

## **In the revolutions for food, housing, work and freedom, the working class needs to organize independently**

### **No to imperialist intervention and continued plunder of Libya**

In the heroic revolutions that have just started in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and where the masses are starting to enter into manoeuvres of revolution in Bahrain, Djibouti, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, Morocco, Sudan, Saudi Arabia (and the smaller emirates on the Arabian peninsula), thusfar there has been a crucial shortcoming, namely, that the working class has not been organised independently. In all cases so far the committees that have emerged have been dominated by the middle class and by capitalist parties. The Egyptian Socialists (part of the international of the British SWP) calls for revolutionary councils to be set up based on 'popular committees'- in these committees the middle class and working class sit together without the workers being organised independently. The Egyptian Socialists call for the wealth to be returned to the 'people'- in other words they are silent on the question of which class leads the revolution and how this return is to take place, namely that the working class not only should lead but has to take power in its hands to begin to take back the wealth from imperialism and the local bourgeoisie. The notion of 'people' lumps the local working class, middle class and capitalist class as if they are all one homogenous whole- as if there are no class differences between them. Thus when workers come to the 'popular committees' they do not come as workers or worker representatives but as part of the 'people' – subordinated to the interest of the middle class and capitalist class and thus subordinated to imperialism. It is not for nothing that the Egyptian Socialists say, 18 days after the revolution started in Egypt that 'Now we need the workers' for a 'general strike' to 'seal the fate of the regime' while the higher council of the popular committees represent the 'people'. In other words the workers are needed as a pressure tool for the higher council dominated by the middle class and the capitalist class to negotiate with imperialism.

What allowed the first 18 days of the revolution in Egypt to be dominated by the middle class and capitalist class was that workers were not organised independently, ie as workers delegates in their own councils as part of the broader movement- thus working class demands were subordinated to that of the middle class youth and capitalist class. The problem with the first 18 days was that they were not led by the working class.

**What is immediately necessary, in Tunisia, in Egypt, in Libya, and elsewhere where the revolution against imperialism-capitalism is starting, is the setting up of workers councils comprised of worker delegates, coming with its demands into the revolutionary movement against the lackey regimes of imperialism- in other words, the broad**

**revolutionary movement becomes transformed into a united front of the working class with its allies instead of being a broad amorphous movement where the bourgeois forces dominate, as they have up to now.**

The first reason for this domination by the middle class is the self-limitation that the Socialist groups have imposed on the revolutions, namely a national vision of the struggle, that is to say, posing the task as changing the regime but not linking this task with the necessity to expropriate all imperialist assets and that of the local bourgeoisie, without compensation and having to establish workers' control. With the expropriation of imperialist assets it directly follows a clash with imperialism, which immediately takes the struggle for working class power on a national scale into a struggle for Socialism on an international scale. In other words, it links the struggle for workers power on national scale in the semi-colonies, to the struggle for workers power in the imperialist centres. The policy of the British SWP and the Egyptian Socialists is the opposite- they separate the struggle in the semi-colonies from that in the imperialist centres. They call for nationalisation of the ruined factories and assets that were privatized- they make no call for expropriation of imperialism and the establishment of workers control- Gaddafi, Nasser and many others carried out nationalization which was really partnership with imperialism and without workers control. When workers went on strike under Nasser, some were executed- they were told by Nasser that 'you do not demand, we give'. Further and crucially the SWP and Egyptian Socialist are silent about the need for the Egyptian revolution to be sustained, means imperialism has to be overthrown in the imperialist centres such as the USA and the UK.

In fighting against the regime in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen and Libya the middle class leadership have shown themselves incapable of fighting to the end against the regimes. In Tunisia and Egypt they have cut a deal with the old regime. Ghannouchi, the right hand man of the Ben Ali regime, although forced to resign, leaves behind others of the Ben Ali regime who are now in control while in Egypt Mubarak's generals are in charge (on behalf of imperialism). Both regimes have not lifted a finger against the imperialists and the local bourgeoisie who plundered the wealth during the decades of the dictatorship. Only token measures have been taken against a few of the Ministers and a small section of the elite. On the contrary the first steps taken have been to secure imperialist assets from being taken over by the working class. In Egypt Mubarak's generals have asked Mubarak's old cabinet, with some new faces from the 'opposition' to draft the new constitution – the masses are completely excluded- to add insult to injury the military will put this draft to a 'referendum'- in other words a bourgeois tool to pretend to involve the masses but in the end to give them very little choice. Mubarak and US imperialism will in fact draft the 'new' constitution. In Bahrain the 'opposition' is not even demanding freedom but a 'constitutional monarchy', in other words, they propose to maintain the repressive regime. In Libya, the tribal leaders who want to gain control of the revolution are flying the flag of the old monarchy and appear to have called in British and French military advisers to assist them. The ex-Minister of Justice in Libya, who claims to have joined the revolution, is already attempting to negotiate with the murderous Gaddafi, who

has shot down thousands of the unarmed masses, to set up a 'interim government'. In Tunisia and Egypt there are 'Socialist' forces who up to now, have remained outside of the popular front regime (Tunisia) and outside the bonapartist regime (Egypt). In both cases the 'Socialists' raise the call for a Constituent Assembly but ignore the critical question as to who will convene it. The middle class and capitalist parties have joined the capitalist regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and have shown themselves incapable of meeting the basic demands of the masses for freedom, work, housing and food.

In short the middle class and capitalist forces have betrayed the revolutions and are siding with imperialism against the masses. The central question now is: what is the programme of the world proletariat for the revolutionary masses against those who betray from within? The middle class forces cannot meet even one demand of the masses- they continue to attack the masses with high food and oil prices, being unable to give work to the millions of unemployed, unable to grant the working class freedom to organize and free political activity, unable to involve elected representatives of the masses, freely elected and subject to instant recall, to draft a new constitution or guarantee even the freedom to protest.

The first step that has to be taken is for the working class, employed and unemployed need to organise themselves independently based on workers delegates from the workplaces, setting up council of delegates where delegates of the unemployed, the rank and file soldiers also send delegates.

The central demand of the formation of these structures must be to do away entirely with the old regime and expropriating all imperialist assets and all the local bourgeoisie as they were the prime beneficiaries of the dictatorship. In a sense the working class organize themselves independently on a programme to do away with the old regime, forming a united front with their allies, the rank and file soldiers, poorest peasantry, revolutionary students and any sector of the ruined middle class that aligns themselves with the programme for destroying the old regime, establishing workers control and expropriation of imperialism (without compensation to the capitalists). With the working class organised independently, with its own structures, within the revolutionary movement it acts as a safeguard against the Trojan horses that imperialism is sending to 'join' the revolution- these bureaucrats join to save their own skin and in many cases to steer the revolution to maintaining a capitalist regime- with or without Gaddafi.

These steps need to be generalised across North Africa and the Middle East- away with all the monarchies and imperialist lackey-dictators. These steps need to be generalised into other semi-colonies and colonies and taken into the heart of the imperialist centres. The threat of the state to use armed force against the protestors in Wisconsin should be met with independent organization of the working class and an armed workers militia; the threat by the lackey of US imperialism in Zimbabwe to use the treason law against the reformist Gwisai and 51 others must be met with the independent organizing of the working class and the organising of a workers militia, etc.

## **Arm the masses**

When Gaddafi and the French and Italian-backed mercenaries starting massacring thousands in the streets, the masses found arms and destroyed the state machinery. What the ex-Minister of Justice is doing, under the guise of setting up militias, is disarming the masses (by bring the arms under the central control of the tribal council and other bourgeois forces)- in other words he is delaying the sending of arms to the masses in Tripoli who are at the mercy of the butcher Gaddafi. Further, he is laying the basis for the re-establishment of a capitalist state, where the arms are under a central command to protect the assets of imperialism-capitalism. By these delays he is buying time for imperialism to manoeuvre to use all its allies and resources to attempt to strangle the revolution.

All imperialist military bases and their military advisers should be expelled from the region.

## **Workers Control of the oil industry**

Oil exports to US and other imperialism has re-commenced from the Benghazi region. The point is that the unelected tribal council is controlling the oil industry not the workers. The workers need to immediately place the oil industry under workers control. Thus the need for the immediate setting up of workers councils based on workers delegates who become part of the revolutionary movement and assert their demands there.

## **Imperialism sends their man, Chavez to strangle the revolution**

Imperialism has sent the 'Brother leader' from Venezuela, Chavez, to try and strangle the revolution. Not long ago imperialism sent him to Colombia to point out where all the guerrilla bases were- Chavez told the resistance to give up. Many of them were subsequently killed by imperialist forces.

Chavez is sent by imperialism to try a achieve a 'negotiated settlement' which will, under the cover of anti-imperialist rhetoric, will re-establish the control by imperialism and a unity government with the Gaddafi regime, with or without Gaddafi. Imperialism wants to, at all costs, prevent an overthrow of Gaddafi through an armed revolution because this would be a signal to the masses in Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, and indeed to the masses of the world. If the 'peace' mission of Chavez fails, imperialism is preparing even for military intervention under the cover of 'protecting' their assets and citizens, or some other excuse.

## **The treacherous bourgeois liberals of the Cosatu leadership**

The Cosatu leaders issued a statement which is very similar to that of the imperialist Hilary Clinton. Both are concerned over the loss of life of the 1000 protestors and both call for the right of peaceful protest. The Cosatu leaders go on in their statement to elaborate a long list of glowing achievement of dictator Gaddafi. What the Cosatu leaders question is why are the slaves

rebelling when the slave-master is so good to them? According to the Cosatu leaders, Gaddafi killed 1000 people but he is really a good man. Further, the call of Cosatu amounts to a call, even after thousands have been mowed down in cold blood, for the masses to disarm and to be well behaved like the Egyptian masses and go unarmed into an open square and be at the mercy of Gaddafi and his French and Italian-backed mercenaries.

Thus by singing praises to the mass murderer Gaddafi, the Cosatu leaders are also preparing the way for a 'unity government' with Gaddafi himself. The Cosatu leaders are total lackeys of US imperialism- this is why they have not organised a single protest or rally in support of the Libyan masses. It completely escapes these great leaders of Cosatu that Libya has no unions nor are any strikes allowed. This does not matter as Gaddafi is good to his people.

The Cosatu leaders are signalling to the masses in South Africa that they will side with the state against the masses in time of revolution because the ANC and SACP are so 'good' to the masses.

### **The start of a revolution or an 'uprising'?**

Al Jazeera and the other bourgeois press call events in Tunisia and Egypt a 'revolution' where the masses were disarmed and the middle class hijacked the struggle of the masses for power, where the revolution was, for the moment, halted and the old regime retained. But in Libya, where the masses have gone the furthest to destroy the old regime, the start of the revolution where the masses have armed themselves, and have destroyed to the root the state structures, the capitalist press call an 'uprising'. They are trying to hide that for a real revolution, the masses have to arm themselves; secondly they hide that this revolution is against world imperialism by portraying the struggle as being only an uprising against a corrupt dictator. Thus they help to prepare the way for the tribal leaders and middle class to hijack the revolution and to re-establish the capitalist regime- a new dictatorship.

### **The party can wait for the masses but the masses cannot wait for the party [Trotsky]**

It is our hope that, from the independent organisms of the workers that should be set up during the revolutionary processes, will arise the nuclei for a new working class party. We call for an international conference of revolutionary workers organizations and internationalist Trotskyists on the barricades of Libya to set up a revolutionary International. Forward to revolutionary working class parties as part of this refounding of the Fourth International.

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