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ONE WORLD - ONE STRUGGLE - ONE REVOLUTION



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8 March: For a Revolutionary Women's Movement!

*Solidarity with the Syrian Revolution

*US Bombing of Libya

*Mexico: The Struggle of Women Workers

*Argentina: The Struggle against Macri

*Brazil: The Zika Virus

*US: No Vote for the Democratic Party

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Sisters, Let Us Set the World Alight!

Declaration for 8 March 2016 – International Day of Women Workers

by Almedina Gunić, International Women's Secretary of Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)

1. Day by day, we women shape the world in which we live, through our work and through our struggles. We do so as working women in China, by the millions, in factories of companies, performing our daily tasks, constituting a huge portion of the global working class. At the same time we strike with iron resolve as factory workers in the struggle against exploitation in Cambodia, organizing by the hundreds of thousands for higher wages, for the establishment of trade unions, and for our equality as women against the oppression of the factory and against the brutal police. We are the heroines of the struggle against inhuman dictatorships like that of al-Sisi in Egypt and Assad in Syria. We are the spearhead of the struggle against imperialism and its consequences. For all what we are we are persecuted and punished every day. For a decade now, we are attacked in Mexico, often raped, murdered and buried in the desert. We are persecuted as fighters against the government in Burundi, robbed of our lives in the dark of night. We are fearsome warriors in the eyes of the apartheid state of Israel, imprisoned only because we raise a hand against the inhuman oppression of our Palestinian people. We are the nightmare of the ruling classes around the world, the Furies who cannot be bound as much as they try. We cannot be defeated and will not break whatever the class enemy might do. We are the morning, bringing the light to our oppressed brothers who are fighting, as workers and as the poor, in towns and in the country, against exploitation and oppression. For them, we are not and never will be Furies, but rather examples. All that we are throughout the entire year, Sisters, we recall as members of the RCIT on March 8.

2. The core of the global working class is shifting more and more to the east and south. The emerging factory towns throughout the Asian continent resemble similar developments in the 19th century Europe and America. In China, our sisters live in miniscule, confined

spaces, dozens of bunk beds crammed into a room with a small stove being the pinnacle of luxury. Many of these women are migrant workers, separated almost all the year round from their families. From early morning until late at night, they are the wage slaves of corporations. Most spend their entire day working at a piece rate. In addition to immediate improvements, such as replacing the piece rate with a decent hourly wage, and the ability to organize in a union, we are struggling with our sisters for the expropriation of the factories, their placement under public ownership and their control by the workers; in particular in the case of factories which have been closed or are facing closure. Our sisters in China have played a central role in numerous strikes in the past, especially in the province of Guangdong, where 30% of China's exports are produced in countless factories almost exclusively staffed by a female workforce. But, in addition to the appalling conditions in which they work, our sisters are also forced to fight daily against sexual assault, so prevalent in the workplace. Surveys conducted in the third largest city in China, Guangzhou, reveal that at least 70% of women workers regularly suffer sexual assault. Therefore, the fight of our sisters in their workplaces is not only against their demeaning exploitation as workers, but also as victims of sexual violence and intimidation. The present and the future of the global class struggle are directly and significantly influenced by the working class women of China. Thus, the building of a worldwide revolutionary women's movement will depend to a great extent on our Chinese sisters.

3. The struggles of our sisters in Cambodia are inferior in nothing to those of our sisters in China. The heroic commitment of women workers of Cambodia to the establishment of independent trade unions and their struggle for increases in wages have already been a model for a number of years. In the province of Phnom



Almedina Gunić, International Women's Secretary of the RCIT, speaks at a rally on Women's Day in 2014 in Vienna

Penh, our class sisters have led an enormous labor strike overwhelming composed of women, who account for nearly 90% of the textile workers there. Throughout the country, supporting strikes have included hundreds of thousands of workers. While the bourgeois *Cambodian National Rescue Party* (CNRP) has been supportive of the strikes, the former Stalinist, bourgeois party *Cambodian People's Party* (CPP), which has been in power for more than three decades, has been instrumental in attempting to crush them with brutal force by the police, and has at times even called in the military. Even with the CNRP's official favoring of the strike, they have cynically tried to use it for their own ends, and thus a central task of our sisters in Cambodia is to fight for the independence of the trade unions from these bourgeois parties. This can only be done by our heroic sisters' building a revolutionary workers' party. In this way, the labor disputes can be extended and augmented with creation of self-defense units against the violence of the regime, towards the calling of a general strike, and the beginning of a revolutionary uprising against the capitalist government under the leadership of the new revolutionary party. Our sisters have already achieved much in the course of their recent struggles. With much spilt blood and many deaths, our sisters, who fought alongside their class brothers, have forced the government to increase the minimum wage. However this, in turn, brought many corporations to leave the country and relocate their production facilities, demonstrating that the sole aim of the imperialist parasites is to bleed the country and to leave it at the earliest possible opportunity. Only a victorious armed struggle and the forming of a socialist workers and peasant government can stop this by expropriating the factories and placing them under control of the workers. It is the task of the international labor movement to call for solidarity strikes with our sisters and brothers in Cambodia, in order to help bring about the expropriation of the corporations and put their factories under control of all the workers.

4. The migration of companies from Cambodia and other parts of the Asia is closely linked with the construction of new factories on the Africa continent. With the emergence of Russia and China as new imperialist powers, intense competition has emerged among all the imperialist powers, both East and West. China, in particular, began years ago investing in impoverished, sub-Saharan Africa and is now the largest investor there. Based on China's own experience, it was clear to these new imperialists that the younger proletariat in Asia can also organize rapidly and thereby cut into Chinese profits. Accordingly, China established a foothold in many other countries, like Ethiopia, with the aim of developing the economic powerhouse of Africa for their own profit. In Ethiopia, wage costs are minimal even compared with those of China, at times constituting only 10% of what the Chinese capitalists would have to pay to workers in their own homeland. Naturally, very little Chinese capital is invested in safety for the Ethiopian workers. As a result, almost 30% of Ethiopian textile factory workers are injured by machinery in the course of their working lives, while an additional 20% are hurt in other ways in the workplace. At the same time, the very young Ethiopian proletariat is historically unused to the new relations of imperialist exploitation, and the physical capacity of workers there

averages 8 hours per day, while the Chinese capitalists are accustomed by to getting 11 hours of work per day out of their workers at home. Consequently, Ethiopian workers are drilled and harassed by their foreign bosses. Still, given the mass unemployment and poverty in Ethiopia, factory jobs are highly sought after. To make matters worse, the country of our Ethiopian sisters and brothers is currently suffering from the worst drought in 50 years, one which, by mid-year, is expected to affect 15 million persons. When there was a severe drought in the country 30 years ago, a million people died. But that drought was nothing compared to the present one. Added to all this, Ethiopia pays exorbitant interest on its foreign debts to the imperialist states. Therefore, in full solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia, as well as those across the African continent, and in all semi-colonies around the world, we call for an immediate and full cancellation of all debt! In addition, we call upon the international labor movement to organize immediate humanitarian aid for drought-stricken Ethiopia. It is yet just another perversion of imperialism that our class brothers and sisters must die from thirst while, in some countries, drinking water is used to flush toilets!

5. In addition to the torment of exploitation fomented by the imperialists in the factories, the human suffering due to the problems caused by increasing climate change and environmental disasters (which are ultimately the responsibility of the Number 1 polluters, namely the multinationals), our sisters in Africa are also suppressed because of their sex. In Burundi, every day opponents of the current government are abducted, killed and their corpses are left lying somewhere. Women are often brutally raped beforehand. Rape, in addition to other forms of sexual violence, is a special burden that is imposed on us women against our wills. And it's not only our sisters in Burundi who are suffering.

6. Gang rape of women in India regularly takes place and these crimes are so dramatic in their brutality that they often lead to death of the victim. There is hardly a woman of lower classes in India who has not suffered rape during her lifetime. However, the mainstream media have only begun to show indignation in recent years, making the phenomena known to the public following rapes directed against wealthy women. But long before their widespread report, our Indian sisters began to organize. They have shown us what self-defense units can actually look like, and they have become ubiquitous; like the *Gulabi Gang* (*Pink Saris*) which was created ten years ago and was founded by the then 45-year old Sambat Pal Devi, a member of the lowest caste. Since then more than 150,000 women have joined this self-defense unit! Our militant sisters, have adopted pink for the color of their garments, because none of the previously existing parties had claimed that color for itself. The independence of the self-defense units from *all* the bourgeois parties is an important and correct approach taken by our Indian sisters. Since Sambat Pal Devi has become a supporter of the Congress Party, it is said that this has led to a split in the movement. The *Pink Saris* arm themselves with iron-tipped sticks, called *Lathi*, not only against rapists, but also against corrupt policemen and members of higher castes that exhibit violence towards members of lower castes. They are also fighting for their own movements' independence from

bourgeois influence, and are supported by poor women in cities and rural areas. These are the women who have become the heart and soul of a new revolutionary party in India. Without such a party, in the long run the movement cannot possibly implement its self-proclaimed political goal: Stopping any injustice against the poor and weak.

7. The movement of the *Gulabi Gang* demonstrates the potential for building a revolutionary women's movement in India. But it could also serve as a shining example for our sisters in today's Mexico. For a decade now, they have experienced a growing wave of violence and murder. Women are kidnapped, raped and often dumped dead in the middle of the desert. Many of the surviving victims recover only after a very long time. This murderous violence against women, in this particularly heinous form, must be stopped immediately. Self-defense groups for our sisters in Mexico, like that of the *Pink Saris* in India, could be a lifesaver. In addition, every case of rape or other form of physical and sexual violence against any woman must be thoroughly investigated and solved. A jury, consisting of representatives of the workers' movement and the persons concerned must address each such incident, with the goal of bring the perpetrators to justice. Our victimized sisters and their families should be given the option of restorative justice for the atrocities they have suffered.

8. "*Ni una Menos!*" ("*Not one less!*") is the slogan called out by hundreds of thousands of our sisters in mass demonstrations against femicide in Argentina. In May 2015, a 14-year old woman was brutally murdered, as happens to hundreds of other women each year in Argentina. As in Mexico, our sisters in Argentina have bitter experience with brute force and up to femicide in Argentina. Death at the hands of the partner or by family members and friends is a particularly common form of femicide in Latin America. Every one of our sisters must be protected against such cruelty. In every neighborhood, in every village, in the workplace and educational institutions, women must have the ability to conduct meetings. The cohesion and mutual protection thus created, the awareness and the timely warnings of violence in the immediate environment can literally save hundreds of lives!

9. However, the worst killers of us women are by far the major imperialist powers and their stooges, the dictatorships. Our heroic sisters in Egypt are fighting relentlessly against the brutal dictatorship of General al-Sisi, which sends even small children to trial. This dictatorship was inaugurated in a coup on July 3, 2013, and was hailed by the US and the imperialist countries of the EU. A month later, an incomprehensible massacre was perpetrated by the military dictatorship, in which in a single day, more than 3,000 of our brothers and sisters were slaughtered. Tens of thousands of people are suffering torture and humiliation in the prisons of the military regime and are usually judged in summary proceedings. In show trials conducted in the course of a single day, hundreds of people were sentenced to death, sometimes without even having had the opportunity to consult with a lawyer. Yet, for this dictator and mass murderer, al-Sisi, the imperialist powers have rolled out the red carpet. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel met with al-Sisi and his delegation last year in Berlin. While our sisters were rotting in the prisons of the Egyptian regime, those who

had not already lost their lives in the struggle against the dictatorship, Angela Merkel courted the mass murderer al-Sisi! At the same time, someone like Alice Schwarzer, a leading representative of bourgeois feminism, makes statements against immigrants and Muslims and plays right into the hands of the racist PEGIDA movement. What striking examples of middle class, iconic women, "epitomes of feminism," who have absolutely nothing at all to do with the real interests of women! What excellent examples of how little feminism has to do with women's liberation! The Angela Merckels and Alice Schwarzers of the world are one with the mass murderers in the world! They are, therefore, not our sisters, but the greatest enemies of us working women!

10. Just as our sisters in Egypt heroically fight against the dictatorship of al-Sisi, so our sisters in Syria are fighting against the dictator Assad. Yet they are forced to simultaneously fight the imperialist intervention by Russia and its Iranian henchmen on the one hand, and the US and the EU and their stooges on the other, if in the end they do not want to lose their home to the imperialist predators.

11. No list of heroic anti-imperialist struggles would be complete without mentioning our sisters in Palestine. More and more of our sisters are actively organizing in the resistance against the apartheid state of Israel. The vital Third Intifada cannot be set in motion without their courageous efforts! They are the brightest models in a relentless struggle for justice and freedom, in the struggle for a free, red Palestine!

12. On this March 8 we recall each of the heroic struggles of all our sisters worldwide. We remember the history of March 8 as a day of battle, which began in the self-sacrificing struggle of working women more than 100 years ago. We remember the fighters and all those sisters who are today oppressed and exploited. Like the millions of fleeing persons looking for a new home in Europe. We want to open the gates to them, shout out support for them, and welcome them. We intend to do so not only today, but fight even more resolutely for this tomorrow. Against exploitation in the factories, suffered by our sisters in China, Cambodia and around the world; Against the brutal apartheid, suffered by our Palestinian sisters at the hands of the imperialist state of Israel; Against the beast of imperialism that exploits not only us working women, in city and country, but also our class brothers every day; Against murderous racism, not only against refugees and migrants but also against our black brothers and sisters in the US and elsewhere; Against the war machine of the imperialists whose economies and greed pave the path to our subjugation by crushing our bodies. Our history is one of struggle, and so is our present. We will yet retrieve every tear, every drop of sweat and blood. We will fight for a future in which the exploitation and oppression is nothing but a shadow of the past; a future in which capitalism and its final stage, imperialism, is nothing but a chapter in the book of history; a future in which our children's children will proudly speak of the revolutionaries, women and men, who together moved forward to build a world revolutionary party and courageously stood up to the imperialist beast; who organized the greatest event in the history of mankind – the world socialist revolution; those who gave humankind a future of socialism in which we women are free at last. ■

Defend the Syrian Revolution – Defeat Assad – Drive the Russians, NATO, and All Other Foreign Aggressors Out of Syria!

**On the 5th Anniversary of the Start of the Syrian Revolution:
For an International Solidarity Campaign in Support
of the Liberation Struggle of the Syrian Workers and Fallahin!**

Joint Call by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency and the Agrupación de Lucha Socialista (Mexico), 8.3.2016

On the 5th anniversary since it began, the Syrian Revolution is facing grave peril. The Syrian people face unspeakable misery as a result of the never-ending terror by the Assad regime in addition to the ongoing aggression of the Great Powers. According to the *Syrian Centre for Policy Research*, 470,000 people have already died since the beginning of the civil war and 11.5% of the country's entire population has been either killed or wounded, while an incredible 45% of the Syrian people have been displaced!

Today, with the help of the Russian *blitzkrieg* and thousands of Iranian-led troops, the Assad regime threatens to liquidate *Free Aleppo*. The Great Powers – Russia, the US, France, the UK, and Germany – are all engaged in a murderous bombing campaign which, under the pretext of the “War on Terror,” is directed primarily against the Syrian rebel forces and the civilian population. In addition, not only are Iranian-led and Hezbollah forces intervening in the Syrian civil war, but the reactionary regimes of Turkey and Saudi Arabia threaten to do the same. Furthermore the reactionary *Daesh* (the so-called “Islamic State”) threatens the Syrian Revolution from within. Unfortunately, the leadership of the PKK/YPG – while defending the legitimate right of the Kurdish people for national self-determination – fails to support the Syrian Revolution, and instead is collaborating with the Assad regime as well as with the US and Russia.

The Syrian Revolution faces yet an additional grave danger: the Great Powers are determined to liquidate the revolutionary process in Syria by imposing the so-called Geneva “Negotiations.” This is nothing but an attempt to repeat the counter-revolutionary “Oslo peace process” which ended in the sell-out of the first Palestinian Intifada in 1994.

At the same time, the European governments are either entirely blockading or barracking hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who have been forced to flee their war-torn country. Rightwing racist and fascist forces are whipping up hatred against the Syrian refugees or are even violently attacking them. Islamophobia has become the new Anti-Semitism of Europe.

We denounce all those forces who claim to be socialists (Stalinists, Castro-Chavismo proponents, the Party of the European Left, various pseudo-Trotskyists) but, who in fact, are betraying the masses by not taking a progressive stand in these crucial fights which are a vital part of the world class struggle. These hypocritical forces support – either directly or indirectly – the Assad regime or take a neutral stand in the civil war instead of supporting the Syrian Revolution. This is particularly true for the two Syrian “Communist” Parties (“Unified” as well as “Bak-

dash”) which for decades have shamefully been a part of Assad's ruling “*National Progressive Front*.”

Likewise we denounce those “progressive” parties in Europe who fail to oppose the advancing counter-revolutionary offensive (militarization, the “State of Emergency” regime, etc.), who aren't fighting for “Open Borders” (i.e., defending the right of refugees to freely come to Europe) and who fail to fight for full equality of migrants (equal civil rights, equal wages, equality of their native language in schools and public administration, etc.).

The Syrian Revolution dramatically demonstrates the painful absence of a revolutionary party rooted in the working class. Only such a party would be able to advance and organize the numerous heroic local initiatives of Syrian workers, youth and fallahin to administer their neighborhoods and arm themselves against the enemies of the people. It would advance the formation of independent trade unions. Only such a party would be able to combine the democratic struggle against the dictatorship with a socialist perspective of a *Workers' and Fallahin Government based on popular councils and militias* which would destroy the Baathist state apparatus, expropriate the bourgeoisie, and take over the country's wealth in order to put it in the service of the people.

It is only because of the absence of such a party that corrupt elements, as well as petty-bourgeois pro-Western or Islamist forces, have been able to gain a leading position amongst the Syrian popular anti-Assad forces.

As a matter of fact, the Syrian Revolution – and the Arab Revolution in general – the struggle against Great Power aggression in North Africa and the Middle East, and the struggle against militarization and racism in Europe are all inextricably linked. They are a litmus test for all revolutionaries and a dividing line between authentic Marxism and revisionism. Revolutionaries can *only* take a correct approach by combining these struggles on the basis of the program of permanent revolution, proletarian internationalism, and Marxist anti-imperialism.

As Marxist revolutionaries we stand for the unconditional defense of the Syrian Revolution against the Assad dictatorship as well as against the brutal aggression of the Great Powers and various regional foreign states. We combine this stand with the revolutionary and socialist perspective of a *Free and Red Syria*. We unconditionally support the struggle of the Syrian people without giving political support to its petty-bourgeois secular and Islamist leaderships. Likewise we support the struggle of the Kurdish people for national self-determination without giving political support to the pro-imperialist PKK/YPG leadership. We support the resistance of the Syrian people against the aggression of the Great Powers in order to drive them out

of the region and call upon the international workers' and popular movements to support this struggle. We defend the migrants, especially the Muslim migrants, against the growing wave of racism. We call for the creation of an international solidarity movement of workers', youth and migrant organizations to fight for "Open Borders" and full equality of migrants and refugees. Such a movement must also fight against militarization and the "State of Emergency" regime in Europe. We undertake such a struggle as part of our efforts to unite all authentic revolutionary forces and build a *Revolutionary World Party*.

The RCIT and the ALS call upon all workers', popular and migrant organizations to join forces in an international campaign of solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. Such a campaign should be based on the following three pillars.

** Defend the Syrian Revolution! Defeat the Assad Regime! No to Daesh/IS!*

** Drive the Russians, NATO, and all other Foreign Aggressors out of Syria! No to the Great Power-imposed "Negotiations" Aimed at Liquidating the Syrian Revolution!*

** Open Europe's Borders for all Syrian Refugees! Put an end to the Racist and Islamophobic Backlash in Europe!*

We call upon all those who support these demands to contact us and join such an international solidarity campaign.

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Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Israel/Occupied Palestine, Yemen, Tunisia, USA, Germany, Britain and Austria): www.thecommunists.net, rcit@thecommunists.net ■

Down with Assad and the Great Powers!

Report from a Rally of the Syrian Community in Vienna on 14 January 2016

By the Austrian Section of the RCIT, 19.01.2016

The Syrian Community in Vienna organized a rally in solidarity with the ongoing liberation struggle against the dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad and against the military aggression of the Great Powers. They invited the Austrian Section of the RCIT to participate in the rally which took place in front of the Austrian ministry of foreign affairs. They also asked our comrade Michael Pröbsting to hold the official speech at the rally.

In his address Michael Pröbsting expressed the RCIT's unconditional solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. He also sharply denounced the reactionary intervention of the Great Powers in Syria. Pröbsting said: "Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed by the Syrian army. What is the European Union doing? What is the US doing? What is Russia doing? They only send bombs against the people in Syria! But our brothers and sisters in Syrian don't need bombs

which kill them. They need food, medicine and weapons in order to defend themselves!"

Pröbsting also called the workers movement, in particular the trade unions, to organize an international solidarity campaign for the oppressed Syrian people and at the same time to oppose any military aggression of the imperialist Great Powers – be it Russia, the US or the European Union. The RCIT has supported the Syrian Revolution from its beginning in March 2011. We will continue its solidarity work despite the increasing obstacles in the struggle for the successful liberation of the Syrian workers and peasants!

See photos and the video clip of the rally's speech at the following link:

<http://www.rkob.net/wer-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei-syrien-kundgebung-2016/> ■



Michael Pröbsting (centre), International Secretary of the RCIT, addresses a rally of the Syrian community on 14.3.2016 in Vienna

Stop the US Bombing of Libya!

Mobilize against the Expansion of the Imperialist War! Defeat the Imperialist Aggressors and Their Lackeys in Libya!

Statement of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 23.2.2016

1. American warplanes bombed what were allegedly houses and camps of *Daesh* (the so-called “Islamic State”) in Western Libya on 19 February, killing at least 40 people. This seems to part of a long-term military campaign of the imperialist Great Powers to intervene in Libya and to regain control of the country. The *New York Times* reported: “For weeks, American and allied Western officials have mulled a possible air campaign against the Islamic State in Libya, particularly around its *de facto* headquarters in Surt. Libyan officials and news media outlets have reported the presence of American, French, British and Italian special forces units in the country in recent weeks, ostensibly on reconnaissance missions and to liaise with local militias.” (19.02.2016)

2. The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT) unreservedly condemns this latest aggression by the Great Western Powers. The imperialists claim to be waging a war against the reactionary *Daesh* forces. In fact, as we see every day in Syria, their war is mostly directed against Islamist rebel forces (fighting against the Assad dictatorship in the case of Syria) and the civilian population. The war against *Daesh* is a pretext – both of the Great Western Powers, as well as of imperialist Russia – for their attempts to liquidate the revolutionary process which started in the Arab world in 2011 in addition to expanding their respective spheres of influence. Their true goal is to gain control of the oil and gas reserves in the region (at the expense of their imperialist rivals) and, consistent with this, to enthrone loyal lackeys. Yet another aim of the Great Powers is to stop the poor in North Africa from migrating to imperialist Europe. European media have claimed that there are currently about 150,000 people waiting in Libya to cross the Mediterranean. The EU, which in the past could rely on the collaboration of the Gaddafi dictatorship to stop migrants from coming to Europe, has already adopted plans to intervene with its military on the Libyan coast to repulse potential African migrants.

3. The latest military aggression of the US follows the failure of the Great Powers to impose a settlement of the civil war in Libya. As a result of the overthrow of the Gaddafi dictatorship in the autumn of 2011, there is no centralized state authority in that country and more than a quarter of a million people are armed and organized into various local militias. The imperialists and the Gulf monarchies have been attempting to regain control of Libya for some time by supporting the coalition called *Amaliya al-Karama* (“Operation Dignity”). This alliance is led by former Gaddafi officer and CIA agent, General Haftar, who heads up the so-called government based in the eastern city of Tobruk. However, until now, these forces have failed to defeat the rival alliance named *Fajr Libya* (“Libyan Dawn”) which constitutes the government based in the country’s capital, Tripoli. This latter government is dominated by various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois

Islamist forces which previously played a leading role in the uprising of 2011. When Haftar’s war failed, the Great Powers – under the veil of the United Nations – tried to force the two camps to end the civil war and form a unity government. However these diplomatic negotiations, led by the German diplomat Martin Kobler, have failed until now because of the resistance of the Islamist government in Tripoli. The latter has even refused to allow Kobler’s plane to land in the capital since early January. While we give no political support to the Islamists and are fighting for independent mass organizations of the working class, we categorically state that, in this civil war, the main enemy is the camp of General Haftar.

4. Against the chaotic backdrop of the civil war, *Daesh* has been able to build some local bases of support (mainly in the central coastal region around Sirte, the home town of the Gaddafi clan, and around the Western town of Sabratha). Marxists firmly denounce the Salafi-Takfiri *Daesh* as a counter-revolutionary force which often acts as an enemy and constitutes a physical threat to legitimate popular struggles (the anti-Assad rebels and the Kurds in Syria, the *Fajr Libya* forces, the popular resistance led by the Houthis in Yemen, etc.). Furthermore, *Daesh* has executed numerous barbaric terrorist attacks against civilians throughout the Arab world, Turkey, and recently in Paris. *Daesh* is a direct result of the failure of the Arab Revolution to achieve its democratic and social goals. It has profited from the increasing desperation of the plebeian urban and rural youth who want to fight against the ruling elite, but who lack any class-based organization and orientation. Naturally, Marxists support the legitimate struggle of popular forces in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and other countries against *Daesh* in order to eliminate this arch-reactionary threat.

5. However, as the RCIT has pointed out many times, the imperialist Great Powers – the US, EU, Japan as well as China and Russia – remain the main enemies of the international working class and oppressed peoples. The control of the world economy by the imperialist monopolies and the domination of world politics by the Great Powers remain the main causes of the devastating economic, ecological and social catastrophes which are causing the deaths of millions of people each year. Hence, revolutionaries welcome all blows by oppressed peoples against the Great Powers’ drive to subjugate the world’s semi-colonial countries. In cases where local forces – even if they are Islamists (including *Daesh*) – resist the imperialist aggressors, we support such actions without, however, giving any *political* support to such forces of reaction.

6. We call upon the international workers’ movement to mobilize against the new imperialist aggression in Libya. We condemn the reformist left – like the “Communist” Party of France and their friends

in the *Party of the European Left* – which have failed to oppose the imperialist aggression. These hypocritical forces even voted in the French parliament for the “state of emergency” law after the 13 November attacks in Paris, legislation which became the cover for a wave of repression against Muslim migrants, including 3,289 raids and hundreds of arrests since then. We criticize all those centrists within and outside Europe who, while opposing the imperialist aggression, cowardly refuse to support the military struggle of the – mostly Islamist-led – resistance against the imperialist occupants.

7. Revolutionaries should join forces on the basis of the position “*Defend Libya – Defeat the Imperialists and their Lackeys!*” They should unite and fight based on the following slogans:

* *Stop the US Bombing of Libya! Mobilize against the Great Powers’ plans to intervene militarily in Libya and along its coast! Support the resistance against imperialist aggression!*

* *Defeat General Haftar’s alliance of imperialist lackeys, without giving any political support to the Islamists!*

* *No to reactionary sectarianism! Down with the Salafi-Takfiri Daesh!*

* *For independent workers’ and popular councils and militias! For a workers’ and popular government in Libya which will expropriate the domestic bourgeoisie and the foreign monopolies! For the nationalization of industry and banks under workers control!*

* *Victory to the Syrian Revolution against the Assad Regime! Solidarity with the popular resistance in Egypt against General al-Sisi!*

* *For a socialist federation of the people of the Maghreb and Mashriq!*

International Secretariat of the RCIT

We refer readers to the numerous statements and articles on the Arab Revolution and the imperialist aggression which can be found on the RCIT’s website <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/>.

In particular we refer to the following documents:

RCIT: World Perspectives 2016: Chapter IV.2.

Counterrevolutionary Offensive: The Retreat of the Arab Revolution Continues Despite Heroic Popular Struggles, January 2016, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2016/part6/>

Yossi Schwarz: Why Revolutionary Marxists Oppose Daesh/ISIL, 15.12.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/marxists-vs-daesh/>

RCIT: Great Powers Aim to Liquidate the Syrian Revolution! Mobilize for International Solidarity with the Syrian Liberation Struggle against the Assad Dictatorship! Stop the US, Russian and French Air Strikes! No to Daesh/IS-Terrorism! 18.11.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/great-powers-syria/>

RCIT: Throw Open the Gates of Europe to Refugees! Long live International Solidarity of the Workers and Poor! Down with the Imperialist Fortress EU! Advance the Arab Revolution to Build Workers and Peasant Republics! 15.9.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/refugees-are-welcome/>

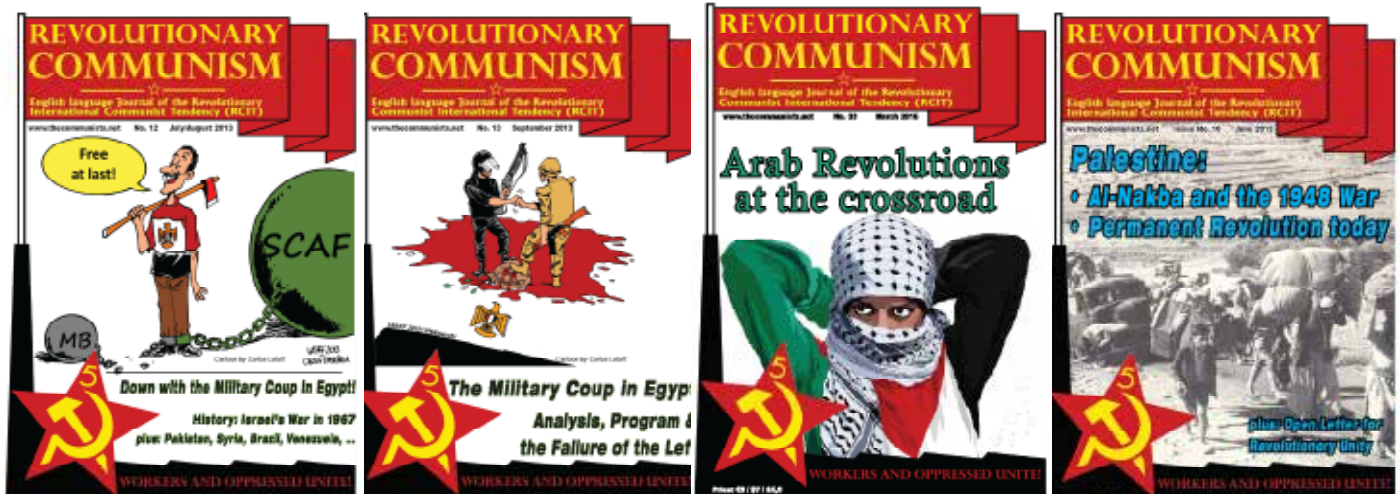
RCIT: Europe / North Africa: Storm the Gates of Rome! Open Borders for Refugees! Stop the Imperialist EU-War against Refugees! No to the Preparations for an Imperialist Aggression against Libya! 22.5.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/eu-war-against-refugees/>

RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Arab World: An Acid Test for Revolutionaries, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-arab-revolution/>

RCIT: General Sisi, Hollande, Obama: Hands Off Libya! Defeat General Haftar’s Imperialist Lackeys! Down with the Daesh-Gang of Killers! For a Workers’ and Popular Government! 26.2.2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/hands-off-libya/>

RCIT: Defeat Obama’s New Crusade in the Middle East! For an International Mass Movement to Defeat the Offensive of the Great Western Powers! Support the Kurdish Struggle for an Independent State! No to the Harassment of Muslims in Western Countries! 18.9.2014, <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/africa-and-middle-east/obama-s-new-crusade/> ■

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Tunisia: Solidarity with the Workers' and Youth Uprising!

Down with the Nationwide Curfew! For a General Strike and Mass Uprising to Bring down the Essebsi Regime! Onward to the Second Revolution!

Joint Statement of the International Secretariat of the RCIT and the RCIT Tunisia, 23.01.2016

1. In the last few days, Tunisia has been shattered by a wave of spontaneous mass protests, many workers and youth clashing with security forces. The protests started in the western Kasserine province, following the death of an unemployed man who was electrocuted atop a power pole near the governor's office. Soon the discontent spread to other towns including Sidi Bouzid, Jendouba, Gafsa, Kebili, and Ettadhamen (a working class district in the area of Tunis). Up until now, 240 civilians and 74 policemen have been reported injured and one policeman killed. As a result, President Beji Caid Essebsi was forced to cut short a European tour and return to his country where he imposed a national curfew with the army controlling the streets. He's trying to undermine the uprising by deliberately withdrawing police from rebellious areas and letting loose criminal thugs so that people actually prefer the presence of the police and plead for their return. Nevertheless, the uprising continues! It's very spontaneous and is being led by no specific party. The slogans on the streets – summarizing the demands of the uprising – are “*Work, Dignity and Freedom*” and “*We will not stop our Struggle until we get Jobs*”! The *Al-Shuruk* newspaper wrote: “*It's as if we were back in 2010-2011,*” referring to the revolution that overthrew dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Clearly, a pre-revolutionary situation has opened in Tunisia.

2. The new uprising is the result of the failed promises of successive governments following the overthrow of Ben Ali. First was the bourgeois-Islamist *Ennahdah* government and, since late 2014, the reactionary *Nidaa Tounes* government representing the return to power of the old guard of the Ben Ali dictatorship – both have betrayed the hopes of the masses to overcome unemployment and poverty. Today, Tunisia's official unemployment rate stands at around 15%, but in poorer regions like Kasserine it reaches as high as 30%. Even President Essebsi has been forced to acknowledge that Tunisia has “*700,000 unemployed and 250,000 of them are young people who have degrees*”.

3. The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)* stands in full solidarity with the Tunisian workers and youth. We call the international workers' movement to support the protests. This new uprising completely refutes the idiotic claims of many reformists and centrists that the Arab Revolution had ended in defeat, or that it had been the product of a conspiracy by Western imperialists. The crucial task now is to form *action committees in the workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and universities* in order to organize the struggle democratically. In addition, such committees should organize self-defense units to fight state repression. Activists should put pressure on the UGTT trade union federation, the UGTE (student union), as well as on other mass organizations to organize a general

strike. For now, the central demands should be to *end the national curfew* and to establish a *public works program under the control of the UGTT and other mass organizations, financed by the expropriation of Tunisia's super-rich, many of whom are close to the Ben Ali clan.*

4. If the workers and youth succeed in building such *action committees* and as *self-defense units*, both could then become organs of struggle as well as of power, creating the basis for a *workers' and popular government*. Such a government would *exclusively* serve the interests of the popular masses and would remove power and wealth from the hands of the small corrupt elite of super-rich politicians and army generals. It would also expropriate the foreign imperialist corporations which are exploiting semi-colonial Tunisia.

5. Revolutionaries in Tunisia must work hard to advance the formation of a revolutionary party without which the Second Revolution is in danger of failing just like the first did after 2011. Such a party must also be part of the new revolutionary world party, since capitalism in Tunisia and the class struggle there are closely interrelated with international capitalism. The activists of the RCIT in Tunisia call upon revolutionaries to join forces on the basis of an unambiguous revolutionary program of action. An authentic revolutionary organization in Tunisia has to break with the treacherous capitulationist tradition of those sectors of the left – mostly influenced by the Stalinist/Hoxhaist as well as Nasserist/Baathist tradition – which unabashedly supported the *Nidaa Tounes* forces in the past.

6. The importance of the Second Tunisian Revolution cannot be overestimated. It has the potential of not only stemming the counterrevolution which the country experienced in recent years and advancing the previously unfinished democratic revolution which set in motion the wave of Arab revolutions. But in doing so it could also revitalize the Syrian Revolution against Bashar al-Assad, strengthen the mass resistance in Egypt against the dictatorship of General al-Sisi, set an example for and give support to the Palestinian liberation struggle against the Zionist state, and inspire the Yemeni war of liberation against the foreign invasion by the Al-Saud gang. In addition, a successful mass uprising in Tunisia would invaluablely advance the struggle against the reactionary sectarianism promoted by reactionary forces like the Salafi-Takfiri Daash. Finally, it would also strengthen working class and democratic forces in Europe, encouraging them to fight back against the counterrevolutionary wave of racism and state repression which is currently being waged by various conservative and social democratic governments with both tacit and open assistance and support by semi-fascistic forces. In order to advance these historic struggles and infuse them with a socialist program of permanent

revolution and working class power directed against both Western and Eastern imperialism as well as local bourgeois regimes, the RCIT calls upon revolutionaries around the world to join us in the struggle for a new world party of socialist revolution!

* *End with the national curfew in Tunisia!*

* *For a program of public works under the control of the UGTT and other mass organizations, financed by the expropriation of the super-rich cronies of the Ben Ali clan!*

* *Expropriate the Foreign Imperialist Corporations!*

* *Down with the Essebsi Government! Forward to the Second Revolution!*

* *For the building of Action Committees and Self-Defense Units! For a Workers' and Popular Government based on such organs!*

* *Solidarity with the liberation struggle in Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Yemen!*

* *Solidarity with the refugees arriving in Europe! Down with*

racism and state repression in the EU! Lift the state of emergency in France! No restrictions to democratic rights!

* *No to reactionary sectarianism! Down with Salafi-Takfiri Daash!*

* *Revitalize and spread the Arab Revolution which began at the end of 2010! For a socialist federation of the Middle East!*

* *Forward in building revolutionary parties in Tunisia and internationally! For the revolutionary Fifth Workers' International!*

For our analysis of the Arab Revolution we refer readers to:

RCIT: Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Arab World: An Acid Test for Revolutionaries, 31 May 2015, <http://www.thecomunists.net/theory/theses-arab-revolution/> ■

Book from the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South

Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital. Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism

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

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

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

In *The Great Robbery of the South* Michael Pröbsting argues that a correct understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as of the program of permanent revolution which includes the tactics of consistent anti-imperialism is essential for anyone who wants to change the world and bring about a socialist future.

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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*



By Michael Pröbsting

Published by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency

Look for details of the books at www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net

The Author: Michael Pröbsting is a revolutionary activist since 34 years. He is the author of many articles and pamphlets in German and English language. He published books or contributed to books on Rosa Luxemburg (1999), on the World Economy (2008), on Migration (2010) and the Arab Revolution (2011). In addition to *The Great Robbery of the South* and *Cuba's Revolution Sold Out?* he also published in 2014 the book *Building the Revolutionary Party in Theory and Practice. Looking Back and Ahead after 25 Years of Organized Struggle for Bolshevism*. He is the International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency.

Israel / Occupied Palestine: Culture, Race, and National Destiny between the River and the Sea

By Yossi Schwarz, Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine), 2.2.2016

Israel's Minister of Culture and Sport, Miri Regev, recently submitted a bill to the Knesset's Education Committee entitled "loyalty in culture." (1) If passed, this legislation will change the way the ministry of which she is currently in charge supports cultural institutions, denying any state funding to persons or groups who allegedly attack or disgrace the national flag or other state symbols, incite racism, violence or terrorism, mark Independence Day as a day of mourning, or deny Israel's status as a "Jewish and democratic state." (2)

À propos racism

Ironically, perhaps, the degree to which the Israeli state objects to racism was recently revealed once again when the "director of communications for the Likud, Eli Hazan, ... invited a senior member of Austria's far-right Freedom Party on an official Knesset visit."

The Freedom Party is a far-right, populist, anti-immigrant party. According to the American Arch-Zionist Anti-Defamation League:

"Its previous leader Joerg Haider is known for his dubious statements about Jews and his praise of Nazism. Joerg Haider was born in 1950 in Upper Austria to parents with direct links to the Nazis. His father joined the Hitler Youth in 1929 and the Nazi SA storm troops a year later. The senior Haider reportedly traveled to Munich with Adolf Eichmann and Alois Brunner in 1933 as a member of the Austrian legion. Haider's mother belonged to the Nazi Party's League of German Girls. When asked to comment on his parents' wartime activities, Haider remarked: "In retrospect one is always wiser. As a descendant, one should not be so arrogant as to say, 'I would have known better.'" (3)

By the way, the very same senior member of the Freedom Party, David Lasar, who was invited to visit the Knesset by Eli Hazan also happens to be "on a[n Israeli] Ministry of Foreign Affairs blacklist." (4)

Banned in Tel Aviv: the threat of miscegenation

That being as it may, clearly, in Regev's mind at least, state sponsored "culture" should be nothing more than right wing propaganda directed against the Palestinians and the memory of the Nakba. Such a vision is also in line with the intent of the present government's Minister of Education, Naftali Benet, who on December 28th, declared in the Knesset that "The time has come to say Israel is ours... To go from strategic defence to a process of initiating the implementation of Israeli sovereignty over the territories under Israeli control in Judea and Samaria."

Indeed, the same minister recently banned an Israeli novel from the high school curriculum, *Gader Haya* (literally "Hedgerow" but titled in its English translation as *Borderlife*) by Orit Rabinyan. The book tells the story of a love affair between a Jewish Israeli woman and a Palestinian man. According to *Haaretz*:

"Among the reasons stated for the disqualification of Dorit Rabinyan's *Gader Haya* ... is the need to maintain what was referred to as 'the identity and the heritage of students in every sector' and the belief that 'intimate relations between Jews and non-Jews threatens the separate identity.' The Education Ministry also expressed concern that 'young people of adolescent age don't have the systemic view that includes considerations involving maintaining the national-ethnic identity of the people and the significance of miscegenation.'" (5)

So it would seem that the Ministry of Education is determined to create its own *index librorum prohibitorum* of books and plays which are strictly forbidden to be taught in schools.

Noteworthy is the fact that, after the initial international outcry, the official reasoning for banning the book was modified to its "spreading lies about IDF soldiers." Furthermore, Rabinyan's book does not actually promote ethnically mixed relationships, seeing how, at the book's end, the relationship between the main protagonists doesn't work out, and Rabinyan is on even on record as opposing mixed marriages (because they lead to "assimilation," a term with long-time Jewish religious connotations). (6) Rather, like the case of Adam Verde – a liberal Zionist civics teacher who was almost fired for saying that Israel's army is *not* the most moral in the world – or that of *Breaking the Silence* – an organization of former Israeli soldiers which records testimonies of soldiers serving in the occupied Palestinian territories, but who nevertheless remain loyal to both the Zionist army and state – these are hardly radical statements and should not be portrayed as such, which is exactly what many "leftist Zionists" and segments of the semi-Zionist left in Israel tend to do. However, these voices should still have our support when they are attacked because such attacks are part of a broad rightward shift in Israeli public opinion, and staying neutral would mean supporting the dominant force.

Ostensibly everything is only relative – Indeed?

The measures in Israel pale in comparison to the ones taken in the West Bank: regular curfews; the newly introduced numbering system in Hebron; a ban on entry of Palestinians into settlements where they work and general ban on Palestinian workers walking in industrial areas in the West Bank; the storming of the Beir Zeit and Al-Quds universities; the closing of newspapers and radio station; the military arrest of journalist critical of the Palestinian Authority; and so on.

However, Israel's role in repression takes place not just in Occupied Palestine, or even only in the Middle East, but worldwide as Israel seeks to censor the internet worldwide and does good business exporting surveillance drones and other "security" technology to repressive governments and regimes around the globe. (7)

Has Israel become a fascist state?

The Netanyahu government is using the despair of the Palestinian youth to push the Israeli public further to the right. At the same time, the useless official opposition led by Zionist Union leader Issac Herzog has joined the incitement, having said last Wednesday that the two-state solution is not a realistic option in the near future. *"I don't see a possibility at the moment of implementing the two-state solution,"* he told Army Radio. *"I want to yearn for it, I want to move towards it, I want negotiations, I will sign off on it, and I am obligated to it, but I don't see the possibility of implementing it right now."* (8)

Not that a two-state solution has ever been one that could end the oppression of the Palestinians; nor has it ever really been the policy of any of the Israeli governments; but Herzog's position at this conjuncture simply reveals how useless the Zionist Union opposition is. Instead of blaming the government for the despair of the Palestinian youth, a hopelessness that drives them to attack with knives mostly settlers, police, and soldiers, the head of the opposition joins the anti-Palestinian chorus.

Even UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon understands that it is only *"human nature to react to occupation,"* leading, of course, to his condemnation by the Israeli government as just another Anti-Semite.

Israel is clearly moving in the direction of a right-wing populist autocratic regime. However, it is popular among Palestinians and some left-wing circles in Israel and among liberal Jews outside the country to speak of the current government as being fascistic.

For example the Journalist Khalid Amayreh, a veteran Palestinian journalist and political affairs commentator living in Occupied Palestine, wrote:

"From a third-party perspective, e.g., a Palestinian viewpoint, and in light of the composition of the new coalition, we can assume that the next Israeli government will be the most fascist, most extremist, most pugnacious and most anti-peace government in the Jewish state's history." (9)

Richard Silberstein of *Tikun Olam* published an article on November 25, 2014 entitled *"Israel and the Rise of Judeo-Fascism"* in which the author contends that the racist laws of Israel under [previous Netanyahu] government makes it a type of fascism or at least on the road to fascism. (10)

Following Israel's 2014 war on Gaza, Israel Prize laureate and renowned scholar Zeev Sternhell stated in an interview with *Haaretz*:

"As I say, there are worse things than fascism. You don't need that exact definition. For example, people say that if there isn't a one-party regime, it's not fascism. That's nonsense. A party is a means for achieving power, not a means of rule in itself. What needs to be examined in this context is the resilience of the democracy – and Israeli democracy has become increasingly eroded, until it reached a new nadir in the current war. The indicators [of fascism] you asked about definitely exist here." (11)

The Marxist point of view on Fascism and Bonapartism

While we understand and have sympathy with those who say that Israel is moving in the direction of fascism, the problem with such a position is the inherent misunderstanding of what fascism is and, at the same

time, a misunderstanding of the nature of the Israeli Apartheid state. The Zionist ruling class of Israel does not need fascism because fascism is a mass movement of the petit bourgeoisie aimed at the destruction of the working class organizations and the atomization of the working class, and is motivated out of fear of a socialist revolution.

However, in Israel most of the Jewish workers support the racist policies and laws of the right-wing government, and therefore are justifiably not perceived either as a threat to capitalism or to the Zionist regime. The gradual rightward shift of Israel society is not against the Jewish working class but against the oppressed Palestinians. The situation is similar to the Nationalist party policies during the Apartheid regime in South Africa. While the latter was an oppressive racist regime, it was not fascist, as most white workers supported the Apartheid regime.

In fact, Israel is not moving in the direction of fascism but rather *right wing populism with an element of Bonapartism*. Leon Trotsky dealt with the difference between Bonapartism and fascism in his 1934 Article *"Bonapartism and Fascism."* (12) There he wrote that in times of acute crises all kinds of *transitional, intermediate situations and combinations* arise. For those who simply employ formal logic, the regimes of Primo de Rivera, Mussolini, Chiang Kai-shek, Masaryk, Brüning, Dollfuss, Pilsudski, and the Serbian King Alexander were all seemingly forms of fascism. What escapes the authors of such evaluations is that between parliamentary democracy and a fascist regime, there exists a series of transitional forms. Sometimes these regimes take power *"peacefully."* At other times, they do so by means of civil war. Prior to Hitler's rise to power, the Brüning, Papen, and Schleicher governments in Germany represented examples of the first stage from parliamentarism to Bonapartism, a stage which is characterized by the machine of parliamentarism having lost all importance.

Moving towards right-wing autocratic populism and military-police dictatorship

From the perspective of class relations in Jewish Israeli society, Netanyahu's government is moving *"peacefully"* in the direction of right-wing autocratic populism. It cleverly and maliciously exploits the desperate blind attacks by Palestinian youth who are reacting to the endless Zionist oppression, the only reality they have ever known. For its part, the government remains aloof above the meaningless parliamentary dialogue lacking in any serious opposition from the Zionist Union, which only manages to stoop and criticize the government from



the right. However, this government is not, and cannot, be suspended in mid-air. Like anything else in this world, it is subject to historical movement. And the axis along which the present government will move passes through the police, the bureaucracy, and the military clique which are supported by most Jews in Israel. Therefore, what we are going to be confronted with in Israel is not a fascistic form of rule, but rather a military-police dictatorship.

What we see is not classic Bonapartism which is transitional form of a "strong" government that seems to stand above the working class and the bourgeoisie, between parliamentary democracy and fascism, based on military force in a period when capitalist class rule is not secure. In Israel what we see is a government that is based on the Jewish lower middle class and sections of the Jewish workers in support of Israel as an open apartheid with no pretensions of being a bourgeois democracy, one that will steal more lands and properties from the Palestinians and transfer part of it to their own pockets. The economic roots of the upper middle class Jews are based in the 1948 dispossession of the Palestinians; the right wing movement of today wants the same for itself from the loot of 1967. This right wing movement sees the upper middle class, its liberal Zionist culture and its two-state program as an obstacle to their aspirations to improve their own conditions by dispossessing the Palestinians. Thus the "class struggle" we witness is not between the working class and the capitalist class but between the lower middle class and the upper middle class. The only way out of it for those Jews who do not want open apartheid is to completely break with Zionism and join the Palestinians in a struggle for a democratic and red Palestine.

Footnotes

(1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miri_Regev: Miri Regev, currently Minister of Culture and Sport, began serving as the IDF Spokesperson's representative in the Israeli Southern Command.

Regev was promoted to a Colonel rank for the position of Deputy IDF Spokesperson in 2002. In 2003, she was appointed coordinator of the national public relations efforts at the Israeli Prime Minister's Office in preparation for the Iraq War. After a short stint (2004–2005) as the Chief Press and Media Censor, she was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and to the position of IDF Spokesperson in 2005. She served in this position during Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005 and the 2006 Lebanon War.

(2) Moran Azulai Regev to submit culture bill - no loyalty, no funding, Ynet 26/1/2016 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4758047,00.html>

(3) http://archive.adl.org/backgrounders/joerg_haider.html#VqkGviorLIU

(4) http://archive.adl.org/backgrounders/joerg_haider.html#VqkGviorLIU

(5) Or Kastti Israel Bans Novel on Arab-Jewish Romance from Schools for threatening Jewish Identity, December 31, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.69462>

(6) <http://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/1.2813294>

(7) <http://newobserveronline.com/israel-demands-world-internet-censorship/>

(8) Raoul Wootliff: Herzog: For now, two-state solution unrealistic, The Times of Israel, January 20, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/herzog-for-now-two-state-solution-unrealistic/>

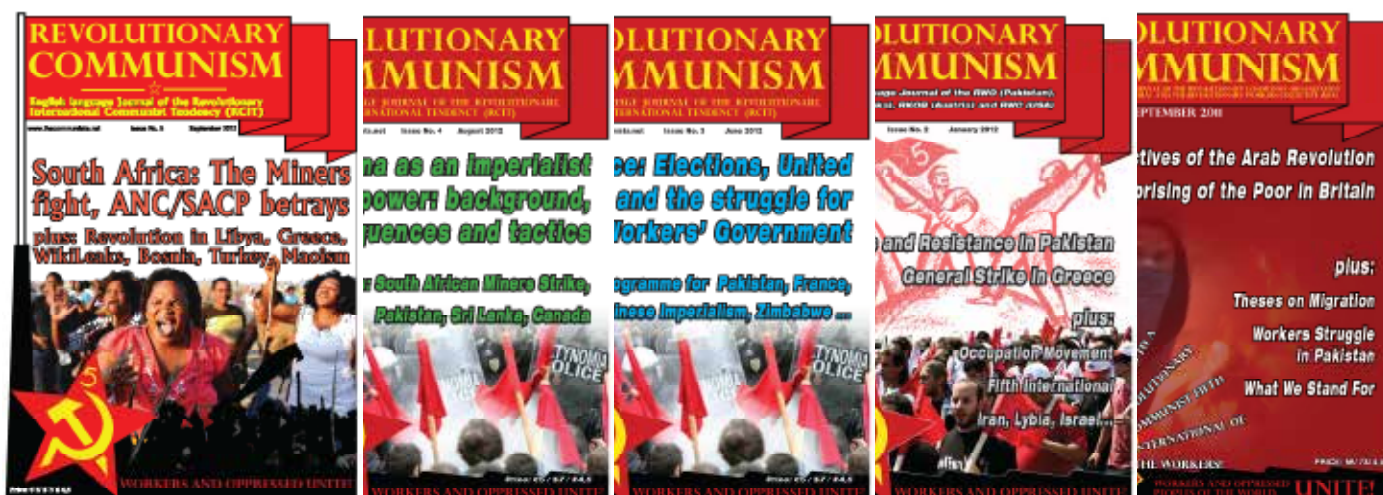
(9) Khalid Amayreh: Israel's new government: Fascist par excellence, <http://english.palinfo.com/site/pages/details.aspx?itemid=71581>

(10) Richard Silverstein: Israel and the Rise of Judeo-Fascism, <http://www.richardsilverstein.com/2014/11/25/i-November-25,2014>

(11) Signs of Fascism in Israel Reached New Peak During Gaza Op, Says Renowned Scholar Zeev Sternhell, August 13, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.610368>

(12) New International, Vol.1 No.2, August 1934, pp.37-38, https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/ni/issue.htm#ni34_08 ■

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When An Arab Kills Jews

By Yossi Schwarz, *Internationalist Socialist League (RCIT Section in Israel / Occupied Palestine)*, 16.1.2016

On Friday, January 1, a 29-year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel, Nashat Milhem, shot and killed two Israel Jews in a central *Tel Aviv* pub, injuring seven others. During his escape from the scene, he also killed an Arab Bedouin taxi driver. This was an ugly murder that we unequivocally condemn. The police were able to identify the killer after his picture appeared in CCTV footage broadcast on Israeli television and his father informed the police that it was his son recorded in the footage in the process of shooting unarmed civilians. It's hard to know what the shooter's motivation was, but ten years ago, Melhem's cousin was killed by Israeli border police during a search of his home, the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz* reported. (1)

Police detained Mohammed Milhem, the killer's father, on suspicion of his assisting his son; this, in spite of the fact that it was the father who informed the police that his son was the perpetrator of the attack after having seen the released footage. Neither did the fact that the elder Milhem has served as a volunteer policeman in his community for 30 years prevent his detention. According to Attorney Nechamia Feinblat, Mohammed Melhem's lawyer, the father spoke with his son Friday soon after the shooting. The father claims that after he realized it was his son who carried out the attack, he phoned him and his son answered. Was this sufficient reason to suspect the father's involvement in the crime, or was the latter's detention merely a pressure tactic the police decided to use against the shooter, Nashat Milhem? Or, perhaps, it was an attempt to create an anti-Arab atmosphere? Following the shooting, there was a dangerous atmosphere in which a pogrom against the Arabs could be organized by the right wing extremists. Of course, we cannot know at this moment the real reason for the police's detaining the father, but on the surface it seems unlikely that he assisted his son only to inform on him.

Zionist Hypocrisy

For one full week this murderous attack was *the* major news item in Israel. The police organized a very large force to hunt down Melhem after he succeeded in fleeing. By way of comparison: Israeli police found the burnt body of Fadi Hoosh, an Israeli-Palestinian citizen inside a car in the garbage dump in the vicinity of Kafr Kannah on November 22, 2015. Israeli media sources reported that the police decided to have the body autopsied, in order to establish the cause of death, and to search for any clues related to the perpetrators. Palestinian witnesses claimed they saw a number of Israeli Jews attacking the 22-year old, then put him inside the car and set it ablaze. (2) Did we hear of large police force hunting for the murderers? Not in Israel! After all, the victim was not a Jew. Can you imagine the reaction of the Israel Jewish public opinion if, after the Tel Aviv shooting, instead of hunting for the murderer we were informed that the bodies of the two victims at the scene were being sent for autopsy to determine the cause of death, and to search for any hints

related to the perpetrator?

We can also learn something from cases of Palestinian women murdered for the sake of "family honor." On November 26, 2012, Aisha Ala'asam, a 15 year old girl from the town of Tal Al Sabe', was murdered by her brother. The Israeli police had known that Aisha's life was in danger. They had been informed that she had been threatened by her family. Aisha herself had filed several complaints with police regarding the danger she was facing, but the Israeli police nevertheless returned her to her home after she had sought refuge with her uncle who assured her that he would protect her. The police stood silent as Aisha fell victim, first because of social morés based on patriarchal authority and then to the lack of enforcement of the Israeli law. Aisha's story is one of many stories of Palestinian women and girls who were threatened with death and then were in fact murdered regardless of their appeal to the Israeli authorities. (3)

For a full week following the attack, Nashat Milhem was hiding in an empty house belonging to relatives in his home village of Arara. When his relatives returned to their home, they discovered him and informed Nechamia Feinblatt, the attorney representing Milhem's father Mohammed. The lawyer in turn informed the police about where Nashat Milhem was hiding. The police shortly arrived at the scene, and in a shootout with security forces in Arara, on Friday, January 8, Nashat Milhem was killed. According to the official story, special police units surrounded the building and at around 4:00 p.m. they broke into the house. Milhem opened fire at the security forces and they responded by firing four bullets, killing him. No injuries were reported among the police. According to the news reports from only a week earlier, the day of the attack in Tel Aviv, Milhem was extremely versatile in the use of his weapon. If so, how is it that no policeman was even slightly injured?

It is still unclear whether this was yet another extrajudicial killing or, as such killings are termed the Israeli media "neutralization," as police claimed they wanted to capture Milhem alive to extract information about those who had assisted him.

In any event, this is a very unusual case. Most of the young Palestinians who have launched desperate knife attacks against Israelis since October have targeted soldiers, police and settlers, not simple civilians residing in the borders of pre-1967 Israel. The "neutralizers" are most often, again, soldiers, police, or settlers who, in many cases, have killed the attacker after he or she no longer posed a danger to their lives or that of others. By way of comparison, Eden Nata-Zada was an Israeli soldier who opened fire in a bus in the town of Shefer Amr on August 4, 2005, killing four Palestinians citizens of Israel and wounding twelve others. He was "neutralized," but afterwards the Arabs who killed him were tried and received prison sentences.

Israeli propaganda claims that Israel does not use extrajudicial killing of the Palestinians. However this is simply not true. In a report it recently issued, B'Tselem wrote:

"Politicians and senior police officers have not only failed to act to calm the public climate of incitement, but on the contrary have openly called for the extrajudicial killing of suspects. They have also urged civilians to carry weapons. For example, Jerusalem District Police Commander Moshe Edri was quoted as saying: 'Anyone who stabs Jews or hurts innocent people is due to be killed.' Interior Security Minister Gilad Arden declared that 'every terrorist should know that he will not survive the attack he is about to commit.' MK Yair Lapid stated that 'you have to shoot to kill anyone who pulls out a knife or screwdriver.' Much of the media joined in and encouraged a similar approach. The bodies responsible for supervising police operations – the State Attorney's Office and the Department for the Investigation of Police – remained silent in the face of these comments." (4)

Netanyahu, once more, incites the Israel Jews against the Arabs

In spite of the fact that the father of Nashat Milhem assisted the police and Arab political leaders and public opinion denounced the murder perpetrated by Milhem, and perhaps precisely because it was a rare case in which both Jews and Arabs condemn the cold-blooded murder of unarmed civilians, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saw as appropriate that he incite the Israel Jews against the Arabs. The day after the shooting in Tel Aviv he said:

"We will open new police stations, recruit more police officers, go into all the towns and demand of everyone to pledge loyalty to the laws of the state. We all know there is wild incitement by radical Islam in the Arab sector: incitement in mosques, incitement in the education system, and incitement in social media. I expect all of the Arab Knesset members, all of them, without exception, to condemn the murder clearly and unequivocally. Murder is murder; it must be condemned and acted against by all sides." (5)

We can easily imagine what would have been the reaction of the ilk of Netanyahu if, after the firebombing by Jewish extremists of the home of the Dawabsheh family from Duma last July 31 (in which the 18 month old son died immediately, and both of his parents would die within a month from their burns), an Arab member of the Knesset would have said: *"There is an urgent need to open up new police stations, recruit more police officers, go into all the Jewish towns and demand from everyone to pledge loyalty to the laws of the state... After all, we all know there is wild incitement by radical rabbis in the Jewish sector; incitement in synagogues; incitement in the education system; incitement in social media. I expect all of the Jewish Knesset members, all of them, without exception, to condemn the murder clearly and unequivocally. Murder is murder; it must be condemned and acted against by all sides."* This Arab Member of Knesset would be condemned as a racist hate monger and would be lucky he escaped assault, or worse.

Make no mistake. This is the same Netanyahu who, during the last general elections called out the Jewish voters to support him saying: *"The right-wing government is in danger. Arab voters are going 'in droves' to the polls. Left-wing NGOs are bringing them on buses to vote."*

This is the same Benjamin Netanyahu who astonishingly claimed that it was the Mufti of Jerusalem who inspired Hitler to exterminate the Jews, making Netanyahu the only prime minister in the world today who is a Holocaust denier. You only have to replace the word "Arabs" in his

mouth with "blacks" and you can easily see a leader of the American Ku Klux Klan (KKK) dressed in a white sheet.

During the debate in the Knesset, MK Ahmed Tibi said that, since 2000, 1,150 Arabs citizens of Israel have been killed by Arab criminals using firearms. Yet when the arms are pointed at Arabs, it's not a public issue; but when an Arab kills Jews it becomes a national issue. (6)

The Need for Armed Self-Defense

The Palestinians citizens of Israel have a very good reason to learn from the experience of black people in the US who daily face racist police. In response to a number of high profile instances of police brutality committed against blacks, one local NAACP leader called upon blacks to arm themselves. The president of an NAACP branch out of Memphis, Tennessee said blacks should be prepared to defend themselves, according to *My Fox Memphis*:

"They have a right to defend themselves," said Crittenden Co. NAACP President Shabaka Afrika, *"We're not suggesting people go out and start shooting folks and taking the law in their own hands, but it is clear that law enforcement or prosecutors or the judicial system cannot or will not defend us."* (7)

Of course, the best scenario would if the Palestinians Arabs and democratic Jews would be able to organize self-defense committees and disarm the criminals. However, today this is not a realistic option. Yet it is very dangerous and unwise to trust the very same police force which has a history of shooting Palestinians to disarm the Arab criminal gangs, as the cops will most likely brutalize the non-criminals. The Israel police and army have a long tradition in this area, starting from the mass ethnic cleansing of 1947-8; Kfar Kasim in 1956; Land Day in 1976; and the 2000 killing of 13 Palestinians, 12 of them citizens of Israel.

At the moment it seems that the best thing to do, in every Palestinian village or neighborhood, is to organize a public witness committee armed with cameras that will follow the police and photograph whenever appropriate if indeed the police try to take the weapons away from the criminals.

Footnotes

- (1) PopHerald.com, <http://popherald.com/2016/01/09/israeli-police-searching-for-gunman-who-killed-two-in-tel.html>
- (2) International Middle East Media: Israeli Terrorists Burn Palestinian citizen of Israel to Death, November 22, 2015, <http://www.imemc.org/article/73944>
- (3) Maryam Hawari: The Murder of Palestinian women :Amid Patriarchal Authority and Israeli Authority, <http://mada-research.org/en/files/2014/03/4-Maryam-Hawari.pdf>
- (4) B'Tselem October 14, 2015 http://www.btselem.org/press-releases/20151014_summary_execution_joint_statement
- (5) Times of Israel: PM doubles down on criticism of Israeli Arabs after TA attack, January 3, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/pm-doubles-down-on-criticism-of-israeli-arabs-after-ta-attack/>
- (6) Dov Gil Har, <http://news.walla.co.il/item/2922768>
- (7) In Response to Police Brutality, NAACP Leader Tells Blacks to Arm Themselves, April 20 2015, YBW, <http://breakingbrown.com/2015/04/in-response-to-police-brutality-naacp-leader-tells-blacks-to-arm-themselves/> ■

Argentina: How to Fight, and how not to Fight, against the Macri Government

Remarks on the TPR's pro-Kirchnerist Slogan "Bring Christina Back NOW!"

By Michael Pröbsting, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 19.02.2016

Argentina is currently undergoing a wave of mass protests against the new right-wing government of President Macri. As we stated in our resolution last December, after his victory in the presidential elections, Macri's government represents a tremendous threat to the working class, upon which a series of attacks has already been launched. (1)

In response to these attacks, a number of demonstrations and strikes have already taken place. In addition, trade unions in Argentina have called for a general strike on 24th February to protest the government's dismissal of workers on the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

It's hardly surprising that these protests are being led by various strands of populist and reformist forces, in particular pro-Kirchnerist ones. Until last December, Christina Fernández de Kirchner and, before her, her late husband Nestor, ruled the country for 12 consecutive years. The Kirchners were able to make some concessions to the working class and poor, with the support of important sectors of the labor bureaucracy, on the backdrop of a certain economic upswing for the Argentinean economy resulting from the increased price for the country's raw materials (including soya, a major export commodity), together with the rise of China as a new Great Power which also became a major trading partner. However, the Kirchners always ruled in the service of the bourgeoisie and, when export prices dropped, Christina Fernández de Kirchner's government began attacking the working class.

Therefore, we stated in our December resolution that the Kirchner government "*represented a bourgeois-populist sector which strongly rests on workers and popular mass support.*" As Marxists we defend the principle of *not* calling for a vote – however "critical" it may be – for bourgeois parties. For this reason, when so-called "revolutionaries" called for a vote for the Kirchnerist candidate Daniel Scioli in the second round of the last presidential election, they were breaking with this important principle; as we wrote after the election of Macri: "*In the second round of the elections, revolutionaries should have cast a blank vote, refusing to give support to either Macri or Scioli, since both candidates represented different factions of the ruling class.*"

Thus, when the Kirchnerist bureaucracy now halfheartedly offers resistance to the Macri government, there should be no doubt that in the end "*they want to reach a deal with Macri and 'wait it out' for the next elections in four years. They offer to stop the protests and to ensure the 'governability of the country' in exchange for legal impunity for the Kirchnerist leaders.*" However, this does *not* mean that authentic Marxists are ignoring the fact that, behind the current conflict, there is a mass revolt against the grave attacks by the Macri government. It would be utterly sectarian if revolutionaries would ignore the substance of the present developments and only look superficially at

the leading representatives in this conflict.

As we pointed out in December's RCIT statement: "*However, this bureaucratic motivation of the Kirchnerist leadership must not confuse revolutionaries into ignoring the objective, important class conflict which is behind the current confrontation between the Kirchnerists and the Macri administration: the latter represents the anti-democratic and aggressive austerity offensive of the bourgeoisie, while the former represent a bourgeois-populist sector which strongly rests on workers and popular mass support. In such a conflict revolutionaries must form a united front bloc with those Kirchnerist sectors which are prepared to resist in the streets and the workplaces. Such a bloc must be focused on practical actions and must not be allowed to limit the independent propaganda and agitation of revolutionaries.*"

Given the current mass protests and the substantial popular illusions in Kirchner, it is not at all surprising that many workers and poor people wish to bring the old Kirchnerist government back. Such a sentiment is currently expressed in the slogan "*¡Que Vuelva Cristina YA!*" ("Bring Christina Back NOW!").

An Impermissible and Opportunist Concession

Regardless of how popular such a mood might be among the masses, it is *absolutely impermissible* for revolutionaries to adopt in their own propaganda such a slogan calling for the return to power of former President Christina Kirchner. Unfortunately, this is exactly what the comrades of the Argentinean group *Tendencia Piquetera Revolucionaria* (TPR) have done in their recent "*Open Letter to Christina*" which is embarrassingly titled "*¡Que Vuelva Cristina YA!*" ("Bring Christina Back NOW!"). (2)

Here the TPR comrades have stepped over the important dividing line which demarcates the *legitimate* application of the united front tactic with reformist and populist leaderships in the practical class struggle on one hand, from the *illegitimate and opportunistic* deviation of political support for such a leadership on the other. If such a slogan comes from ordinary workers, it merely reflects their illusionary hopes and their immature political class consciousness. Naturally, revolutionaries have to deal with such illusions in a clear and pedagogical manner.

However, when such a slogan appears within the headline of a socialist manifesto, this is something truly astonishing! Is it possible that the TPR comrades have forgotten that calling for the return of the Kirchner government is nothing but the call for the return to power of a party of a sector of the bourgeoisie?! Isn't it clear that such a slogan can only highly disorient the masses *in the extreme*? In the current conjuncture of rising mass struggles, revolutionaries must clearly orient the workers to mobilize for an *indefinite general strike* and create

action committees in the workplaces and neighborhoods. Revolutionaries have to warn workers and youth against the illusion that their problems can be solved by “bringing Kirchner back to power.” Rather, we must warn against such illusions and explain to the workers and poor that they can only trust their own power and that of no one else!

Lenin and Trotsky against Popular-Frontism

The fundamental problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics in Argentina today are inextricably related to the notion of the popular-front. By the term “popular front,” Marxists in the tradition of Leon Trotsky understand a political alliance between forces/parties of the working class and the bourgeoisie. Such an alliance can only result in the political subordination of the working class to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Leon Trotsky emphasized the importance of Marxists’ understanding the treacherous character of the popular front, a warning which has been confirmed by many tragic developments in the history of the class struggle (e.g., France in 1936, Spain in 1936–39, Chile in 1973, as well as Venezuela and Greece in more recent history). Trotsky wrote: “The question of questions at present is the People’s Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People’s Front. In reality, the People’s Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism.” (3)

Such a popular front must *not* be confused with legitimate joint actions with such forces in the class struggle. In the case of the popular front, the reformist representatives of the working class forces consciously subordinate their struggle to the demands of the capitalists in order to maintain a long-term alliance with them. In the latter, legitimate application of the united front, the working class retains its complete political independence and limits itself only to “striking together” with petty-bourgeois or even bourgeois forces (e.g., conducting a joint demonstration or strike). Adopting a popular front approach includes supporting the taking (or keeping) of power by such a force and rallying behind a joint political program. By contrast, a bloc or a *united front* is limited to joint actions on the basis of this or that specific concrete demand.

It is crucial for Marxists to understand this distinction, since it marks the difference between Bolshevism, i.e., authentic Marxism, on one hand and sectarianism and opportunism on the other. Lenin explained this in August 1917 when the Bolsheviks were faced with the need to defend the popular front Kerensky government against a right-wing coup d’état by the forces of General Kornilov.

“Like every sharp turn, it calls for a revision and change of tactics. And as with every revision, we must be extra-cautious not to become unprincipled. It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who (like Volodarsky) slide into defensism or (like other Bolsheviks) into a bloc with the S.R.s, into supporting the Provisional Government. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled. (...)”

Even now we must not support Kerensky’s government. This is unprincipled. We may be asked: aren’t we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here, which is being stepped over by

some Bolsheviks who fall into compromise and allow themselves to be carried away by the course of events. We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, just as Kerensky’s troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. On the contrary, we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten.

What, then, constitutes our change of tactics after the Kornilov revolt? We are changing the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without renouncing the task of overthrowing him, we say that we must take into account the present situation. We shall not overthrow Kerensky right now. We shall approach the task of fighting against him in a different way, namely, we shall point out to the people (who are fighting against Kornilov) Kerensky’s weakness and vacillation. That has been done in the past as well. Now, however, it has become the all-important thing and this constitutes the change.

The change, further, is that the all-important thing now has become the intensification of our campaign for some kind of “partial demands” to be presented to Kerensky: arrest Milyukov, arm the Petrograd workers, summon the Kronstadt, Vyborg and Helsingfors troops to Petrograd, dissolve the Duma, arrest Rodzyanko, legalise the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants, introduce workers’ control over grain and factories, etc., etc. We must present these demands not only to Kerensky, and not so much to Kerensky, as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been carried away by the course of the struggle against Kornilov. We must keep up their enthusiasm, encourage them to deal with the generals and officers who have declared for Kornilov, urge them to demand the immediate transfer of land to the peasants, suggest to them that it is necessary to arrest Rodzyanko and Milyukov, dissolve the Duma, close down Rech and other bourgeois papers, and institute investigations against them. The “Left” S.R.s must be especially urged on in this direction.” (4)

The Example of the Popular Front in Spain in 1936-39

Trotsky defended this method when he explained the Marxist approach to the popular front government in Spain in 1936. At that time, General Franco launched a coup d’état against the popular front government which resulted in three years of civil war. Trotsky rejected any ultra-left sectarians who refused to defend the bourgeois democratic republic against the threat of the Franco coup d’état.

“The difference between Negrin and Franco is the difference between decaying bourgeois democracy and Fascism. Everywhere and always, wherever and whenever revolutionary workers are not powerful enough immediately to overthrow the bourgeois regime, they defend even rotten bourgeois democracy from Fascism, and they especially defend their own position inside bourgeois democracy.” (5)

However, he continued in the same article by emphasizing that such a defense must be strictly limited to practical actions and must not involve any support for the bourgeois democrats taking power:

“The workers defend bourgeois democracy, however, not by the methods of bourgeois democracy (e.g., Popular Fronts, electoral blocs or governmental coalitions, etc), but by their own methods, that is, by the methods of revolutionary class struggle. Thus, by participating in the military struggle against Fascism, they

continue at the same time to defend their own organizations, their rights and their interests against the bourgeois-democratic government.” (6)

Trotsky also differentiated between Marxists’ forming a bloc with bourgeois forces in a practical struggle against a right-wing threat, and their supporting the latter as an (aspiring) governmental force. He discussed the case of the confrontation between the German ex-General and conservative right-winger Hindenburg and Hitler in Germany in the second round of the German presidential election of 1932, when communists correctly refused to call for a vote to Hindenburg. Trotsky explains this tactic and compares it with his military defense of the popular front government led by Negrin in its civil war with Franco.

“The civil war between Negrin and Franco does not signify the same thing as the electoral competition of Hindenburg and Hitler. If Hindenburg had entered into an open military fight against Hitler, then Hindenburg would have been a ‘lesser evil’. We do not choose the ‘greater evil’, we choose the ‘lesser evil’. But Hindenburg was not the ‘lesser evil’ - he did not go into open warfare against Hitler; the Social Democrats hoped for that - that was stupid - but that was not the case. But here [in Spain] we do have a war of the Social Democrats against fascism.

To support Hindenburg against Hitler meant to give up political independence. Here too we do not support Negrin politically. If we were to have a member in the Cortes (the parliament in Spain, Ed.), he would vote against the military budget of Negrin. We charge Negrin with the political responsibility for the conduct of the war. But at the same time, we must repulse the fascist hordes until the moment when we ourselves can take into our hands the conduct of the war.

To affirm that to fight together with the Negrin forces against Franco is the same as to vote for Hindenburg against Hitler is an expression, I am sorry to say, of what is known as parliamentary cretinism. The war against fascism cannot be resolved by parliamentary means because fascism is an army of reaction that can be crushed only by force. That’s why we were against the policy of the Social Democrats in Germany -- the pure parliamentary combination with Hindenburg against Hitler. We called for the creation of workers’ militias, etc.”. (7)

It would be utterly mistaken to believe that Marxists, while rejecting support for a popular front taking power in imperialist countries (as Russia was in 1917 or France and Spain in 1936), but could do so in semi-colonial countries.

When the Mexican trade union bureaucracy called to support the “progressive “ bourgeois candidate Ávila Camacho at the Presidential elections in 1940, Trotsky strongly opposed this. He explained that support for a bourgeois candidate was illegitimate: *“At the present time there is no workers party, no trade union that is in the process of developing independent class politics and that is able to launch an independent candidate. Under these conditions, our only possible course of action is to limit ourselves to Marxist propaganda and to the preparation of a future independent party of the Mexican proletariat.” (8)*

Concluding Remarks

To summarize, we stress that revolutionaries in Argentina today must participate in the popular mass movement against the Macri government. Such participation has to include the application of the Marxist tactic of the united front which has to be addressed to the trade union and

other mass organizations of which many are currently under the leadership of pro-Kirchnerist forces. However, such a united front tactic must be limited to joint practical actions and must not include support for the Kirchnerist return to political power.

Calling for Kirchner to return to power obviously is an opportunist mistake which blurs the difference between the united front tactic and popular-frontism. It is highly unfortunate that the comrades of the TPR ignore the lessons of Lenin and Trotsky and call for Kerensky-Kirchner to take power. In our opinion, they run into danger of repeating the opportunist mistakes of Nahuel Moreno – the father of post-war Argentinean centrist “Trotskyism” – when he opportunistically cuddled General Peron in the 1950s and supported the latter attempts to hold respectively regain power. (9) We sincerely hope that the TPR comrades reconsider their mistake.

Instead of giving any kind of political support to Kirchner, revolutionaries must apply the united front tactic in a principled way so that it enhances the most important Marxist principle: *proletarian class independence*. Hence, as we stressed in our statement from December, revolutionaries must politically struggle *“against all forms of popular-frontism (like Kirchnerism, Castro-Chavism, etc.)”*. This remains true, now even more than ever.

Footnotes:

(1) See RCIT: Argentina: Prepare for Workers’ and Popular Mass Resistance against the New Macri Administration! For a United Front of all Workers and Popular Organizations against the New Austerity Offensive and the Macri Administration! For a Break with the Policy of Class Collaboration of Kirchnerism! For an Independent Mass Workers’ Party! 19.12.2015, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 45 (January 2016), <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/argentina-macri/>

(2) TPR: CARTA ABIERTA DE LA TPR A CRISTINA: “¡QUE VUELVA CRISTINA YA!” 14.2.2016, <http://tpr-internet.blogspot.com/2016/02/carta-abierta-de-la-tpr-cristina-que.html>

(3) Leon Trotsky: The Dutch Section and the International (1936), in: Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36), Pathfinder Press, New York 1977, p. 370 (Emphasis in Original)

(4) V. I. Lenin: To the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (1917), in: LCW, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1977, Vol. 25, pp. 289-290, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/aug/30.htm> (Emphasis in Original)

(5) Leon Trotsky: Answers to Questions on the Spanish Situation (1937), in: Leon Trotsky: The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939), Pathfinder Press, New York 1973, p. 282

(6) Leon Trotsky: Answers to Questions on the Spanish Situation, p. 282

(7) Leon Trotsky: Answers to Questions on the Spanish Situation, pp. 287-288 (Emphasis in Original)

(8) Leon Trotsky: Clave and the Election Campaign (1939), Writings of Leon Trotsky 1938-39, p.176

(9) On this and our criticism of Morenoism see e.g. Michael Pröbsting: RCIT: Summary of our main differences with the UIT-CI, October 2015, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/critique-of-uit-ci/>; LRCI: Barbaric Trotskyism: a History of Morenoism (Part 1), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/morenoism-part-1/> and Barbaric Trotskyism: a History of Morenoism (Part 2) <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/morenoism-part-2/>. ■

Argentina: Free Milagro Sala Now!

Down With the Criminalization of Social Movements by President Macri and His Allies!

Statement of the Corriente Comunista Revolucionária (CCR, Section of the RCIT in Brazil), 22.1.2016

The Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires was filled on Monday afternoon, January 18, 2016, by demonstrators protesting the arbitrary arrest of Milagro Amalia Angela Sala, one of the main allies of former president Cristina de Kirchner (*Frente Para La Victoria*). Sala is leader of the Tupac Amaru group and Member of *Parlasul*, also known as MERCOSUR, a sub-regional bloc whose member states are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. Sala was first elected to public office in December 2013, when she won a seat as a deputy in the provincial legislature of Jujuy in northern Argentina, as a candidate of *Frente Unidos y Organizados de Jujuy* (United and Organized Front of Jujuy). She resigned from her seat in the provincial legislature in November 2015 upon her election to the parliament of MERCOSUR as a candidate by the *Frente Para La Victoria* (Front for Victory).

Sala was arrested on Saturday, January 16, in the province of Jujuy, on charges of inciting violence. At the time she had been participating in activities at a “struggle camp” first set up by various social organizations in front of Jujuy’s Governmental Palace on December 14. On the day of her arrest, the social organizations gathered together by Sala had been protesting outside the offices of Jujuy’s governor, Gerardo Morales of the União Civica Radical, an ally of the newly-elected right-wing president, Mauricio Macri, demanding the continuation of threatened funding for a project through which a cooperative of women has been building their own homes and modernizing their neighborhoods for almost a decade. Sala was arrested at her home in the capital of the province of Jujuy, for alleged “incitement to commit crimes and riot.”

The newspaper *El Tiempo* has reported that the imprisoned Sala has begun a hunger strike against her unjust jailing and political persecution. Following her arrest, political leaders active in several social organizations held a rally where they complained of the clearly political character of Sala’s detention. “For the last 35 day, since his assuming office, he (Gerardo Morales) has been causing problems. They want us to retreat, but will not do so. We will not move from the square because in Argentina, social protest is not a crime,” said Marcos, a member of Tupac Amaru.

The Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS), very highly respected for its defense of human rights, issued a strong statement denouncing Sala’s arrest and the alleged reasons for her imprisonment. [1]

In the same context, Estela de Carlloto, from the Association of Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, made the following statement: “When such things happen in Jujuy they clearly want to demonstrate power that they do not have. The people have voted. We will respect the will of the people, as long as the president respects us... but he’s not respecting us, he’s insulting us. For a month we have been going through hell. Every day we must take to the streets in defense of one thing or

another: of justice, in defense of people sacked from their jobs; against imports that will leave our factories empty of workers; and now the height of absurdity: the arrest of a woman, the first political prisoner of our country.”

As we previously predicted in our recent article on the results of the presidential election in Argentina [2], the arrest of Milagro Sala is proof of the new political reality that the country is living with since the inauguration of President Mauricio Macri last December, 10. Following the neoliberal recipe, Macri’s right-wing government is undertaking a number of mass layoffs of public sector employees, a policy also being followed in the private sector, both attacks being aimed at dismantling any remaining democratic rights, criminalizing social movements, and breaking away from the popular policies pursued by the previous governments of Néstor and Cristina Kirchner. This new anti-worker, anti-rights campaign has been undertaken by the direct request of both US and EU imperialism which maintain that there should be no more concessions to the poorest and oppressed strata of society. Instead, the imperialists contend that the public budget should be directed by the ruling class and the national and international financial system.

According to CELS, Sala’s arrest constitutes a “very serious precedent of criminalizing social protest.”

We at the CCR, Brazilian section of RCIT, vehemently condemn the arrest of Milagro Sala. We demand her immediate release and the withdrawal of all charges against her or any other militant struggling against layoffs. We understand that what is underway in the Argentina of Macri, with the complicity of the bourgeois media and the ruling class, is the criminalization of the struggles of social movements with the clear intention of increasing the exploitation of the working class and the oppressed. The rulers want to place the price of the economic crisis and the global recession on the backs of workers, using state repression.

* Down with the criminalization of social movements declared by President Macri and his allies!

* For the immediate freeing of Milagro Salas and the withdrawal of all charges against her!

* Down with the threats of dismissal for women workers of Cooperatives!

*1. <http://cels.org.ar/comunicacion/?info=detalleDoc&ids=4&lang=es&ss=46&idc=2024>

*2. <http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/latin-america/argentina-macri/> ■

The Right to Abortion Must Be Discussed!

What Do the Tragedies of the Kiss Nightclub, the “Mountain Tsunami” at Mariana, and the Spread of the Zika Virus All Have in Common? ... The Unbridled Pursuit of Profit and the Exploitation of the Capitalist System!

By Joao Evangelista, (CCR, Section of the RCIT in Brazil), February 2016

In January 2013 there occurred a tragic conflagration at the Kiss Nightclub in the city of Santa Maria in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil in which 230 people died, as we reported in our article at the time. [1] On November 5, 2015 a “mountain tsunami” of 62 million cubic meters of iron ore slime destroyed Bento Rodrigues, a sub-district of the historic city of Mariana in the state of Minas Gerais, when the dam restraining the sludge burst. [2] The huge flood of toxic refuse, the byproducts of the mining and extracting operations, swept into Rio Doce, a river in the southeast of Brazil, which forms the border between the states of Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo. With a length of 853 km, the course of the river is the most important watershed entirely within the Southeast of the Brazil. The toxic leach residue contaminated the full length of the river and flowed into the Atlantic Ocean, causing what has been called the largest environmental disaster in the history of Brazil. As a result of the mining disaster the river is technically dead. Experts say that it will take decades for it to recover. Thousands became homeless; hundreds of fishermen lost their livelihood; tourism in the region was severely impacted; lives were destroyed. The company that caused the disaster is Samarco, a powerful multinational subsidiary of the Vale do Rio Doce corporation, which itself belongs to the Anglo-Australian monopoly BHP Billiton.

The Zika virus, transmitted by the bite the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, although rarely involving complications for its bearer, is evidently linked to congenital microcephaly affecting the fetus when acquired by pregnant women. [3] Microcephaly is a birth defect in which a baby’s head is smaller than expected when compared to babies of the same sex and age. Babies with microcephaly often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly. [4] During the first half of 2015, there were confirmed cases of the disease from states in all regions of Brazil. With milder

symptoms than those of dengue and the chikungunya fever (diseases also transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito), the Zika virus was initially ignored by health authorities. However, with its rapid spread throughout Brazil, and its incursion into countries throughout Latin America, and the reporting of cases now from Europe, it no longer was possible to pretend that nothing was happening. As long as the contamination by the Zika virus was only limited to the poorest sections of the population, it could be treated as something localized; but as it started to spread, even residents of the richest neighborhoods of large cities became vulnerable.

At the beginning of February of this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the fight against the Zika virus should be considered a public health emergency of international concern. This is the same WHO which was recently criticized harshly for ignoring the extent of the danger of Ebola virus that killed thousands of persons in Africa. As the 2016 Olympics are scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro later this year, the Olympic Committee of the United States (USOC) said its athletes should consider not competing in the Olympic Games in August, but only hours later the USOC denied having made this comment.

While the tragedy of the fire at the Kiss nightclub was the result of corporate greed which bribed public officials to ignore the building’s safety infractions, and the colossal disaster in Mariana followed the same script, the spread of Zika virus in Brazil and the rest of the world is primarily related to the lack of proper sanitary conditions in the poorest neighborhoods and slums, i.e., it is clearly a problem that originates with social inequality. But the municipal, state and federal governments of Brazil prefer to blame the citizens for their “carelessness in not eliminating mosquito breeding sites.”

The national and global repercussions of the threat of an epidemic-like spread of a disease causing microcephaly

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in fetuses and babies yet to be born has brought to the forefront debates on abortion never seen before in Brazil. In recent days attempts have been made to open up the discussion on permitting abortions in cases beyond what is already allowed by law: when rape is involved or when anencephaly, development of the fetus without a brain, occurs. An appeal in this matter is being prepared for presentation before the Supreme Federal Tribunal. [5] The Catholic Church and other conservative religious bodies have spoken out against such an easing of the restrictions on abortion, but the trend is that *this time* the discussion will go beyond the moral question. In a statement on the impact of the crisis on women's rights, the High Commissioner of the Law of UN Women, Zeid Al Hussein, called on countries affected by the virus to enable women to have access to contraception and abortion.

Medically supervised abortion in Brazil has been "permitted" for many years, but only for the well-to-do families which, when they want it for their daughters, can afford to pay between 5 and 20 thousand Reals in specialized clinics, while thousands of working women and young people must resort to backyard improvisations. The website of the newspaper *O Globo* estimates that between 7.5 and 9.3 million women interrupted pregnancies in Brazil between 2004 and 2013. Although it affects thousands and cost the public coffers at least R\$ 142 million annually abortion continues to be treated as a matter to be avoided in political campaigns for the presidency, and most candidates, even those considered

progressives, seek to evade the issue.

We in the CCR, the Brazilian section of RCIT, defend the right of women to decide about their own body. Preventing women from having autonomy over their bodies is a brutal form of oppression. In our manifesto (Chapter V, entitled "Joint fight for women's liberation!") we make it clear what we think on this issue when we say that "in the history of mankind, class-based economic systems existed from the beginning side by side with forms of political oppression (by the state) and social oppression of specific groups (for example, women, youth, etc.). The oppression of women is therefore deeply rooted in class society throughout history and can only be eliminated with the abolition of class exploitation. Therefore, the struggle for women's liberation is invariably and closely linked with the struggle for socialism."

[1] <http://elmundosocialista.blogspot.com.br/2013/02/the-tragedy-in-santa-maria-rio-grande.html>

[2] https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rompimento_de_barragem_em_Bento_Rodrigues/

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bento_Rodrigues_dam_disaster

[3] <https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microcefalia>

[4] <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/microcephaly.html>

[5] <http://saude.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,contra-microcefalia-onu-recomenda-liberar-aborto-na-america-latina,10000015136>

<http://www.thecommunists.net/home/portugu%C3%AAs/capitulo-v/> ■

New Book!

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

Until When Will the Great Brazilian Football Idols of Today Continue to Ignore Racism, Prejudice, and Brutal Social Inequality?

By Joao Evangelista (CCR, Section of the RCIT in Brazil), 24 February 2016

Socrates Brasileiro Sampaio de Souza Vieira de Oliveira, or simply Socrates, not the great Greek philosopher of course, but the great footballer and a doctor of medicine, delighted the planet with his fellow Brazilian teammates in the 1982 World Cup in Spain. But Socrates was also notable for his political activism, particularly during the 1980s, when he led a movement for the democratization of football as well as that of the entire country. While the military dictatorship in Brazil officially ended in 1985, with the election of Tancredo Neves as president, his election was not by popular vote but rather indirect, by means of an electoral college. At that time Socrates took part in the "Direct now!" movement, in which he militantly stood for the right of the Brazilian people to elect the president of the republic by a direct and secret vote.

Socrates died in 2011, bequeathing to us both longings and lessons; not only as a football genius, but also as a militant fighter for democracy. By comparison, we can say that he was the Brazilian version of the American boxer Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali), who refused to be sent off to the war in Vietnam; or that of the champions of the 1968 Olympics, Tommie Smith and John Carlos who, in their courageous protest against racism, held aloft clenched black-gloved fists in a salute to Black Power when the American national anthem was played after they received their medals, an act which caused such a scandal at the time. But Socrates was the happy exception in every way. Unfortunately, he has not been, and still is not, a model for today's sports idols.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento ("Pelé"), our greatest example of foot-balling perfection, renowned worldwide, named the so-called "athlete of the century" in the 1980s, during an all out campaign for the democratization of the country and against the military dictatorship scandalously declared that "The Brazilian people are not ready to vote, due to a lack of both practice and education. Vote more out of a sense of fellowship!" Furthermore, Pelé always denied that racism existed in football; in fact, in the mind of Pelé racism simply doesn't exist; for him it is rather an optical illusion of the beholder, and supposedly the little that he himself actually does witness, he recommends not to report, not to protest against. Pelé is a true "Doubting Thomas."

Ronaldo Luis Nazário de Lima, known as Ronaldo, Ronaldo the Phenomenon, or simply Ronaldinho, is considered by experts to be one of the greatest football players of all time. Well, this so-called phenomena commenting about expressions of racism at football stadiums, said unbelievably "I think all blacks suffer (from racism). I, who am white, also suffer from such ignorance!" But Ronaldo's true ignorance is his not realizing that he himself is of African descent. This very same Ronaldo Nazário recently took part in the demonstrations calling for the impeachment of the elected president of the

republic, Dilma Rousseff, thereby aligning himself with the most reactionary and conservative forces in Brazil who are doing their utmost to pull off a coup d'état. During the preparations for the 2014 World Cup, demonstrators protested against the criminal absurdity of spending so much of public funds, invariably at the expense of health, education and housing. When the protestors were violently repressed by the police, Ronaldo Nazario gave his opinion saying "The World Cup has got nothing to do with the building of hospitals!" Of course, being a millionaire, Ronaldo and his family have access to the best health care.

The footballer Romario de Souza Faria, known simply as Romario, was a team member of the 1994 Brazilian World Cup Championship which was held in the US. In 2010, he was elected to the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies for the state of Rio de Janeiro, as a candidate of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) which, by the way, has nothing at all to do with socialism. In parliament, Romario has delivered fierce speeches against corruption in Brazilian football and FIFA. He is currently president of the PSB for the state of Rio de Janeiro. In April 2015, he gave a controversial interview to the sports magazine *Placar* (Score) in which he first revealed his desire to one day become mayor of Rio de Janeiro, and added what became an emblematic comment about Brazilian politics: "I thought politics was a place of thievery and dirt. And I was right." Following publication of the interview, the senator apologized on his Facebook page and said he was overexcited during the interview. In his apology he claimed that "there are great politicians in Congress." As the 2015 political crisis headed towards an attempted impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, Senator stated that care should be taken saying that "Regardless of whether we are for or against (impeachment), we senators want the country to get back to economic growth and to get out of this crisis. In the current context, opportunistically, Romario largely stands with those supporting a coup d'état. But nothing is by chance, as Romario is now playing for his new audience: the reactionary proponents of the coup and right. As already reported, he is one of the candidates for in the elections for mayor of the city of Rio de Janeiro to be held in October 2016.

Daniel Alves da Silva, commonly known as Dani Alves, a member of the Brazil national football team who plays for Barcelona in the Spanish league (where he achieved heroic status during that club's fantastic 2014 season), was involved in another episode of football racism. During a Spanish league match, a supporter of Villarreal threw a banana at the Brazilian Alves who responded humorously by taking a bite of the fruit before resuming the match. The story went viral on social networks worldwide, with an overwhelming number of comments welcoming the player's easy handling of the incident while condemning

the racist act. Among the various personalities who expressed solidarity with Alves's handling of the matter was the current great football idol Neymar da Silva Santos Junior, better known as Neymar Junior.

Neymar himself was a victim of racism in Barcelona's match against Español in January 2016. At the beginning of the match, fans began chanting racist slogans and later in the game, when Neymar made contact with the ball, some fans started making monkey sounds. The former head of the Barcelona club, Toni Freixa, wrote on his Twitter account that "I hope that the racist cries made towards Neymar will be recorded in the minutes of any arbitration." But, somehow, completely inexplicably, Neymar commented that he "did not hear the screams. I do not hear things off the playing field. It is truly difficult things which bother me; I just play football!" In this reaction, Neymar shows himself to be a true disciple of Pelé.

Currently Neymar, along with his father and the former president of the Barcelona club, are being accused in Spanish and Brazilian courts of an alleged multimillion-real tax fraud involved in Neymar's move from the Catalan Santos team to Barcelona. The Spanish press indicates that the "unreported" amount of the transaction comes to more than 170 million reals, with obvious negative implications for the public coffers due to unpaid taxes. Strangely, in the Brazilian media, in which headlines and entire pages are devoted to crimes of alleged corruption and money laundering by politicians, the only mention of the multimillion-real tax fraud perpetrated by Neymar are relegated to the sports pages. Obviously, this is the

media's way of hiding from the population that their great idol may have withheld millions of reals in taxes, which would otherwise be available for healthcare, education, housing, etc. In the end, Neymar and Ronaldo Nazario are one and the same.

Meanwhile, thousands of young people from all over Brazil, from the periphery to the urban slums dream of being the next football phenomenon. This dream can only become a reality for a very, very few. The vast majority of the country's football players never reach either fame or fortune. The dream is almost in all cases an illusion as impossible to achieve as winning the lottery. And yet, because of this cruel illusion, many young people place no value at all in their studies; rather they drop out of school early to participate in tryouts for kids' football clubs. And for most of the very few that do become professional, their salary is no more than twice the minimum wage. It is only when they mature, with no professional success nor with the necessary educational background, at times even semi-literate, that they realize that they have lost a considerable part of their lives in search of an impossible dream.

The current heroes of Brazilian football, and some veterans like Pelé, are sad examples of political alienation, opportunism, the ostentatious display of wealth, tax evasion, the complete ignoring of the most grotesque acts of racism, homophobia, and sexism. By their example, they confirm the truth of what the great German playwright and poet Bertolt Brecht once very appropriately said: "*Unhappy is the land that needs a hero!*" ■

New Book!

Michael Pröbsting: Greece: A Modern Semi-Colony

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

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

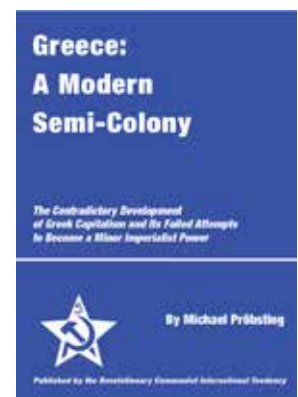
The following paragraphs are the back cover text of the book which gives an overview of its content.

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

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

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

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



Mexico: The Struggle of the Women Cleaning Workers at IEMS

Interview with the Agrupación de Lucha Socialista (ALS, Mexico) by the RCIT, March 2016

Question: Could you please describe the background of the struggle of women cleaning workers at IEMS (Mexico City)?

First, on a general level, the struggle of the cleaning workers at IEMS is a consequence of labor and educational reforms which have been introduced. The first legalized outsourcing and eliminated job security, while the second have undermined the educational model of IEMS, a project which was initiated by the communities of Iztapalapa and Tlalpan and which demanded that the government of Federal District [Mexico City] create high schools for their children. This model was adopted by the government of the Federal District during the administration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, and it included flexible mechanisms for the acceptance and maintenance of students. The introduced educational reforms aim at eliminating this model, and the cleaning workers were the first obstacle in doing so.

Second, the *Trade Union of Workers in IEMS* (SUTIEMS) was originally founded as an independent union of teachers and administrative workers who, in the course of various strikes, won the rights they currently have. The cleaning workers were SUTIEMS's main source of support at its defenders. Therefore, their dismissal constitutes a political attack on the part of the IEMS and the outsourcing company against the union in that role.

Third, as part of the irregularities under which the outsourcing is allowed to operate, workers were hired by an oral agreement, without any written contract. As a result, whenever a new tender was issued and accepted, the company which won the tender (it was, in fact, always the same company, but under a different commercial name), the company would fire the workers and, then, as the cleaning workers had the support of SUTIEMS, they

were rehired, as the 59 dismissed workers would sue the company and the IEMS for their reinstatement.

Finally, in December 2015, when the outsourcing tender of the company ROC-MAN, by which the cleaning workers employed, came to an end, and the new tender was won by an outsourcing company named JOAD (its owners were the same as those of ROC-MAN), this time the workers were not rehired, nor compensated.

Question: What are the workers' main demands?

To be rehired and given tenure their original place of work.

Question: Has their protest had any success up until now?

Through their demonstrations, the workers have succeeded in achieving roundtable discussions with government institutions dealing in labor matters. However, the authorities of the IEMS are firm in their refusal to conduct any dialogue with them. The very most the outsourcing company has offered the workers is to employ them at other locations.

This is due to the attitude of isolation that most of the IEMS community has exhibited towards the workers.

Question: What has been the attitude of other employees of the IEMS to the demands of the cleaning workers?

There are students and teachers who have expressed their solidarity on an individual and voluntary basis. Unfortunately, however, this solidarity has not become organized and ongoing: they are absent from the demonstrations and have become close to the new cleaning staff which has been working on their campuses for nearly a month and a half. Some of the teachers are more concerned about their own employment situation on campus.

Solidarity with the Women Workers of IEMS in Mexico City!

by the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 29.1.2016

The group *Agrupacion de Lucha Socialista* (ALS) from Mexico released on 21 January 2016 an interesting document on its blog about the dismissal of 59 outsourced women cleaning workers from their jobs at the *Instituto de Educación Media Superior* (IEMS), Mexico City. The women had been working at several locations belonging to the IEMS. Several organizations have been accompanying the sacked workers during demonstrations demanding their immediate reinstatement and against the repression being directed against them and the student militants who have joined their struggle.

We in the RCIT express our full solidarity with the just struggle of the fired women workers and their student supporters. The outsourcing of labor, a tactic which significantly undermines the most basic labor rights, is a global phenomenon in which the capitalist system seeks to

increasingly exploit workers and the oppressed.

In the present context we call for international solidarity of all progressive parties and social movements with the struggle of the women cleaning workers of IEMS, because the struggle of these comrades is the struggle of *all* workers of the world against capitalist exploitation.

** For the readmission of all dismissed workers!*

** Down with repression!*

** For the right to unionize!*

** Down with neo-liberal structural reforms!*

Read the full report in Spanish at the following URL:

<https://agrupaciondeluchasocialista.wordpress.com/eventos/mitin-de-las-trabajadoras-de-intendencia-del-iems/> ■

Question: What has the trade union said about this?

SUTIEMS has verbally supported the women cleaning workers in a very evasive way, and until now such "support" has not been translated into the inclusion of the cleaning workers in their own struggle. Instead, SUTIEMS keeps postponing declaring their own strike, apparently in order to prevent turning the struggles of the workers who are members of SUTIEMS from becoming one with the struggle of the cleaning workers. Clearly this is no true support for the cleaning workers' struggle.

Question: Has there been solidarity among other sectors of the population with the cleaning workers?

No. The only exception has been at the Talpan I campus, where the neighbors support the cleaning workers because the latter live nearby the campus, and these are working class neighborhoods which were created on the initiative of the people themselves, but this support is limited to the strictly local level.

Question: What have been the main demands and slogans of the ALS?

We adopted the demands for the rehiring and tenure of the workers, but have added to these the need for independent unions, since this is what can keep them united and organized and give them a better chance to fight for job security and better working conditions. This includes strengthening of their own union throughout the sector that brings together cleaning workers and other government workers of Mexico City. We have also called for a meeting of all dismissed workers and those in danger of being so, in which the women cleaning workers would participate and out of which the different workers' struggles could become unified.

Question: Could you tell us about the practical work of the ALS in this struggle?

We, as members of the ALS, have accompanied the workers in partial boycotts conducted at their campuses, in demonstrations, and in carrying on discussions and giving tactical advice. We have also conducted agitation in the subway and on the workers' campuses. We have made efforts to link them with other groups in order to overcome their isolation including with the workers of INVI and of Lexmark, with whom we have previously had contact.

Question: Have you established close connections with the women workers?

Yes, of the five campuses involved in the resistance, we have become involved in two, GAM II and Coyoacan, as we are only a very small group. However, at these two campuses we have established close connections with the workers and as a result we have gained a certain presence in the movement in general.

Question: Have you succeeded in engaging the workers in political discussions? Do you think you will be able to make closer political contacts with the cleaning workers?

This has been more difficult. The dismissed workers are completely immersed in their immediate economic plight. However, it is certainly among our priorities, and we aim to make time for it.

Question: What have been the most important lessons and experiences for you from this struggle?

The most important is the need to link the different struggles that are taking place, especially of the unemployed and those struggling for labor rights. Therefore, we are agitating to achieve a meeting of dismissed workers and those whose positions are threatened, to wage a campaign against outsourcing, for employment tenure, and for independent and democratic unions. ■



Cleaning worker of IEMS and activists of the ALS

Why Not to Vote for the Democratic Party in the Forthcoming US Elections OR AT ANY OTHER TIME

By Yossi Schwarz, Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, 2.3.2016,

The economic crisis of the capitalist system that began in 2008 has led to polarization around the world, including in the US. Such polarization is reflected in the US presidential election campaign, in which two main issues have surfaced: economy and war. Billionaire Donald Trump reflects the anti-working class, racist, sexist and anti-immigrant consciousness of a section of the middle class and a section of the more backward-looking white workers who blame the immigrants for their lower salaries rather than the corporations. Another section of the middle class, the union bureaucracy and even many individual workers support Bernie Sanders. Their support indicates that the mood of the working class is changing and that class battles are a real possibility.

Were Bernie Sanders to run at the head of an independent, working class party, we could consider giving him critical support; but as a candidate of the Democratic Party, Sanders is simply sucking energy and money out of the workers, while subduing them for the benefit of the capitalist class. Sanders represents the middle class and their illusions, not the working class, which needs its own working class revolutionary party. In this article I will also deal with the question of a labor party in the United States.

Sanders – A Latter Day Debs?

Sanders claims that the man who inspires him is Eugene V Debs, considered by many American workers, historically, as the greatest leader of the American labor movement.

A picture of Debs, a socialist union organizer, hung in Sanders' office in city hall when he was mayor of Burlington, Vermont. (1) A plaque honoring Debs is now by the window in Sanders' US Senate office. (2) In 1979, Sanders even directed a glowing half-hour tribute – released as a vinyl record – to “a socialist, a revolutionary and probably the most effective and popular leader that the American working class has ever had.” (3)

However Sanders pretention to follow the footstep of Debs is, among other things, simply a self-serving fraud. Debs was an honest working class fighter even though he suffered from political weakness. He was against the Democrats as much as against the Republican Party, as he saw both parties as the political representatives of the capitalist class, the enemy of the working class. For this reason he led the Socialist party as an independence force during the 1912 presidential elections, winning 6% of the popular vote. Debs heroically opposed the US's entry into the First World War, which he saw correctly as an imperialist war, and for this he was jailed. Sanders, by contrast, is running for the presidential nomination of a bourgeois imperialist party – the Democratic Party – and has a record of openly supporting the US war in Afghanistan, its military air strikes in the Balkans, as well as Israel's murderous 2014 war in Gaza. Sanders defended Israel in that war, even though he criticized it for attacking civilians. In July 2014, Sanders joined the rest of the U.S.

Senate in unanimously voting to support Israel's actions. (4)

The Legacy of Debs

Eugene V Debs (1855-1926) was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, on November 5, 1855. He began working on the railways at the age of 14. Based on his experience as an exploited worker, he led the struggle for the formation of the *American Railway Union* (ARU) and was its first president. He was also a leading figure of the Anarcho-Syndicalist *Industrial Workers of the World* (IWW). He understood that the trade union bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor serves the capitalist class interests, saying “The trades-union movement is today under the control of the capitalist class. It is preaching capitalist economics. It is serving capitalist purposes” (5) This was as true then as it still is today.

In his role as president of the ARU, Debs led a strike against the Great Northern Railroad in 1894. For this he was sent to prison where he met socialist and future congressman Victor Berger, who introduced him to the ideas of Marx and socialism. After Debs' release from prison, he founded the *American Socialist Party*. On May Day of 1907 he said: “The most heroic word in all languages is REVOLUTION. It thrills and vibrates; cheers and inspires. Tyrants and time-servers fear it, but the oppressed hail it with joy. The throne trembles when this throbbing word is lisped, but to the hovel it is food for the famishing and hope for the victims of despair. Let us glorify today the revolutions of the past and hail the Greater Revolution yet to come before Emancipation shall make all the days of the year May Days of peace and plenty for the sons and daughters of toil.” (6)

In 1910, Debs said that the working class must conquer and abolish the capitalist state: “The Socialist Party is the party of the workers, organized to express in political terms their determination to break their fetters and rise to the dignity of free men. In this party the workers must unite and develop their political power to conquer and abolish the capitalist political state and clear the way for industrial and social democracy. But the new order can never be established by mere votes alone.” (7)

In this statement there is some possible ambiguity on the question of the state, depending on how you read the formula “conquer and abolish the capitalist political state.” The working class interest is not to conquer the capitalist state, but to smash it and replace it with a working class state.

In 1912, when Debs was running as an independent socialist for the US presidency he said: “We are today entering upon a national campaign of the profoundest interest to the working class and the country. In this campaign there are but two parties and but one issue. There is no longer even the pretense of difference between the so-called Republican and Democratic parties. They are substantially one in what they stand for.” (8) What a wonderful and correct insight!

During the same year he also said: “Friends and Fellow-Workers: The spirit of our time is revolutionary and growing

more so every day. A new social order is struggling into existence. The old economic foundation of society is breaking up and the social fabric is beginning to totter. The capitalist system is doomed. The signs of change confront us upon every hand. Social changes are preceded by agitation and unrest among the masses. We are today in the transition period between decaying capitalism and growing Socialism. The old system is being shaken to its foundations by the forces underlying it and its passing is but a question of time. The new system that is to succeed the old is developing within the old and its outline is clearly revealed in its spirit of mutualism and its co-operative manifestations." (9)

In this statement there is a serious weakness. A working class economy *cannot* be built within the capitalist system and co-operatives; unless they are part of a *working class state* they will become capitalist enterprises.

Debs, who considered himself a Marxist, should have known better. Marx and Engels had criticized the reformist Lassalle who, relying upon what he called the "iron law of wages," argued that there were no means of raising wages above the minimum. From this he concluded that it is necessary to organize producing co-operatives with the aid of credits granted by the government. However, for Marx and Engels, co-operatives have value only if they are established by the workers themselves, and even then their value is very limited. They can serve as proof that the capitalist was not a necessary factor in production. But to view co-operative associations as a means for gradually taking over society was to forget that in order to accomplish this it was necessary first to be in possession of political power. (10)

Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* wrote that: "the workers' desire to establish the conditions for co-operative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionize the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of co-operative societies with state aid. But as far as the present co-operative societies are concerned, they are of value only insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois." (11)

Imperialism and War

Debs opposed the First World War as an imperialist war: "Capitalism makes war inevitable. Capitalist nations not only exploit their workers but ruthlessly invade, plunder, and ravage one another. The profit system is responsible for it all. Abolish that, establish industrial democracy, produce for use, and the incentive to war vanishes. Until then men may talk about 'Peace on earth' but it will be a myth — or sarcasm." (12)

We can only respect Debs for this courageous position. Yet it contains an important mistake.

This formulation is a reference to socialist economy that produces use values rather than exchange values. However in the transitional stage to socialism, which is the workers' state, there is competition between the nationalized and planned economy on the one hand and the forces of the market that still exists and which produce exchange values, on the other, as Evgenii Preobrazhensky has explained. (13) It is possible that, in his formulation, Debs misunderstood the need for a workers' state.

At the same time, Debs' reformist illusions were expressed

in his position: "The proposition is here made to put an end to war by democratizing war. In all the history of the world THE PEOPLE have never declared a war. A constitutional amendment providing that no war shall be declared except by a vote of the people and that, as Allan Benson has suggested, if war is declared they who voted for it shall be the first to go to the front would put an end to war forever in this country." (14)

Imperialist wars will not be prevented by any change to the US constitution. Short of overthrowing the ruling class, they will invariably continue their plundering wars.

Unlike Debs, the working class revolutionaries held the position of turning the imperialist war into a revolutionary class struggle. Lenin's position was for revolutionary defeatism. Lenin wrote: "The question of the fatherland—we shall reply to the opportunists—cannot be posed without due consideration of the concrete historical nature of the present war. This is an imperialist war, i.e., it is being waged at a time of the highest development of capitalism, a time of its approaching end. The working class must first "constitute itself within the nation", the Communist Manifesto declares, emphasizing the limits and conditions of our recognition of nationality and fatherland as essential forms of the bourgeois system, and, consequently, of the bourgeois fatherland. The opportunists distort that truth by extending to the period of the end of capitalism that which was true of the period of its rise. With reference to the former period and to the tasks of the proletariat in its struggle to destroy, not feudalism but capitalism, the Communist Manifesto gives a clear and precise formula: 'The workingmen have no country.' One can well understand why the opportunists are so afraid to accept this socialist proposition, afraid even, in most cases, openly to reckon with it. The socialist movement cannot triumph within the old framework of the fatherland. It creates new and superior forms of human society, in which the legitimate needs and progressive aspirations of the working masses of *each* nationality will, for the first time, be met through international unity, provided existing national partitions are removed. To the present-day bourgeoisie's attempts to divide and disunite them by means of hypocritical appeals for the 'defense of the fatherland' the class-conscious workers will reply with ever new and persevering efforts to unite the workers of various nations in the struggle to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie of all nations." (15)

Likewise Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "The madness will cease and the bloody product of hell come to an end only when the workers of Germany and France, of Great Britain and Russia, awaken from their frenzy, extend to each other the hand of friendship, and drown the bestial chorus of imperialist hyenas with the thunderous battle cry of the modern working-class movement: 'Workers of the World Unite!'" (16)

Debs, however, unlike the right-wing social democrats and the centrist Kautsky, who refused to defend the Russian revolution, in fact defended that revolution writing: "The Revolution in Russia is now in its most critical stages. The near future will determine whether or not the Bolsheviki can maintain their supremacy. They represent the peasants, the workers, and the soldiers — the great bulk of the population. Their demand is the land to the peasants who till it and the tools to the workers who use them. This means real democracy, for which the Russian people alone are fighting in the present war." (17) In the same article, Debs also wrote: "As for the German invasion, my hope is that the Russian people will resist it by all means in their power and that they will not rest until they have driven these ruthless barbarians

from their borders. The shame of this invasion is not so much that of the kaiser and the junkers as it is the majority socialists. In standing for this crime, they cap the climax of their betrayal and disgrace of the socialist movement. In standing for this, the majority socialists of Germany prove finally that they will stand for anything except socialism and democracy. The Austrian socialists have threatened to rise in revolt and have compelled their emperor to renounce any part in or responsibility for the invasion. But the German majority socialists are so thoroughly Prussianized, so completely subjected to the iron will of their military despots, that all they know is to obey orders, even to the extent of becoming the rankest of kaiserites, being uses as willing hirelings to stamp out the aspirations of other people to be free."

In 1918, in defense of the revolution, Debs wrote: "It has been charged that Lenin and Trotsky and the leaders of the revolution were treacherous, that they made a traitorous peace with Germany. Let us consider that proposition briefly. At the time of the revolution Russia had been three years in the war. Under the Czar she had lost more than four million of her ill-clad, poorly-equipped, half-starved soldiers, slain outright or disabled on the field of battle. She was absolutely bankrupt. Her soldiers were mainly without arms. This was what was bequeathed to the revolution by the Czar and his regime; and for this condition Lenin and Trotsky were not responsible, nor the Bolsheviks. For this appalling state of affairs the Czar and his rotten bureaucracy were solely responsible. When the Bolsheviks came into power and went through the archives they found and exposed the secret treaties—the treaties that were made between the Czar and the French government, the British government and the Italian government, proposing, after the victory was achieved, to dismember the German Empire and destroy the Central Powers. These treaties have never been denied nor repudiated. Very little has been said about them in the American press. I have a copy of these treaties, showing that the purpose of the Allies is exactly the purpose of the Central Powers, and that is the conquest and spoilation of the weaker nations that has always been the purpose of war." (18)

Debs in Prison – The SPA Betray the Revolution

While Debs was in prison and the Socialist Party of America was invited to join the Communist International, it refused to accept the 21 conditions for membership. (19) In one of the earlier publication of the American Communist party we find:

"Debs has declared himself for the Third International? Karsner may have told Debs that the Socialist Party had, by referendum vote, applied for admission to the Third International. But did he also tell Debs that the SP does not endorse the principles of the Third International? Did Karsner also tell Debs that the Third International does not admit parties which do not adopt its principles? What did Karsner tell Debs which induced Debs to accept the Presidential nomination from a party which, in the now historic Albany trial, wrapped itself in the American flag and told us all that the Socialists here would support the bourgeois state in a war against invasion by the forces of Soviet Russia." (20)

On this issue, James Canon wrote: "In the United States, the Socialist Party left wing was expelled that same year by the SP's chauvinist majority for advocating a break with the Second and affiliation with the Third International. The fact that Debs was serving time in prison and could not attend this convention, even had he wanted to, helps underscore the superiority of Lenin's

concept of the revolutionary party and the role of leadership over the organizational policies followed by Debs' party which were at odds with Debs' own revolutionary political policies and his class instincts. As a matter of fact, how Debs might have voted had he been able to attend the 1919 SP convention will remain forever unknown because in Debs' 1918 Canton Ohio speech, which led to his arrest, indictment, conviction and more than two years served of his ten-year prison sentence, had in that speech famously stated his support for Lenin's Bolsheviks and for the Russian Socialist Revolution with these words: "From the top of my head to the tip of my toes, I am a Bolshevik, and proud of it." (21)

As is documented in the MIA's Early American Marxism: "In May 1920, Morris Hillquit, the International Secretary of the Socialist Party of America gave a speech at the May 8-14 Convention of the party held in New York. Hillquit, supportive of the Russian Revolution and the legitimacy of Lenin and Trotsky's government, called the Third International 'a nucleus, but no more than that, of a new International.' Hillquit's argument was that he opposes any international organization which might impose theoretical interpretations and tactical policies on member parties, noting that 'the rule of self-determination in matters of policy and matters of struggle' had been a fundamental principle of both the First and Second Internationals. Hillquit considered the Third International's interpretation of the phrase 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' to be historically erroneous (citing the phrase's originating in Marx's 1875 Critique of the Gotha Program) and tactically disastrous, opening the Socialist movement to abrogation of democratic norms and victimization by its bourgeois opponents. Hillquit sought the SPA's participation in a future International including both the Russian Communist Party as well as the Independent Labour Party of Britain, the Socialist Party of France, and the Independent Socialists of Germany. (22) In other words, Hillquit, the International Secretary of the Socialist Party of America, took the standard reformist position that the International and the dictatorship of the proletariat must be of the entire class and all its parties, and not exclusively composed by the revolutionary party and those who defend the revolution. This, by the way, was the same position as that of the Mensheviks after the Russian revolution, which led them to support the counter-revolution.

Similar European Reformist Betrayals of the Revolution

The French Socialist party supported the French imperialists during the war and expelled the left wing of the party that would become the French Communist Party. The ILP took a pacifist position during the war and refused to accept the 21 conditions of the International, and subsequently formed with others the short-living centrist "two and a half international." The centrist Independent Socialists of Germany (USPD) refused to accept the 21 conditions, had a split with its left wing and then, instead of supporting Soviets, supported parliamentary democracy. Essentially, this was the same story as that of the Left Workers of Zion. With such parties it is impossible to build an international and lead a revolution. It is possible to form a united front with them for concrete struggles which advance the working class, and in which each party raises its own banner and demands.

The Degeneration of the SPA

Soon after the expulsion of the left wing and the formation of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party of American which had been led by Debs, began to degenerate. In 1924, it supported the campaign of the liberal Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin, hoping to build a permanent Farmer-Labor Party rather than a revolutionary working class party. Later on, during the Great Depression, the Socialist Party, first ran as independent socialist party and received 896,000 for its presidential candidate, Norman Thomas. But by 1936, the party crossed the class lines when it called on its members to vote for Roosevelt, and formed the *Social Democratic Federation* to promote socialism within the ranks of the liberal/labor wing of the Democratic Party. Consequently, the Socialist Party received only 185,000 votes nationwide in the 1936 presidential elections, dropping to a little more than 20% of what it had garnered in the 1932 elections. (23)

Sanders Compared to Debs

With all the weakness of Debs, who was an inconsistent revolutionary and had very little control over his party controlled by reformists, he was a giant compared to Bernie Sanders, a liberal claiming to be a socialist democrat, and promising a welfare state in the US if he is elected president. Sanders claims that, if elected, he will force the large corporations to pay their fair share in taxes, and will stop corporations from shifting their profits and jobs overseas to avoid paying US taxes. Furthermore, he promises to increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 an hour, *but only by 2020*; that he will put at least 13 million unemployed Americans to work by investing \$1 trillion over five years towards public works like repairing the roads and building schools; that he will force the corporations to manufacture in the US, rather than in China and other low-wage countries. (24) What Sanders doesn't tell us, of course, is that for the capitalists to produce in the US, the salaries of the workers will have to be drastically reduced.

As mayor of Burlington, Vermont, Sanders supported real estate developers over tenants in projects related to housing, and signed a deal to transfer nuclear wastes from Vermont to a poor border town in New Mexico.

As a US congressman, Sanders voted to expand the application of the death penalty and the inclusion of other crimes covered in the 1996 *Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act*. He also called for the extradition of Assata Shakur from Cuba. Sanders is a closet xenophobe, and it's not for nothing that Lou Dobbs, American television personality, author, radio host on the Fox Business Network, and arch-conservative and racist, has called him "*one of the few straight talkers in Congress*." (25)

Sanders' program has nothing to do with socialism and is no different from the policies of F.D. Roosevelt in his first presidential term (1933-1937) which was known as the "*New Deal*" and who, as Commander-in-Chief of the American armed forces, led the US into the second imperialist world war.

Unlike Debs, Bernie Sanders supports American imperialist wars but, of course, under the guise of fighting terrorism:

"We live in a difficult and dangerous world, and there are no easy or magical solutions. As President and Commander-in-Chief, I will defend this nation, its people, and America's vital strategic interests, but I will do it responsibly. America must defend freedom at home and abroad, but we must seek diplomatic solutions before resorting to military action. While force must always be an option, war must be a last resort, not the first option.".... "I opposed the first Gulf War, as did many other Members of Congress, because I believed that there was a way to achieve our goals without bloodshed, through sanctions [Ed.: that, when imposed following the war, were responsible for the deaths of one and half million Iraqis] and concerted diplomatic action. I supported the use of force to stop the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans [Ed.: an imperialist war that cost the lives of thousands of civilians in Serbia]. And, in the wake of the attacks on September 11, 2001, I supported the use of force in Afghanistan to hunt down the terrorists who attacked us.... While we must be relentless in combating terrorists who would do us harm, we cannot and should not be policeman of the world, nor bear the burden of fighting terrorism alone. The United States should be part of an international coalition, led and sustained by nations in the region that have the means to protect themselves. That is the only way to defeat ISIS and to begin the process of creating the conditions for a lasting peace in the region." (26)

In addition Sanders voted for the 9/11 Commission Report and for legalizing much of the NSA surveillance programs used around the world, including against American citizens. He has supported the war in Somalia and in other semi-colonies, as well as the US's astronomical military budgets which, among other things, fund the building of F-35 military jets in his own home town.

The American Dream Revisited

In the real world American imperialism, like that of any other imperialist state, cannot exist without super exploitation of the workers in semi-colonies and without wars. This is because the forces of modern capitalist production have outgrown the borders of the nation state and thus each imperialist state must struggle to control as large a portion of the world economy as possible, ultimately leading to economic wars and military confrontations between the Great Powers on a world-wide scale. (27) Terrorism is a response of the semi-colonial middle class to imperialist plunder and oppression. Imperialist wars and terrorism can disappear *only* through a socialist revolution. A vote for the Democratic or the Republican party is a vote for plunder and wars and, indirectly, for perpetuating the conditions that create terrorism. While revolutionary Marxists oppose terrorist acts against civilians, we stand on the side of all forces in semi-colonies or colonies, like Palestine, whether secular or religious, in their fight against imperialism, but at the same give them no *political* support. The role of fighting against ISIL, for example, is that of the Syrian masses, *not* of the imperialists and their local servants. In such battles, imperialists launch their massive killing machines *not* to defend human rights, but to impose their own rule of super-exploitation.

Ironically, the American Communist Party (CPUSA), like the Communist Party of Israeli, among others, claims that Assad's murderous regime is anti-imperialist, and accuses Obama and Hillary Clinton of waging imperialist war

(which of course is true) but, at the same time, supports Russian imperialism's murderous attacks on civilians in Syria. Furthermore, the CPUSA calls upon voters to cast their ballot for Sanders who, if he wins the Democratic nomination (an unlikely development) will be the leader of the same capitalist party that is committed to remove Assad from power, replacing him with its own puppet government, just as happened in Iraq. The CPUSA writes: *"Bernie Sanders is attracting thousands at each event because he presents a specific program squarely on the side of the 99%, challenging income inequality and financial domination of the country and of politics... The Sanders campaign is a wonderful development for 2016 and beyond in many ways... All of this is a huge contribution toward the strategic electoral goal of defeating the extreme right wing. Sanders himself has been careful to emphasize he is not campaigning against Hillary Clinton (or Lincoln Chaffee or Martin O'Malley), he is campaigning to take on the corporate agenda of the Republicans and offer positive solutions".* (28) Indeed? And who, if so, is Hillary Clinton? She's none other than the person who served as the US Secretary of State, and was a key figure responsible for US policy when the war in Syria began; a woman who's wealth is estimated at around 22 million dollars and who is the favorite candidate of American millionaires. (29)

"Hillary Clinton is the favorite U.S. presidential candidate among millionaire voters and would win a head-to-head contest with former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, according to the third CNBC Millionaire Survey conducted in March that was released today. The survey, which polls 750 Americans with a net worth of \$1 million or more, found that 53 percent of millionaires would vote for the Democratic ex-Secretary of State." (30) Of course, today she claims to be against the big corporations.

Ironically, the CPUSA is split on this issue and one wing advocates support for Clinton instead of Sanders!

The US is *not* a bi-polar society with 99% of the population on one side and 1% on the other. It is a class society of workers, the middle class, and the 1% ruling class (the Rockefellers, DuPonts, or Kennedys). By speaking of "the 99%," liberal pundits deceptively group together in the same camp a number of different classes, even including sections of the capitalist class (the small entrepreneurs). Such deception, of course, leads to the politics of the popular front which has led time and again to defeats for the working class.

Centrism adapts to the imperialist Democrats

The right-wing centrist *Socialist Alternative* (CWI) is calling to *"Build a #Movement4Bernie to Defeat the Billionaire Class and the Democratic Party Establishment"* (31) and to bring about a political revolution against the Billionaires. In the article cited, the CWI claims that Sanders is for the working class, while Clinton is part of the establishment. Not the least significant of the problems with this line is Sanders himself, who frankly admitted that if he will not win the Democratic nomination, and Clinton does, he will call upon his voters to vote for Clinton. The right centrists IMT, led by Allan Woods, has taken the same position of critical support for Sanders. Rob Sewell, Editor of *Socialist Appeal* (Britain), wrote on 19 February 2016:

"His left-reformist speeches have brought class issues to the fore. 'Do we have the courage to take on the billionaire class?' asks Sanders. 'The government belongs to all of us and not just a small number of wealthy people,' he states, which was as much an attack on Hillary Clinton as on the billionaire class." (32)

But calling a liberal imperialist a "left reformist" is simply a way of cynically covering up your support for the party of the class enemy.

While the centrist *International Socialist Organization* (ISO) does not take a clear position for or against Sanders, their newspaper *Socialist Worker* has published very sympathetic articles about him, and tends towards supporting him. The paper's article *"Iowa's radical message"* says:

"HILLARY CLINTON and Bernie Sanders may have ended up in a tie in the Iowa caucuses, but the winner of the first primary contest for the Democratic presidential nomination was the socialist from Vermont. (...) He is the underdog fighting the establishment of the Democratic Party and in January, with Sanders continuing to rise in the polls in Iowa and nationally, panic set in. There was a wave of attacks on the Vermont socialist from leading Democratic liberals and media commentators. Sanders was criticized for a range of positions, from health care to fighting racism, but the overall message was that his identification with socialism and talk of a 'political revolution' made him non-viable in the general election." (33)

In spite of the ISO's understanding that Sanders is a liberal, according to them, the *real* problem with him is that he does not support an independent green party candidate:



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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

"Sanders' victory has demonstrated a deep dissatisfaction with the status quo--and an openness to radical talk of socialism and revolution, even when they're used to describe far-from-revolutionary political positions that more closely resemble the Democratic Party's liberal past. And that's not to mention issues like foreign policy, where he is indistinguishable from conventional mainstream Democrats and even a few moderate Republicans. And unfortunately, Sanders has made it clear from the beginning of his campaign that if he does lose the nomination, that's just what he'll do -- support the Democratic nominee, rather than turning his campaign into an independent run or supporting a genuine left-wing candidate like the Green Party's Jill Stein."

Sanders on Israel and Palestine

Finally, it's important to note Sanders' record on Palestine: in an interview with Vox, he stated he would like to move away from providing military aid to Egypt and Israel and instead *"provide more economic aid to help improve the standard of living of the people in that area."* (34) Very nice except that, in the real world, so called "economic aid" is a tool to ensure that the semi-colonies are plundered.

In a statement made to a local website a few weeks after the Vox interview, Sanders spokesperson, Michael Briggs, said *"Bernie does not and has not ever supported cutting off arms to Israel and that has never been his position."* (35)

If you go strictly by how Senator Sanders votes in the Senate, this is indeed very true; Sanders does not vote against military aid to Israel, even if he has floated the idea on a number of occasions. But the tension between Sanders' words, his actions and the cited statement put out by his press secretary points to a wider issue: his inability to stand up on the issue when it counts.

The most glaring example of this was a raucous town hall meeting he held in the summer of 2014. While he condemned Israel's attacks against United Nations schools in Gaza, he also defended the wider Israeli war, and even tried to deflect attention from the conflict by talking about ISIS. As his constituents grew more and more angry, he threatened to call the police on them. (36)

At this point in time, when the anger of the workers and youth against the capitalist class is growing, the way forward is to organize an independent workers' party based on labor unions and associations of immigrant workers, in which revolutionaries will fight for a revolutionary program to overthrow the capitalist class. Is today the time to raise such a demand?

Unlike Europe, in the US there is no mass social democratic party and revolutionaries certainly do not call for the formation of a *reformist* labor party. In 1919, following the horrors of the first imperialist war and the Russian revolution, the working class in the US was in a fighting mood. For example the workers organized a general strike in Seattle, and longshoremen refused to load ships with arms to fight against the Russian revolution. The idea of a Labor Party based on the trade unions became popular. In 1919, Lenin asked Louis Fraina, a leader of the newly established American Communist Party, what he thought about establishing a labor party? Fraina opposed it and Lenin did not push for it. In the third congress of the Communist International, Lenin once again suggested that the American Communist party to advocate forming

a labor party, but this did not change the line of the American Communists.

The *"Thesis on Comintern Tactics"* released by the Comintern's Fourth Congress states:

"The united front tactic is simply an initiative whereby the Communists propose to join with all workers belonging to other parties and groups and all unaligned workers in a common struggle to defend the immediate, basic interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie. Every action, for even the most trivial everyday demand, can lead to revolutionary awareness and revolutionary education; it is the experience of struggle that will convince workers of the inevitability of revolution and the historic importance of Communism. It is particularly important when using the united front tactic to achieve not just agitational but also organizational results. Every opportunity must be used to establish organizational footholds among the working masses themselves (factory committees, supervisory commissions made up of workers from all the different parties and unaligned workers, action committees, etc.)." (37)

James P. Cannon accepted this tactic but Pepper, the representative of the Communist International, pushed for an ultra-left line and for a split with the *Federated Farmer-Labor Party (FFLP)* where the Communists had previously begun to gain influence. Following the split, Robert La Follette, a populist Republican Senator from Wisconsin took over leadership of the (FFLP) and drove it along pro-capitalist lines. In spite of this, the Communists joined up, in a shift to the right which Trotsky opposed, as he was to write:

"For a young and weak Communist Party, lacking in revolutionary temper, to play the role of solicitor and gatherer of 'progressive voters' for the Republican Senator La Follette is to head toward the political dissolution of the party in the petty-bourgeoisie. ... The inspirers of this monstrous opportunism ... are thoroughly imbued with skepticism concerning the American proletariat." (38)

The La Follette formation sucked energy from the trade unions and left-wing organizations, but created no political structures where workers could fight for independent labor political action after the elections of 1924. Nearly a century later, if we just replace Robert La Follette with the name Bernie Sanders, it's clear why revolutionaries should not call for voting for Sanders.

The Question of a US Labor Party during the Great Depression

Trotsky dealt with the question of an independent labor party in the US once again in 1932 and 1938. In 1932, Trotsky opposed this demand, but was for it in 1938. Looking back six years from 1938 Trotsky wrote that in 1932 *"we overestimated the possibility of the development of our party at the expense of the Stalinists on one hand, and on the other hand we don't [didn't] see this powerful trade union movement, and the rapid decline of American capitalism. These are two facts which we must reckon with."* (39)

Trotsky continued that the question is not whether there is a sentiment for a workers' party, as the mood of the workers is not what is decisive. *"But what we can say is that the objective situation is absolutely decisive. The trade unions as trade unions can have only a defensive activity, losing members and becoming more and more weak as the crisis deepens, creating more and more unemployed. Our job is to confront the backward*

material of the masses with the tasks which are determined by objective facts and not by psychology. If the trade union leaders are not ready for political action, we must ask them to develop a new political orientation. If they refuse we denounce them. That is the objective situation."

Trotsky was against calling for a reformist labor party which would become an obstacle for building a revolutionary workers party but was for a party in which revolutionaries would fight from within to transform it into a revolutionary party by putting forth the transitional program. He explained in the same document: "It can become a reformist party ... we must have a program of transitional demands, the most complete of them is a workers' and farmers' government. We are for a party, for an independent party of the toiling masses who will take power in the state. We must concretize it – we are for the creation of factory committees, for workers' control of industry through the factory committees." (and he added we are for workers' militias to defend strikes and for the demand open the books)

In 1938, during the same month that Trotsky was assassinated by a Stalinist agent, the American SWP came forward with the position that a labor party would be a step forward. It stated that it would fight for a revolutionary transitional program inside such a Labor Party. (40). However, it failed to follow consistently such a line. In an article by a SWP leader in 1940, it did not relate the struggle for a Labor Party to what its program should be (a line Trotsky would never have advocated). The SWP position then was summed up as follows:

"At present the best medium for this political education is an independent labor party based on the trade unions – a working class political party which will present its own candidates from its own ranks for election. This political channel will enable the workers to generalize their needs and mobilize powerful forces for the struggle to obtain concessions from the bosses. These demands will also treat with the needs of the unemployed and the deep layers of highly oppressed workers who remain unorganized. They will lend their weight to the fight. Small farmers, merchants, professional people and other middle class elements will follow the leadership of the workers in such a political fight against the banks and the corporations.

"It must be remembered that a trade union which places reliance upon the political agents of the employer is building a structure on quicksand. A policy of independent working class political action is necessary at all times. We repeat: an independent labor party is not the fundamental solution of the problems of the working class. If its creation is delayed too long it might be an unnecessary, even a backward, step. However, at the present time, the formation of a labor party based on the trade unions is a progressive step. The Socialist Workers Party will help to create it." (41)

Today, the strategy of authentic Marxists is to build a world revolutionary party – the Fifth International. On the road to this, we utilize the united front tactic, one of the applications of which is, in the US, the founding of a labor party based on the trade unions and unorganized workers especially immigrant laborers. This should be a party in which revolutionary Marxists can put forward revolutionary programs and methods of organizing the masses for the liberation of the working class and humanity from the parasitic class that presently rules and is ruining the earth. As Lenin wrote: "For humanity to live, imperialism must die."

Footnotes:

- (1) David A. Fahrenthold, "Bernie Sanders is in with the enemy, some old allies say," https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/bernie-sanders-says-hes-a-socialist-his-old-socialist-buddies-say-not-so-much/2015/07/25/a3948256-3145-11e5-97ae-30a30cca95d7_story.html
- (2) Tim Dickinson, "Bernie Sanders' Political Revolution," <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/bernie-sanders-political-revolution-20151118?page=4>
- (3) James Hohmann: The Daily 202: Bernie Sanders has a Eugene V. Debs problem, The Washington Post, January 22 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/01/22/the-daily-202-bernie-sanders-has-a-eugene-v-debs-problem/>
- (4) "U.S. Senate Unanimously Approves Resolution Giving Full Support of Israel on Gaza," <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.606183>; see also Thomas Scott Tucker: Let's Not Be Fooled By Bernie Sanders, August 17th, 2014, <https://www.popularresistance.org/lets-not-be-fooled-by-bernie-sanders/>
- (5) E. V. Debs: Speech at the Founding Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World 1905 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1905/iwwfound.htm>
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Revolutionary Communists in Austrian TV

By Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION (Austrian Section of the RCIT), 26 February 2016

Almedina Gunić and Marek Hangler, leaders of the Austrian Section of the RCIT, were recently invited by the Austrian Television channel OKTO TV. They appeared in the TV show "Aswan TV" on 16 February which is often dedicated to issues relevant to migrants. Our comrades were asked by the presenter Alessandra Rametta, a journalist who reported for many years from

war regions in Africa and the Middle East, to report about the goals and the campaigns of the Austrian Section of the RCIT.

Our comrades Gunić and Hangler presented the communist ideas and activities for 30 minutes in German language. You can watch the whole TV show here:

<http://okto.tv/aswan/15839/20160216> ■



Interview with Alan Can, Kurdish Syrian refugee in Austria

Interview conducted and published by the TPR (Argentina), January 2016

Hi Alan, could you tell us when, how and why did you come to Austria?

Hi, Yes. I escaped from north Syria (Rojava) about one year and a half ago, because of the war, and in order to find a proper place to bring my family with me. I cross to the kurdisch part of Turkey, and I worked for some months near Diyarbakir, as I didn't have the money to travel. Then, with others Syrian refugees, we took a boat from Izmir (in the mediterranean coast of Turkey) to Greece. We travelled across Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary, in order to arrive here. The situation we are living there in Syria is very bad. Now my family is not in direct danger, but I want to bring them with me.

How were you treated when you arrived here?

First they took me to the police and they made me a lot of questions. That was in the main refugee camp of Austria, Traiskirchen. I said I knew some people in Austria, so they kicked me out of the camp. I didn't know where to go, so I tried to get inside the camp again, but they told me that it was already full and I have to find my way alone. So I went to a Charity House, there they told me I could go to Paribian 6 (another refugee camp in a stadium). The situation in the stadium was awful. We were living in tents above the grades, so I left after 5 days. Finally I arrived here, Hiertzig, an old hospital that is being used as a refugee camp, where thousands of people are located.

And which is your current situation in your camp?

Our situation is very bad. We are kept into small rooms with lot of people, and we are not able to do nothing. They give us bread, jam and cheese as food everyday, and we are not allowed to find a job. We are supposed to receive 40 eur (44 USD) a month, given by the state. But in the first 3 months, we didn't receive anything. The camp is administrated by Samariterbund, an NGO connected with SPÖ (Austrian Socialdemocratic Party), which is the majority in the government. They were also running the other camp in the stadium. Also they are very strict with the arrival time at the camp. Basicly, they hold us here, doing nothing, waiting. We want to be allowed to work, to learn German (official language in Austria) and to bring our family with us.

How did you react to this situation? Were there any protests of the refugees?

People are very afraid. They think that maybe austrian government will send us to Syria again. We had lots of

meetings with the refugees, discussing our demands. We want the right to move without restrictions, to work, to have our subsidy despite your are accepted or not (if the government does not give you the title of 'accepted refugee', you don't even earn that little money). Now the situation is worse because after the incidents in Colonia [A massive sexual attack by around 1000 men is being used against migrants and refugees due to the "arab or north african origin" appearance of the assaulters, Independent.co.uk, January 5th], the propaganda against migrants is bigger. Even now, some people in the street get away from me when they listen I am speaking arabic or kurdisch. Notwithstanding, I know people in Germany who organized a demonstration inside the refugee camp and they achieved to improve their situation. They were in a basketball field and they were moved to a hospital. So I told my comrades that we should do the same. Actually, I told them we don't have nothing to lose. If they throw us away from the country, that may show that this european governments are like Al-Assad or Al Sisi. But I don't want to wait anymore, I cannot stand here doing nothing. Either I get what I deserved, or I am deported to my country again.

Which was the attitude of the left organizations, migrant communities, etc?

Actually, the only organization that came to support us is RKOB. There are also some individuals, mainly migrants, that come to help us. But not the migrant communities.

Didn't Communist Party, Green Party or any other organization come to talk with you?

No. Even the BDP (political-electoral wing of the kurdisch movement) didn't come to talk with us, despite they have office in Austria and it's known that lots of kurdisch refugees arrived here.

What do you think about situation of the kurdisch people now?

I support YPG in syrian kurdistan, they protect us. Nowadays, kurds in Turkey are under the assault of Erdogan. He is like Al Assad now

How can we help refugees struggle?

By this, making our situation public and known. Our living conditions and our demands are hidden by the media. I hope this interview would be a call to the people to know our struggle. Many thanks. ■

**NEW! Website of the
RCIT Germany**

<http://www.diekommunisten.net/>

Austria: Fight Racism and Fascism!

Report (with Photos and Videos) from an anti-fascist demonstration by the Austrian section of the RCIT, 10.2.2016

Several thousand people marched on 29 January against the so-called “Akademikerball” – a “social event” of right-wing, racist and fascist forces in Vienna. It is organized by the Freiheitliche Party of HC Strache and has been visited in the past years by figures like France’s Marie Le Pen and similar racists.

The Austrian section of the RCIT (Revolutionary Communist Organization LIBERATION) participated in

the demonstration with a militant and multi-national contingent. Comrade Johannes Wiener, a leading member of the Austrian section, gave a short speech in which he linked the struggle against racism with the struggle of the Palestinian people for national liberation.

See photos and the video clips at the following link:

<http://www.rkob.net/wer-wir-sind-1/rkob-aktiv-bei/no-wkr-2016/> ■



Contingent of the Austrian Section of the RCIT at the anti-fascist demonstration on 29.01.2016 in Vienna

The True Levellers or Diggers and the emergence of Communism in Britain during the latter part of the English revolution 1648-1651

By Joseph Adams

Class society in Britain during the early 1640's was experiencing a severe economic crisis. Britain was largely a landowning and agricultural country with small capitalist enterprises and workshops with artisans and journeyman. Journeymen were the mere appendages of the yeomanry of small masters. This period is noted for the struggle between the Monarchy and Parliament and the establishment of the Republic from 1649-1660. There were two parties in the commons, the *Presbyterians* (Landowners) and the *Independents* (squires, gentry and merchants). Oliver Cromwell was a squire and a member of the Independents.

There were large divisions between rich and poor exacerbated by enclosure of the common land by the landowning class. *"There is a permanent background of potential unrest, large scale unemployment, breakdown of government disorder might occur as it did in 1607"* [1]. These were the enclosure riots. There was a continuing battle by parliament to check the power of the king and defend its own interests. Land was the decisive factor. The gentry were becoming more and more alienated from aristocratic rule. *"Marx spoke of the poor laws as the means by which the agricultural people first forcibly expropriated were driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds and then whipped, branded tortured by laws grotesquely terrible into the discipline necessary for the wages system."* [2].

The *Presbyterian* party in parliament led by Lord Essex and Lord Manchester were for more parliamentary control of the King. They wanted a constitutional monarch checked by the power of parliament. The *Independents* led by Pym and Hampden and supported by republicans like Cromwell, Ireton and Marten wanted the King to surrender to parliament. Farm labourers, artisans and the poor were not represented in parliament. The gentry and the squires represented the democratic interests in parliament. The English revolution was a class struggle between the Monarchy and parliament represented by squires, the yeomanry, lawyers and merchants. The civil war started in 1641 at Edge Hill when the King and his advisors refused to discuss with parliament. The civil war ended at Naseby in Northamptonshire in 1645. Charles sought help from the Scots and was defeated and arrested at Preston. During the first civil war Cromwell, Fairfax and Ireton broke with Essex and Manchester and created *"The New Model army"*. This was an army of professional soldiers, composed of artisans, farm labourers, i.e. *"the middling sort of men"*. This army was a kind of proletarian army who fought against the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie.

In 1646 elements in the army – mainly the agitators – took control. They demanded rights and a document called *"The Agreement of the People"* was drawn up as well as *"A Grand Remonstrance"*. Presbyterian leaders connived to protect the King and wanted to disband the army. Parliament

prevaricated and in 1648 Colonel Thomas Pride marched into Parliament and arrested Presbyterian leaders and ensured that there would be no more negotiations with the King. This was called *"Pride's Purge"*. Parliament was referred to as *"The Rump"*.

The Levellers – a movement amongst craftsmen, artisans and small craftsmen – drew up a charter of rights.

- 1) *Annual Parliaments*
- 2) *Freedom of conscience*
- 3) *Equality before the Law*

It was the sovereignty of the people and manhood suffrage that Leveller leaders like Lilburne, Walwyn and Marten fought for. The Levellers were the left wing of the democratic movement in the army and were opposed to the Army Grandees of Cromwell, Fairfax and Ireton. The Leveller movement emerged in the army and put their demands to the Grandees at Burford Church in Putney in 1647. Craftsmen and agitators like Thomas Rains, Cornet Joyce and John Wildman debated with Cromwell, Fairfax and Ireton the rights of the common people for manhood suffrage. The *"constitutional levellers were the radical left wing of the revolutionary party the Independents"* [3]. Ireton Cromwell's son in law challenged the Levellers at Burford *"a doctrine of natural rights would lead to communism"* [4] *"The Levellers suggested that Parliament should be made representative of the free people. Some Levellers excluded paupers and wage labourers from the free people."* [5] It is a *"fact that the most radical political party (Levellers) even of the revolutionary decades excluded over half the male population and all women"* [6].

There was no agreement between the agitators and the grandees. Cromwell terminated the debates at Putney and ordered the agitators back to their regiments. The Leveller revolt was over, many Levellers were arrested and some were executed. On 30th January 1649 Charles 1st was executed and a Republic was declared. The Levellers still continued to fight on. They were the democratic wing who advocated natural rights and manhood suffrage but rejected communism. They embraced private property and looked back to the Norman yoke and Anglo Saxon rights against the Normans in the 12th Century. *"On the contrary they expressed the outlook of small men of property. They sharply differentiated themselves from "the diggers" who advocated a communist programme and began communal cultivation of land at S Georges Hill in 1649."* [7] The big distinction between the Levellers and the Diggers was on the issue of private property *"The Leveller petition of 11th September repudiated any idea of abolishing property, levelling estates or making all common."* [8]

In December 1648 Gerrard Winstanley announced his communism when a group of his supporters started digging the common land in Digger communities at St Georges, Wellingborough in Northants, Coxhall in Kent, Barnet

in Herts Enfield in Middlesex Dunstable in Bedfordshire and Bosworth in Leicestershire. *"Winstanley spoke for those whom the constitutional Levellers would have disenfranchised, servants, labourers and paupers."* [9] *"Constitutional Levellers then were not in fundamental disagreement (with the Grandees). The sanctity of property and their desire to extend democracy was within the limits of capitalist society."* [10] The Digger movement was non-violent and had no support from the army or the constitutional Levellers. They had a utopian view of society, they hoped that other people would form communities without private property or wage labour. *"The digger colony of St Georges Hill was intended to be the first stage in a sort of General Strike against wage labour."* [11]

The Diggers were utopian in that they believed by digging or using the waste lands, forests and parks that were enclosed that the Grandees and Cromwell would not evict them. Cromwell asserted the right of private property and the enclosure of common land. The Diggers in 1650 were defeated and were evicted from their communities or just left. They believed that communism, tilling the soil and working together would be the solution of society's ills. Winstanley had great foresight. But they failed to appreciate that capitalist society after the Cromwellian Revolution would combat communism and treat it as its mortal enemy. The working class had not emerged and there were no organisations like friendly societies or Trade Unions to organise the poor. This would emerge in the period following the English Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries.

"It would appear unlikely that scattered unorganised and undernourished labourers and artisans would have the capacity or the political consciousness to undertake revolutionary action to establish a new economic social and political order." [12] *"The sketch of a classless society that follows (Winstanleys Law of Freedom and other writings) is a deeply interesting blend of radical democracy professed by the main body of the Levellers with the Communism of More's Utopia"* [13]. *"Thus two centuries before Marx Winstanley in the simplest of plain English in (The Law of Freedom) dared to say that Religion is the opium of the people."* [14]

To conclude Winstanley and the diggers were a revolutionary movement of proletarians during the 17th century. Their communism was based on utopian ideals particularly the bible. They believed that this was their solution to the poverty surrounding them. There was no organisation to support them in their universal campaign to till the soil, work together and share. Because of their utopian and non-violent beliefs the Diggers were unprepared to deal with emerging capitalism. Winstanley and his followers believed that by example everyone would allow them to continue practising their communism.

Communism would need a scientific and materialist basis which was to be developed by Marx and Engels in the 19th century. But their tradition was not lost. In the 18th century Thomas Spence would advance a theory of agrarian communism. As the working class developed from the 1780s-1830s corresponding societies would emerge. They are the embryo of trade union organisation which would lead in the 1890's to revolutionary implications. The ideas of Marx and Engels would be crucial in understanding how the emancipation of the working class could be put on a scientific basis. In Part 2 I will consider Thomas Spence and the radical Milieu of Cobbett, Paine, Hunt and the corresponding societies.

ENDNOTES

- [1] Hill C *Puritanism and Revolution. Studies in the Interpretation of the English Revolution* p. 205
- [2] Hill C *Century of Revolution* p.26
- [3] Hill C *World Turned upside Down*
- [4] Hill C *Century of Revolution* p.129
- [5] Hill C *Century of Revolution* p.175
- [6] Hill C *Century of Revolution* p.175
- [7] Hill C *Century of Revolution* p.129
- [8] Hill C *World Turned Upside Down* p.119
- [9] Hill C *World Turned upside Down* p. 121
- [10] Hill C *World Turned Upside Down* p.123
- [11] Manning B 1649 *Crisis of the English Revolution* p.119
- [12] Manning B 1649 *Crisis of the English Revolution*
- [13] Brailsford H *The Levellers and the English Revolution* p.659
- [14] Brailsford H *The Levellers and the English Revolution* p.669 ■

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What the RCIT Stands for

The *Revolutionary Communist International Tendency* (RCIT) is a revolutionary combat organisation fighting for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed. It has national sections in a number of countries. The working class is composed of all those (and their families) who are forced to sell their labor 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, and exploitation are all part of everyday life under capitalism as are the imperialistic oppression of nations, the national oppression of migrants, 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 only this class has the collective power to bring down the ruling class and build a socialist society.

The revolution cannot proceed peacefully because a ruling class never has nor ever will voluntarily surrender its power. By necessity, therefore, the road to liberation includes armed rebellion and civil war against the capitalists.

The RCIT is fighting for the establishment of workers' and peasants' republics, where the oppressed organize themselves in councils democratically elected in rank-and-file meetings in factories, neighbourhoods, and schools. These councils, in turn, elect and control the government and all other state authorities, and always retain the right to recall them.

Authentic socialism and communism have nothing to do with the so-called "socialism" that ruled in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and which continues to do so in China and Cuba, for example. In these countries, the proletariat was and is dominated and oppressed by a privileged party bureaucracy.

Under capitalism, the RCIT supports all efforts to improve the living conditions of the workers and oppressed, while simultaneously striving to overthrow this system based on economic exploitation of the masses.

Towards these ends, we work from within the trade unions where we advocate class struggle, socialism, and workers' democracy. But trade unions and social democracy are controlled by a bureaucracy perniciously connected with the state and capital via status, high-paying jobs, and other privileges. Thus, the trade union bureaucracy is far from the interests and living conditions of

its members, based as it is on the top, privileged layers of the working class – a labor aristocracy which has no real interest in replacing capitalism. Therefore, the true struggle for the liberation of the working class, the toppling of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, must be based on the broad mass of the proletariat rather than their "representative" from the upper trade union strata.

We also 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. Towards this goal we struggle 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.

While the RCIT strives for unity of action with other organizations, we are acutely aware that the policies of social democrats and pseudo-revolutionary groups are dangerous, and ultimately represent an obstacle to the emancipation of the working class, peasants, and the otherwise oppressed.

In wars between imperialist states we take a revolutionary defeatist position: we do not support either side, but rather advocate the transformation of the war into a civil war against the ruling class in each of the warring states. In wars between imperialist powers (or their stooges) and a semi-colonial countries we stand for the defeat of the former and the victory of the oppressed countries.

As communists, we maintain that the struggle against national oppression and all types of social oppression (women, youth, sexual minorities etc.) *must* be led by the working class, because only the latter is capable of fomenting a revolutionary change in society. Therefore, we consistently support working class-based revolutionary movements of the socially oppressed, while opposing the leadership of petty-bourgeois forces (feminism, nationalism, Islamism, etc.), who ultimately dance to the tune of the capitalists, and strive to replace them with revolutionary communist leadership.

Only with a revolutionary party fighting as its leadership can the working class be victorious in its struggle for liberation. The establishment of such a party and the execution of a successful revolution, as it was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks in Russia under Lenin and Trotsky remain the models for revolutionary parties and revolutions in the 21st century.

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

No future without socialism!

No socialism without revolution!

No revolution without a revolutionary party!

