism

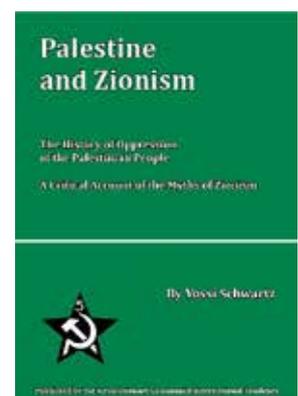
The History of Oppression of the Palestinian People. A Critical Account of the Myths of Zionism

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

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

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

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



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!

