

Tunisia - January 2016

We shouldn't jump ourselves from the roof.

No should set ourselves on fire.

We should build our international unity and pullout democracy, nationalism, religious and the dictatorship of the economy from it's root.

Since middle of January 2016, a wave of struggles hit the streets of more than 15 towns and cities in Tunisia. It started from "*unemployment demonstration*" in Kasserine on Tuesday 16th, than became a wide street fightings, demonstrations and occupations across Tunisia. "*The Tunisian Nawaat blog reported demonstrations in 16 provinces of Tunisia*". When the government tried to end this movement on Wednesday by offering concessions to Kasserine and promising to create a few thousand jobs, workers in other cities across Tunisia joined the movement. The city of "*Thala, Feriana, Sidi Bouzid, Jendouba, Tozeur, Gafsa, Kebili, and Ettadhamen (a working class district in the area of Tunis), Béja, Meknassi, Mazouna, Gabès, Sfax, and Sousse were all hit by protests*". "*The protests and protesters marched, blocked roads and tried to occupy municipal buildings in cities across southern and central Tunisia*". "*Several government buildings were occupied by students and unemployed workers*". "*Protests also hit working class districts of Tunis, where protesters reportedly blocked roads and set a police station aflame*".¹

What was sparked this new wave of street struggle was "*a rally of unemployed workers*" in the city of Kasserine in south of Tunisia (the southern Tunisia where Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid are located, is an industrial and mining heartland). It started when a workers activist, a leader of organize unemployment struggle in Kasserine (Ridha Yahyaoui) "*electrocuted after climbing on a pole to address a rally of unemployed workers*".² He "*was one of seven unemployed who were denied employment after organising a sit-in last year and meeting with local authorities to present demands at the beginning of this year*". "*After the death of Ridha Yahyaoui protests spread across southern and western Tunisia, to the capital, Tunis, and, by Thursday, across the entire country*". In three days of protest, street battles and occupations the police "*once again*" was defeated across Tunisia, the army "*once again*" come out to the street, imposed the national curfew and took over the security.

In the last five years many students and unemployment demonstrations, workers strikes and street confrontations were broked out across Tunisia against an economical, political and low and order program of an elected government and elected parliament. "*Strikes and demonstrations continue across Tunisia. The wrangling over the possible privatisation of state-owned enterprises in sectors such as water, electricity and the media, does nothing to ease the tensions*" (The Lemond). The January 2016 rising up of the proletariat across Tunisia was a unification and explosion of these separate struggles. Once again the proletariat in Tunisia rise up. It was rise up against all political forces that running the last five year's show (elections, work management and repression). It was rise up against an economical, political and low and order program of an elected government, an elected parliament, include (UGTT), (LTDH), "*Workers Party*" and "*Islamic party*", and supported by France and others. In practice and through it's direct action this powerful movement did rejected all these organizations, their parliament and it's economical program and poverty that attach to it. This movement and it's fast generalization across Tunisia was a building up of the community force of human need against dictatorship of global economy and state repression in everyday life. It is a direct social struggle against and above the "*terror and anti terror*" campaigns, which terrorize workers life, reinforce the state and sideline the proletariat immediate struggle. The timing of this movement, in Tunisia and internationally, is extremely important. It did happen in a time when internally bourgeois political collation was doing well, "*the last five years have been marked by*

1 Report published on internet.

2 Idem.

exemplary political achievements" (Laryssa Chomiak), state have been well stabilized, parliament was functioning, the repression was on it's pick and the economy doing well.

"Tunisian youth speak of everyday abuses, negation of dignity, loss of hope and the oppression that the revolution generation is subjected to. This revenge against those who took part in the revolution, especially after the 2014 arrests and prosecution of young Tunisians accused of having damaged property and police stations during the early 2011 protests. According to an Interior Ministry press release on 5 December, from the declaration of the state of emergency on November 24 until 7 December 2015, 3000 raids were carried out, leading to 306 arrests and detentions. That makes an average of 200 raids and 20 arrests per day. From January until the end of November 2015 there were 2934 terrorism-related arrests. According to a statement by Raoudha Grafi, the president of the Magistrates' Association, 1697 terrorism-related investigations were started in 2015". (Debora del Pistoia and Lamia Ledrisi).

Internationally the force of inter bourgeois war, the global *"terror and anti terror"* campaigns, the mass emigration and the humanitarian, racism and anti-racism actions attach to it, hit the proletarian struggle by all means. So the timing, the generalization and the direct actions of this movement is a rupture and absolutely against this internal and international capital war. It is also the reconnection with the December 2010 uprising and a rejection of some of it's democratic weaknesses (believing in election, give a chance to social-democracy and islamic parties, keep waiting hopelessly, submit to the state repression). The slogan of *"Work, Freedom and Dignity"* for all of us, is a weak expression of this powerful human need in the time of multiply war, catastrophe, constant state repression, starvation and many human tragedy. It is a powerful international call from proletarian in Tunisia to the proletarian everywhere to rise up against the dictatorship of economy, the election, the inter bourgeois war, the islamic and global terror.

On December 2010, just over five years ago, the first wave of this proletarian struggle hit the Tunisia towns and cities. The generalization of this movement did paralyze the tunisian state, defeated it's national police force, and wipe out the Ben Ali's government. By January 2011 this proletarian struggle spread across the region and, beyond, exploit many countries one after the other. The last actions of this international movement were across Brazil and Turkey in 2013. In Tunisia this generalization in 2010-2011 uprising stood in the front of the army. The Tunisian bourgeois barricade themselves in and around the army. The official and semi official *"workers organization"*(Union and Workers Communist Party) were for the national unity and democratic reform of the state. They sow in the army both this national unity and support of political reform, so they supported the army and call all the workers to do so.

The Tunisian Workers Communist Party (TWCP) position was:

"The opposition, consisting of all the forces involved in the intifada, has been invited to close ranks for Democratic Change and to form an alternative to tyranny and dictatorship. The Workers' Communist Party renews its invitation to convene a national assembly of the tunisian opposition to come together to coordinate at national and local level support for the popular movements, and to work towards a set of concrete demands so that the movement does not run out of steam. Among these demands the most immediate are: 1. An immediate end to the dictatorship's campaign of repression against the people. 2. The release of all prisoners. 3. The arrest and prosecution of all those responsible for repression, the plunder of property, and murder. 4. The repeal of all restrictions on civil liberties, free expression, organization and assembly. The adoption of immediate economic measures to alleviate unemployment and poverty. We demand income security, health care and the immediate recognition of trade unions. The Workers' Communist Party will remain, as it has always been, on the side of the workers, the poor and all those at the forefront of a new order in Tunisia. For freedom, democracy and social justice".

The democracy was reinforced and the main armed and organized force of the state was intact. The proletariat was not able to attack this national unity, sacred of *"national army"*, takeover their bases, the banks and the factories. This main democratic weaknesses of the proletarian create the social

ground for the joint collusion of the army, the social democracy inside the movement (Union and Workers Communist Party), the Islamic party and France to organize a democratic campaign to reorganize the workers, the economy, the police and the government.

Before 2010 there was a long term workers strike in mining industries. The "*workers union*" and the "*Workers Communist Party*" were the two main organizing forces inside workers movement. The head of Tunisian Islamic Party was in France working on alternative to reorganize the state. Since then the assassination, repression, arrest, revenge and election campaigns were an active part of this process. Proletarian uprising today is an attempt to regaining the revolutionary character of the miners struggle and December uprising (including their demands), reinforce their class struggle against the program and the interest of democratic collection and state terror. How much the proletariat and its leading revolutionary force did learn from its democratic weakness, did learn to arm themselves against the democracy, it is a real test for how far this revolutionary attempt can go. This democratic reality in a longer process and in a more bloody way did repeated itself in Egypt. The Egyptian army and the Muslim Brotherhood created an immediate collusion to control the uprising. This collusion and the world bourgeois did reinforce the influence of nationalism, democracy and religion on the street and campaigned to overrun the movement's class character and its direct action. They agree to shear the power of the state for now against the generalization and radicalization of this uprising. In Egypt, for several months Muslim Brotherhood took over the government, repress the workers movement and also did sideline the army. The proletariat hit back, and there were hundred of demonstrations, strikes, street fighting and attacks on the Brotherhood's ruling party. The collusion between the army and Brotherhood breakdown. The civil society and the "*Worker's Unions*" join forces and support the army to sideline the Brotherhood party. The Army went much dipper. It did crashed the head of Brotherhood and hit the workers movement in the same time. The inter bourgeois polarization between the army (with its international collusion, Saudi Arabia, France, England) and the Brotherhood (with its international alliance, Qatar, Turkey) became a dominate reality against workers movement. In other places (such as Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Syria) the proletarians did rise up and armed themselves. While this movement in all these countries were able to paralyze the national state, its army and dominate institutions, but neither socially and no militarily were able to generalize its struggle. The army, the religious groups and the national institutions were unable to stay united and geographically did split. The powerful international forces (Gulf Cooperation, NATO, Turkey and Iran) were ready to reinforce the polarization and turn it to arm conflicts, religious propaganda, massacre, inter bourgeois war, starvation and mass migration. Through this process the exploitation and human suffering shot to the roof. The bourgeois were able to sideline and punish the proletariat, reinforce the global economy, arm trade and regional polarization. The bourgeois theater did take over the global stage. The war become an only important issue of the world. The global proletariat struggles were dusted and blindfolded with the news of the war. This recent proletariat hit back in Turkey and Tunisia were the proletariat attempts to fighting back global force of capital: dictatorship of economy, inter bourgeois war and global terror (state and religion).

In January movement, the moment of the uprising, how far was spreading, and the force of democracy and the state inside and outside the workers movement:

Force: "*Protesters in Kasserine have already defied a local curfew declared in their region earlier in the week*". Democracy: "*This government has to be changed*" said 26-years-old Nidhal Bennis. "*Only during the elections do the politicians do their best. Otherwise they don't care about us. They only take, they don't give us anything. We don't have a real democracy here.*" "*Protesters marched to a building owned by the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company, outside of which 15 men lay on mattresses under blankets. They have been holding a hunger strike since 4 January, drinking just water and eating sugar. All of them have university diplomas but work as guards for the energy company for low wages*". "*The UGTT, issued a statement that briefly called demonstrators' demands legitimate then proposed deploying UGTT members around state buildings to protect them from protesters. It denounces the looting and theft committed by criminal gangs that try to*

manipulate social protest... and appeals for a general mobilisation of its members to protect the facilities of public and private institutions".

"The UGTT is Tunisia's biggest (with 517,000 members) and for many years was also its only union organisation. Centered on the public sector, it includes 24 regional unions, 19 sector-based unions and 21 grass roots unions. It brings together a wide range of political persuasions and has members in every part of the country and many different social groups, including factory workers, civil servants and doctors". "The UGTT is taking the place of the opposition political parties, which are incapable of fulfilling their proper role. It has decided to stand alongside civil society and the tunisian people in all their diversity, to defend not only the working masses but, above all, the republic and its institutions". "The UGTT's leaders systematically point out the historic legitimacy of their organisation and warn that, in a crisis, they will not hesitate to assume a political role". Tunisian Workers Communist Party (TWCP) was founded on January 3, 1986 and has a youth wing the Union of Communist Youth of Tunisia (UJCT). It was outlawed until December 2010 uprising. In 2011 it became a legal party and participated in "Constituent Assembly election". In July 2012, the TWCP decided to remove the word "communist" from its name and became Workers' Party.

The starting point of this movement, it's approach, and it's immediate demand more or less the same as the uprising started five years ago. Most of proletarians are young, they demand opportunities, equality, end of official corruption and state terror. "Work, freedom, dignity," shouted the crowds, throwing stones and burning tires before trying to storm a police station. President Beji Caid Essebsi said on Wednesday that he understood the plight of "700,000 unemployed and 250,000 of them young people who have degrees." (AFP, Reuters)

To pullout democracy, nationalism, religion and the dictatorship of the economy from it's root the proletariat in Tunisia have to go beyond the defeat of 2010-2011 uprising and mobilized, internationalist and arm itself against four ideologies and their organizations: Nationalism, Islamism, Unionism and "Popular front".

Nationalism and islamism, fatherland and god, are organized forces of global exploitation of you. Unionism and Popular front are the guardian of this global exploitation in your everyday life. They are your weakness on the ground. They protect the dictatorship of wage labor. They want reproduce you and your children as a commodity, as a worker for capital. That is their job not the opposite. Their job is to intermediate between you and your bosses, and get their reward and their salary according to their quality of the job they do. That is what the "Tunisian General Labour Union" (UGTT) and the "Tunisian Human Rights League" (LTDH) are , and that is why they "shared the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize with various business and professional groups". "For its role in brokering a peaceful path to democracy, Tunisia's labor movement today was named a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize". The Nobel Committee recognized the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet-- comprised of longtime Solidarity Center ally the "Tunisian General Labor Union" (UGTT), the "Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts", the "Tunisian Human Rights League" and the "Tunisian Order of Lawyers"-- for establishing "an alternative, peaceful political process at a time when the country was on the brink of civil war". (Solidarity Center). That is what make the "Tunisian Workers Communist Party" became a legal "Workers Party" and join the election and lead the "popular front".

The international democratic current use the concept of "solidarity" to enrich the democracy such as RCIT. "The "Revolutionary Communist International Tendency" (RCIT) stands in 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, neighbourhoods, 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”.

The issue of "*solidarity*" is against the generalization and international of this movement. It is a democratic approach and is against the class nature of this movement. In September 2010 there wasn't "*solidarity*" between proletarians in Sady Bozid and the rest of the country, neither between proletarians in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt but there was an unification of direct class struggle, spontaneous sharing of the same struggle: human liberation from dictatorship of capital and it's historical institutions. This democratic approach is trying to isolate the uprising, limited it's spreading and keep it as a distance. It wanted to replace the real need of social revolution, real direct action and generalization, by a democratic and humanitarian program which see and treat the different needs of the proletarians in different places (work, education, human right, organization, localize reform...). A very good example of this democratic approach is the Appeal by "*The Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*". Their position is a real solidarity but not with the proletarian in action but with their enemy.

Against all these tendancies, let's call for:

International unification and generalization of our struggle against global democracy.

Strengths our generalization through international organs of class struggle.

Openly use the language and direct actions of : "social revolution", "communist program", "anarchist actions" and "dictatorship of the proletariat" across the movement against democracy, national unity and global capital.

Toward the global social revolution.

Toward communism.

January 2016.