

Tunisia: the revolution has started; Algeria, North Africa, Europe: let the revolution begin; 17.1.2011

When Mohamed Bouazzi, an unemployed university graduate, doused himself with petrol and set himself alight in December last year, after the police confiscated the fruit from his stall at the side of the road, he was reflecting the situation of the hundreds of millions of youth around the world who are condemned to die a slow death from starvation by the current onslaught of world imperialism-capitalism. Such is the level of barbarism of the capitalism that the imperialist food companies such as Cargill, Dreyfuss and others have bought up and hoarded hundreds of millions of tons of food to create an artificial shortage to push food prices up. The oil price is artificially driven up by the imperialist banks to increase the rate of extraction of profits from the world proletariat. When Bouazzi died of his wounds, the Tunisian masses instinctively drew the lesson, after many years of brutalisation by the military dictatorship of the RCD (Constitutional Democratic Rally), that it was better to protest and even pay the supreme sacrifice as the system was already condemning them to death. The protests spread like wildfire and despite over 200 protestors being killed the masses continued to rise, over-running police stations and beginning the process of self-arming on a wide scale.

On the 14th January 2011 the Tunisian masses have overthrown the hated dictatorial regime of Ben Ali, a member of the Socialist International (the same Socialist International as Tony Blair, as Zuma, as the Israeli Labour Party and other imperialist agents). This magnificent revolution which has already shed the blood of dozens of heroes, is in grave danger of being smothered by world imperialism and principally French and US imperialism. The Tunisian masses are in the forefront of showing the world proletariat how to combat high food prices, unemployment and in general, the current world onslaught of capitalism-imperialism against the world working class, by overthrowing their own capitalist government. What was achieved by the heroic masses in Bolivia when they expelled their trade union leadership and stopped the increase in the price of petroleum has been taken a decisive step further by the Tunisian masses, arms in hand, overthrowing the hated imperialist puppet, Ben Ali. But the revolution is already in danger as US and French imperialism manoeuvre to take control and smother the revolution. Within days of the masses rising up in Algeria, the dictatorial government was forced to reduce prices and for the moment the revolution has been contained. The Algerian and French masses are the most immediate ally of the Tunisian revolution. There is still deep discontent among the Algerian masses as millions of the youth are still unemployed and 4 million workers are forced to work as semi-slaves in Europe, with the worst pay and doing the most menial of jobs. Millions of immigrants from Africa, the Middle East and Asia work in Europe doing the worst jobs, not organised by the labour aristocracy- despite this they formed the backbone of the strike movement in Europe last year. The Stalinists, the reformist 'left', the World Social Forum etc, do their best to separate the struggle of the workers in the imperialist centres from the workers in the colonies and semi-colonies. As the struggle in the semi-colonies and colonies cannot advance to Socialism without the working class in the imperialist centres taking power, the biggest obstacle that the working class in Tunisia, Algeria and other colonies and semi-colonies face, is the treacherous leadership within the workers movement,

locally and on a global scale. The struggle in the imperialist centres and in the colonies is against the same imperialist exploiters. We are one class in a common fight to defeat our capitalist enemy. The New Anti-Capitalist party, the French CP, the Tunisian CP, the Algerian CP all play the same role albeit with different masks to pose the struggle as an economic one only or one for 'democratic rights' in isolation from the working class revolution to overthrow imperialism in their heartland. They submit the working class to their own imperialist in Europe, they submit the working class to US imperialism through submission to Obama. From different angles they betray the European and American revolution and isolate the world proletariat who are seeking paths to begin the counter-offensive against the capitalist imperialist onslaught. These are the traitors who isolate the Greek masses, the masses in Spain, Ireland, Britain, France, Rumania, from taking their counter-offensive against the capitalist onslaught to its conclusion. If the working class takes power in France then overnight the masses in Tunisia, Algeria, would really be free. This is what the NAP, the World Social Forum, the Stalinist CP's do their best to hide.

The appointment of the Tunisian speaker of 'parliament' as interim President and his call for the 'opposition' to form a 'Cabinet', must be rejected. All the 'representatives' in the 'RCD government' are linked to Ben Ali, his corrupt family while the 'opposition' is tied to capitalist or imperialist interests. The US imperialists have long been building links with the so-called opposition. US imperialism wants to gain greater share from French imperialism of the control of the Tunisian regime so that they can advance their interests of war in the Middle East against the Palestinians and the masses in Iran. For years, Ben Ali has been a puppet of US and French imperialism, supporting the sellout Fatah leadership and supporting fascist Israel. The call by French imperialism for elections should be rejected- they want to hold capitalist elections that will ensure that Tunisia remains forever slaves to capitalism-imperialism. Capitalist elections will be used as a means to create a new caste of managers to enforce the slave conditions required by imperialism in their onslaught against the masses. Nowhere on the planet have capitalist elections ended imperialist exploitation, so why should they work now in Tunisia? We salute the protests rejecting the interim government which includes the mass murderers of the RCD.

For years the International Monetary Fund (which represents the interests of US, French and German imperialism, mainly) has spearheaded the privatization and further plundering of Tunisian resources. The Ben Ali regime was spearheading the latest attempt of world imperialism to shift their crisis onto the Tunisian masses. In this sense, what the masses in Tunisia are facing, is the same attack of imperialism on a global scale. The world proletariat should draw the lessons. It is a myth that imperialism-capitalism has emerged from their crisis. On the contrary they have decided to go further on the offensive against the masses of the world and want to rapidly increase their rate of exploitation- this is what the high sugar, flour, petroleum and other prices really represent. Even the highly reactionary Economist predicted more 'sovereign shocks' this year. They know very well that imperialism capitalism has not exited the crisis and know that the only way out for imperialism is to attack the world's masses on a greater scale. What the Tunisian masses show us is how to respond to this offensive.

When the Tunisian masses were being butchered by the Ben Ali regime the French imperialists maintained a long silence before finally saying that the use of 'force' was

‘disproportionate’, in other words they supported the crackdown on the masses (perhaps using pistols instead of machine guns!). The US regime only issued a mild statement of concern but as they stated in the Wikileaks exposure, they were ‘dialling down public criticism’ of the Ben Ali regime, in other words, like in China after the massacres of Tiananmen Square, they would look the other way while the masses are butchered, and if the masses win then the US imperialists would try to make sure that their man is installed. Both US imperialism (through their puppet regime in Egypt) and French imperialism claim they now support the Tunisian masses. This is a lie! They both are vying to regain control of the masses. They are parasites trying to expropriate the heroic revolution of the masses. Remember that imperialism has learnt from the masses struggle in Kyrgyzstan when the masses overthrew the US puppet regime of Bakiev, US imperialism installed a so-called opposition leader, Rosa Otumbayeva, who crushed the revolt and re-established the control for US imperialism. US imperialism instigated so-called inter-ethnic clashes so that the regime had a cover for destroying the independent worker organisms that were springing up. We need to be alert for such influence by both French and US imperialism, who would temporarily set aside their differences to crush the revolution if it went too far (such as taking over the imperialist assets)- remember the French and US intelligence are operating in Tunisia and would do anything to undermine a workers’ revolution.

US imperialism often talks about ‘respect for human rights’. If they were really concerned of human rights they would long ago have cut ties with the RCD when they butchered the Tunisian masses over the years. So what is their real concern when they talk about ‘human rights’? Imperialism controls many regimes around the world. Sometimes members of these regimes become greedy and want to take a few more crumbs than their masters allow. Imperialism wants a safeguard for their agents to stand up to such regimes to protect imperialism’s profits without facing persecution from the client regime. Thus imperialism’s call for ‘human rights’ is essentially a call to protect absolutely their right to plunder at will. The US imperialist call for ‘human rights’ in Tunisia is a call for the right of US imperialism to plunder the country without any challenge by any of the local political ruling class.

More than a year ago the workers and peasants in Madagascar rose up against the regime’s attempts to privatize more than 1/3 of the island. The rank and file of the army took to the streets, proclaiming, they are with the masses. The masses hung the hated police from the street lamps and the base of the army joined with the workers and peasants in their revolution that ousted the US imperialist puppet, Ravalomanana. In this sense, with the tanks and troops openly siding with the masses in the streets of Tunis, the revolution in Madagascar has finally broken its isolation and reached mainland Africa. In Madagascar, however, the French imperialists, through Rajoelina, have taken over the government and opportunistically stepped into the vacuum that existed when the masses failed to take complete power into their hands, parasitically taking advantage of the ousting of a leadership that was under the thumb of the competing US imperialism. In Tunisia, US imperialism is manoeuvring to take advantage of the revolutionary ousting of French puppet Ben Ali. They must not be allowed to do so.

What are the most immediate tasks in support of the Tunisian revolution?

The most immediate task is the setting up of workers committees in every workplace, the capitalist farms, the oil and gas installations, the mines, the banks, the tourism industry, all the capitalist newspapers, television and radio stations, all imperialist assets, for the purpose of taking them over, expropriating them without compensation to the capitalists and placing them under workers' control. Hand in hand with this is the task of arming the masses and setting up workers militia and calling on the army to come over to the side of the working class, of the revolution. Send family members to the barracks to fetch their sons and daughters. It is with joy that we hear that the rank and file of the army, is fraternizing with the revolutionary masses. It is important to consolidate the support of the rank and file soldiers through soldiers delegates to workers councils. We should not allow the upper ranks of the army, who all have links to imperialism and the Ben Ali clique, to seize control of the revolution. The rank and file soldiers should discard the upper ranks, declaring any positions elective and subject to instant recall. The central task should be the arming of the masses as imperialism will not sit with folded arms to allow a thorough-going workers revolution that expropriates all its assets. [the October 1917 workers state was invaded by all imperialists from around the globe in an attempt to crush it; imperialism knows full well that the Tunisian revolution could become generalised, even within the imperialist centres; that is why they will work day and night to take over and smother the Tunisian revolution].

Imperialism is deliberately spreading the lie of 'armed gangs' that threaten 'property'. The working class has no property. The imperialists are deliberately trying to set the army and the middle class against the growing workers militia that is part of the masses attempts to take revenge on the Ben Ali regime and all his reactionary thugs and agents. This same call to protect 'property' is raised by the reformist Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party. This party met with the Stalinist SACP in August last year to plan how to contain the masses in the coming revolution. The Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party has decided on a division on labour within their Alliance for Citizenship and Equality. The Patriotic Party will remain outside the interim government with the murderous RCD to control the masses from within, while the Tunisian Communist Party (Ettajdid) and the Democratic Front would take up partnership with the RCD against the masses as part of the 'interim government'. The Patriotic Party only calls for the expropriation of the assets of the Ben Ali clique but fails to call for the expropriation of all imperialist assets. The Tunisian Communist Workers party calls for a 'Constituent Assembly', they too do not call for the expropriation of all imperialist assets and ignore the history since 1956 when the Tunisian middle class and capitalist showed that they are incapable of granting even basic democratic rights let alone allow an unrestricted Constituent Assembly. It is only the working class in power that can guarantee the calling of an unrestricted Constituent Assembly. Indeed if the working class has the power why should it cede it to an Assembly that is incapable of taking the struggle for democratic demands to its end? The parties of the 'opposition' in Tunisia are tied by various strings to imperialism and are the main obstacle to the masses seizing power.

Let the delegates from each workplace, from the unemployed, from street committees in working class neighbourhoods, from the rank and file soldiers, from the poorest peasants set up a real workers government. It is only this workers government that can immediately nationalise the land and decide that all work be shared among all who can work, without loss of pay (divide all the work among all those who can work,

with immediate effect); that can lower food prices, taking over all production and distribution of food, centralizing it and formulating a national plan so no-one goes hungry. It is only this workers government that can immediately nullify the odious debt made to the Paris club of banks as well as that made to any other imperialists; it is only this workers' government that can immediately expose the full extent of the secret support of French and US imperialism for the Ben Ali regime (on all fronts, including military and intelligence); it is only this workers' government that can expose the bribes received by the Ben Ali regime for their support of fascist Israel and of the US puppet Mahmud Abbass. It is only this workers government that can immediately bring an end to starvation and unemployment in the rural areas and can give cheap assistance to the poorest farmers; it is only this workers' government that can form worker collectives, taking over all capitalist farms, to feed the masses. It is only this workers government that can bring real freedom to the masses, for the right to meet and organise freely, making available venues and resources for the masses to express themselves. US and French imperialism are the torchbearers of reaction throughout the world and cannot guarantee a single democratic right.

Break the isolation of the Tunisian revolution

Although there are significant differences between the economies of Algeria and Tunisia, there is the same underlying cause for the uprisings currently underway there. Imperialism has relegated, by means of extreme violence, Africa as a primary exporter of raw, unprocessed materials, and at their whim as a holiday destination for the middle class and capitalist classes from the imperialist centres. Algeria exports only one product- gas and petroleum, while Tunisia is largely a holiday resort for the middle class and upper class from Europe (it also has a significant agriculture and minor mining and hydrocarbon production). Down with Boutaflika, Gaddafi, Mubarak, etc! Gaddafi exposes himself as an imperialist agent by calling, despite 200 protestors killed, for Ben Ali to be allowed to serve out his term of office.

Across the whole of North Africa, Turkey and the Middle East, imperialism maintains its iron grip over the masses through dictatorial regimes. These same regimes are the ones that transmit the world capitalist crisis onto the masses through high prices, high unemployment, low wages, lack of even basic bourgeois democratic rights. It is time for the masses to get rid of all these regimes through workers' revolution, like in Tunisia, ensuring the expropriation of all imperialist assets and banks, without compensation and placing them under workers control. Forward to a federation of Socialist workers states of North Africa and of the Middle East. This is the way to fight high prices and unemployment. Down with Faisal, Abbass, Husein, etc!

But the very structure of the economies of North Africa and the Middle East means that the best of technology has been kept away and reside in the hands of imperialism. For the Tunisian revolution and North African (and Middle Eastern) revolution to advance towards Socialism requires that the working class in several imperialist centres such as France, USA, UK, Germany, take power. It is time for the immigrant workers in Europe, Japan and the USA to unite with their class brothers and sisters to overthrow the imperialist regimes. The French imperialists have already seized all Tunisian government assets in France as a security measure to weaken any workers regime in Tunisia. The Tunisian working class is showing the French working class the way out of the crisis. The starting point is like in Bolivia, to expel the treacherous union and leaders of the workers movement, and like in Tunisia to overthrow the

regime. For more than 100 years the French imperialists have brutalised the working class and peasants in the semi-colonies and colonies. It is in our common interest to unite with the French worker to end this period of the terror of the capitalists. We remember the million Algerians killed in the 1956-1962 war against French imperialism; we remember how over 2 million Algerians were kept by the French imperialists in concentration camps. We remember how the Stalinist CP's and fake left supported Ben Bella in his betrayal of the Algerian revolution- they supported him in agreeing that the local middle class take over government positions to become local managers for imperialism, while the hydrocarbons remained largely in French imperialist hands. We remember the betrayal by the French CP and fake left of May 1968 when the workers took over all of France and they called on workers not to take power but to accept a few crumbs as compensation and to leave the imperialist regime in power. It is time to finally and definitively do away with the murderous regime of the French V republic. Forward to Soviet France! Forward to a federation of Socialist workers states of Europe! Down with the imperialist Maastricht that keeps the world's masses in starvation in a world of plenty. Equal pay for equal work and sliding scale of hours and wages in Tunisia, Algeria, across the entire North Africa, Middle East **and** Europe!

Indeed the first internationalist task of the French workers is to demand real independence for Tunisia, Algeria, Madagascar, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Ivory Coast, Reunion, and all other colonies and semi-colonies that are brutalised by French imperialism. They should spearhead what should have been done last year during the French October revolt, kicking out their treacherous leaders, and taking the lead to expropriate all imperialist assets, without compensation to the capitalists, and placing them under workers control, taking May 1968 to its logical conclusion. The enemy is at home! This can be achieved in no other way than through the working class ousting the regime of the hated butcher, Sarkozy, and taking power in their own hands. This is best solidarity that the French working class can give.

We remember the million killed in Rwanda as the French and US imperialists vied for control of the region. We remember the over 6 million killed in the DRC as the US battled all other imperialists for the rape of the resources of the region. For the immigrant worker to join hands with the US worker to overthrow the murderous regime of Obama; for the working class across the world to definitively defeat US imperialism all over the planet (and indeed all other imperialists). For a Socialist federation of workers states of the Americas.

Out with Obama! Down with the party of the imperialist butchers, the Republicrats! Death to the French V Republic! Death to the Spanish and British Monarchy! Long live the revolution in Tunisia! Let the revolution in Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Jordan begin! The spark in Greece has spread to North Africa; let it now spread to France, Spain and the entire Europe!

We call for an organizing committee to refound the Fourth International in Tunisia. Long live the world Socialist revolution! This is the way to fight the capitalist crisis!