

The Communist Party

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What distinguishes our party: – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the III International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy at Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – the tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personalized politics and electoralist manoeuvrings.

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May Day 2016

Under the capitalist regime there can be no peace between States

So let there be war between classes !

The social peace this May Day 2016 is like a volatile layer of fly-ash, polluting the atmosphere while holding back a fire that is bound to flare up again sooner or later.

Over the many years of crisis we have seen the main national capitalisms, from Europe to the United States, from Japan to Russia, from Brazil to South Africa, reduce their production in a recession without end. The proletariat and the middle classes have been impoverished and unemployment is on the rise. Even China, now the second largest global economic power, which seemed to be defying the crisis, is showing clear signs of stagnation.

The economic crisis is driving capitalists in every country, with whatever type of government, to press for lay-offs and to increase the exploitation of workers in defence of their profits. In Britain,

thousands of workers now face the loss of their jobs because of massive over-production in the global steel industry.

The bourgeois States, despite being heavily in debt, are increasing their spending on armaments and are preparing to confront one another militarily for zones of influence, markets and materials, so that they can secure even lower prices.

This peace is in reality only a brief truce ready to explode under the blows of a new aggravation in the economic crisis, which must also take political, social and military forms.

In the Middle East, the fragile truce achieved in Syria conceals an extremely tense situation; the opposing States in this disaster area are preparing a new, broader confrontation with one another. Eastern Europe, supported by the United States, is rearming against Russian imperialism. In the southern Caucasus the confrontation between Azerbaijan and Armenia is reigniting, with the flames fanned by the growing antagonism between Turkey and Russia. In the South China Sea, the dispute between Peking and other coastal States is worsening: Japan is accelerating rearmament, and Australia is doing the same, while the United States openly declares that China is its principal economic and military adversary.

Bourgeois Europe, which until just recently made false and hypocritical boasts about being "social states" promoting "freedom" and "democracy" and receiving "asylum-seekers", while oppressing its own working class with its barely concealed dictatorship, is paying Turkey to take back Syrian proletarians fleeing in their hundreds of thousands from bombs, from massacres, from the war, and from the hunger caused by the criminal action of all the imperialisms of Europe, America and Asia.

Terrorism, masked by religious pretexts, is in reality the product of the war between imperialisms and is bankrolled and protected by States large and small and their secret services, whether for mercenary interests or to spread the seeds of hatred all over the world – yet another instrument for preparing the people for new wars.

It is up to the global working class to respond to this mortal challenge by overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and their States, and abolishing the capitalist relations of production, which consist of waged labour and capital, in order to make way for the communist management of production and distribution.

There are already the first signs of this. In many countries in the north, south, east and west of the globe, the working class is proving its readiness to fight for the defence of its class objectives. Proletarians, often isolated and disorganized, are looking to recover the lost solidarity and fraternity of the dispossessed, beyond the divisions of nationality, of gender, of religion and race.

In order for these struggles to be maintained, consolidated and finally victorious, it is essential that in every country the workers organize themselves into genuine class trade unions, independent and opposed to the regimes and institutions of their bourgeois rulers, determined not to give way to the seductions of opportunist reformism and determined to resist open repression.

It is vital to strengthen the revolutionary class party, the International Communist Party, indispensable instrument for directing the struggle all the way to the conquest of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone can open the road to Communism.

Paris Attacks Bourgeois Terrorism

No, it is not a war. It is preparation for war, while the major states of America, Europe, Russia and Asia are already revving up the engines. Whether it's "terrorism" or "the war on terror", they both stand for advance notice of the coming war.

It is not the war of the Islamic State against the West. It is the war of competing imperialisms. Even if the perpetrators of this umpteenth act of terror are youths pushed to fanaticism, the instigators are to be found in the corridors of power of the state authorities of the entire world.

The Islamic State is not the expression of the impoverished classes of the Arab countries and it does not defend their interests. Nor does it even represent the armed force of Arab national bourgeoisies wishing to free themselves of foreign, ex-colonial or imperialist oppression.

Islamic State's strength lies in those who direct it from abroad; they are mercenary troops who conveniently hide their trade behind the smokescreen of religion. Their direct financiers are some of the petro-monarchies of the Gulf, engaged in an internecine struggle, and their discreet protector is the imperialist front currently lined up behind the USA, which arms them and sends them off to fight, or fights them, according to the colossal interests of all the capitalist powers, strangled by the economic crisis for which they see no end.

Bourgeois propaganda turns the truth on its head: in the Arab countries the pretence of Islamic revolution only hides the reaction of the dominant bourgeois and landed classes behind a thick ideological fog, and its primary victims are the proletarians of these countries. The daily bombings in the squares and markets of Baghdad, Aleppo, Islamabad, Beirut, Damascus, Kabul, Tripoli and Istanbul bear an antiproletarian mark, one of wars between bourgeois gangs.

Communists do not deliver a moral judgement on the war and on its atrocities; they know that violence is intrinsic to class society, founded exclusively on the power of dominion and on terror, even when it is not necessary to use it directly but only to threaten it. Terrorism is an instrument of war, which can be used between the states as well as between classes. This is the terrorism employed by some bourgeois states against others, and of all states against the international working class, in order to divide it according to artificial ideological barriers and to prevent the possibility of any re-emergence of class unity. We know "campaigns of violence" all too well. They are warnings and signals that, for nearly a half century, also in Europe, the bourgeoisies believe are useful to hurl at one another – though obviously it is proletarians who bear the brunt. A few hundred dead are nothing for the monstrous world of capital. The God of profit demands far more human sacrifices. Militarism is the one true essence of capital, in particular of the western imperialist democracies that talk about peace but are busy preparing the next round of global butchery. A war built, instigated and desired for the survival of Capital, at the cost of millions of proletarian lives.

The dominant classes profit from every pretext and from every popular emotion to subordinate the working class to their discipline, to terrorize it, to squeeze it between the threat of foreign violence and the violence which the bourgeoisie applies directly, and constantly reinforces.

Communists therefore keep their distance from every abstract condemnation of violence, from the

bourgeoisie's every utterance of false piety and indignation, and from every demonstration of solidarity with states and with the bourgeoisies of the world, first and foremost with those of their own countries.

The prolonged agony of capitalist society will unleash an unimaginable series of horrors and lies, even beyond those of the First and Second World Wars. In response the working class, and above all its communist party, must be ready to maintain an uncompromisingly firm line against everyone and everything, first in respect of the truth of its class science, and then, alone, against all of its enemies.

Capitalism will not die if not through a violent death at the hands of the communist proletariat. The only possible "war on terrorism" is the one against this barbarous social system, therefore the only one that has communist revolution as its final objective.

By contrast those who accept capitalism, in any of its forms and in any of its guises, is compelled to accept its present day terrorism and will be condemned to submit to its coming war of the future.

Uniting the Struggle of the International Working Class

The governments of all the Americas, from Washington to Buenos Aires, as well as in every continent, raise the flags of patriotism and mobilize workers for the defence of the fatherland.

In some cases, it is a matter of territorial disputes between bourgeois states, behind which hides the conflict between national and transnational capitalist corporations for control over raw materials or for the dominion of strategic localities from the point of the theatres of military operations, or for the movement of commodities and raw materials.

In other occasions, patriotic slogans are raised when the functioning of the national economy and its shares of profit and rent, as part of surplus value obtained by the exploitation of wage workers, are threatened.

But wage workers don't benefit from new territories annexed to the country nor from a smooth growth of the national economy. In both cases, a battle for the defence of the fatherland only economically benefits capitalist enterprises.

Workers won't obtain any benefit from the Venezuela and Guyana conflict or from the conflict

between Venezuela and Colombia. Neither will the situation of the Bolivian workers improve with a reconquering of the Atacama Corridor, Bolivia's historic access to the sea, which today is in the hands of Chile.

Likewise, there won't be any change to the exploitation of workers if Argentina takes sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. It's the same case with every territorial dispute in the whole world. There will be no difference for proletarians between the control of raw materials such as petroleum or gas, copper, Steel, iron, etc., by the national bourgeois states or by imperialist consortium with concessions for their exploitation. In any of these situations, capitalism only goal is the search for maximum profit through the exploitation of the labor-power of wage workers.

Wage workers don't even benefit from the riches generated by their labour in the different economic activities which are accomplished in the actual territory of the country in which they now live, much less will they benefit from the annexations or retaking of territories on the part of the national bourgeois state. In the end, private property in land will walk all over the sovereignty of the national states of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois governments agitate for the defence of the fatherland while elsewhere they sign agreements with transnationals to do business, giving away the national sovereignty they claim to defend.

The workers in the entire whole world have to ignore these calls by the bourgeoisie, petit bourgeoisie, politicians and unionists to line up to defend the fatherland and national economy, because in doing so, they're only defending the interests and businesses of the capitalist class.

There is no socialist fatherland. When the con artists talk of a socialist fatherland, they only vindicate bourgeois nationalism and the continuance of capitalism under the camouflage of a leftist and opportunist discourse that aims to put the workers at the tail of the bourgeoisie, deceiving them with the lie of a false socialism or road to socialism.

The working class has nothing to gain in national unity between wage workers and their employers, between those who are exploited and those doing the exploiting. This road doesn't lead to revolutions and a break with capitalism, and can only enable the over-exploitation of the working class.

While the bourgeoisie, the politicians and the union leaders play the game, they call on workers to fight high prices of primary goods and services and against a black market. The real working class movement needs to be united and organized by the rank and file and across borders has to raise the

international flag of struggle for

- an across the board increase in wages,
- for the reduction of the working day,
- for salaries for the unemployed,
- for the reduction of the age of retirement,
- for the elimination of overtime and extra hours of work and
- for better working conditions and environment.

And when the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie raise their voices to say that the workers are damaging the nation and its economy, the response of the workers' movement should be: the proletarians don't have a fatherland!! We not interested in defending what we don't have!!

General Strikes need to be employed as a reflection of working class unity in action. We need to be breaking with regime unions and establish the emergence of class unions where workers are organized without regard for their nationality, trade, race, religious faith, or political leaning. Strikes need to be organized across industries and workplaces uniting workers with joint demands.

The proletariat is the only revolutionary class, and by its nature is pushed to overthrow capitalism and create a society without exploited or exploiting and without national borders, commodities, or wage labour. With the conquest of political power, the proletariat will implement its dictatorship, the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the international communist party, and will practice its class program, the communist program.

Revolutionary communists call for the unity of action in the economic struggles of workers on a local, national, and international levels. We also need to remember to:

1. Reject imperialist wars, without aligning with any of the contending governments, evoking revolutionary defeatism and the confrontation against the government and employers in every country.

2. Reject calls for national defence and the taking sides in territorial disputes between countries, as reflections of inter-capitalist conflicts for the control of raw materials and market shares.

3. Reject government repression and intimidation of workers' economic struggles on the basis that workers' demands are "anti-national", "pro-imperialist" or "terrorist" conspiracies.

4. Resurrect the strike and demonstration as the principal methods of struggle. These need to be undefined, without minimal services and include workers of different trades and industries. Organizing strike funds to give support to propaganda and to attend to the necessities that might themselves to the movement of the struggle.

Italy

No "Christmas truce" for the struggles of the SI Cobas Against police and regime unions

The vast majority of the workers organized in the SI Cobas are employed in the logistics sector, more precisely in the warehouses as porters, pickers, etc. The SI Cobas, not without encountering considerable difficulties, has also started to organize drivers, still within the logistics sector, including both van drivers, who deliver a reduced number of orders over a short distance, and long-distance lorry drivers. Outside the logistics sector the SI Cobas has recently started to engage in a campaign of recruitment and organization of struggles, with some degree of success, in the slaughterhouses.

For the full implementation of the contract in the food-industry the struggles began at dawn on December 21, with pickets blocking the transport entrance, more than 100 workers at Alcar Uno of Castelnuovo Rangone and 50 workers of Globalcarni Spilamberto, which are meat-processing plants in the province of Modena. After several hours of blockading the workers have moved to the city Prefecture where a mediation to a union truce was obtained, in view of a meeting on 13 January.

The workers of GLS of Montale (Piacenza) were in the lead of the strikes in the main plants of the firm in Italy, which led to a national accord and to similar agreements in TNT, Bartolini and SDA.

The GLS, however, thought it possible to go on the offensive.

In view of the last general strike organized in the logistics sector in October 29 last year, three out of the four delegates of SI Cobas passed over to the CGIL and with them most of the members, which left 25 workers of SI Cobas out of 125. The strike, successful on a national level, went badly in this warehouse, with the CGIL operating by strike-breaking, as across the rest of Italy.

The SI Cobas of Piacenza reacted promptly, first by organizing a meeting on November 4 in front of the workplace and then in other regional headquarters of the union. Following the suspension "for disciplinary reasons" of the only delegate of SI Cobas, on December 8 a strike was organized, backed by a one-hour stoppage in warehouses throughout Italy. After 5 hours of blockading of in and out movements the company cancelled the suspension. The success of this strike brought back

a good number of workers to SI Cobas, bringing membership up to 52.

The result of the general strike of 29 October, and of the whole of the previous protest movement, was meeting with the bosses on November 18 in Bologna, in the SI Cobas headquarters, which for the first time involved three of the leading companies of the industry - Bartolini, GLS and TNT - and FEDIT, the main syndicate of the industrialists of this category, an important fact as de facto recognition by the bosses for SI Cobas. The fact must be given its due weight, and *recognition* cannot become the pivot of trade union action, because only the maintenance of the force which achieved it, or rather its growth, guarantees its real bargaining power.

Subsequent events confirm that the bosses, while they seem to want to come to terms with the union, will use every means to break its strength. During the night of 22/3 eight members of the CGIL of Piacenza GLS warehouse violently attacked four militants of SI Cobas. The first attack took place against two workers in the canteen, then against two others who were working in isolated locations. All four were hospitalized, one was in a coma for several hours. In protest eighty workers have immediately abandoned the warehouse and have been on strike for a few hours. Then, by assembly decision, having the company said they would punish the attackers, who were then all fired, have gone back to work.

As mentioned, the assailants were all members of the CGIL, which has not made any condemnation of the incidents. Worse, we recall, in fact did the Filt Cgil Lazio, which in a statement had defended, justifying the actions, its members who attacked the striking workers of SI Cobas on May 19 last year in the warehouse of SDA Roma 1. As for base unions, only the CUB has expressed its solidarity with the workers and with the SI Cobas. Others have not deemed it necessary to say anything about such an evidently grave episode.

Also in Rome SI Cobas has managed to mobilize a number of workers taking part in pickets, moving in a very large area, from Fiano to Santa Palomba or to Tiburtina, a distance of over 80 km.

At the Carrefour warehouse in Santa Palomba, on the Via Ardeatina, in July 30 of the 45 employees of the Euro Progea consortium went on strike about wage payments, after yet another delay in being paid, demanding the opening of talks on poor working conditions: working 12-hour shifts in cold stores and paid just 50 Euros. The instructions on the movement of parcels are given to porters through headsets, which cause headaches, while the company does not even provide proper clothing and protective equipment, which porters end up

bringing from home. Also they denounced unpaid working hours and sick leaves, poor family allowances and seniority.

A new mobilization took place there on December 23 when management denied the extension of contracts of a group of seven workers whose fixed-term contract had expired. The SI Cobas organized three blockades of the movement of warehouse goods. The first on the evening of the 23rd for three hours; the second, on the night of 28th, for five hours; and the third, which was the largest, involving about sixty workers, on 15th January. Our comrades were also present.

On the morning of Dec. 23rd a strike began at Bormioli Rocco of Fidenza (Parma) for retaining all of the jobs and salary levels, when the contract of the cooperative working in the plant changed. Here too pickets blockaded goods entrances. The strike continued to the bitter end, with the pickets holding firm day and night, despite the cold and the holidays. On December 30th, the company announced that it had reached an agreement with Cgil and Cisl but the majority of the porters rejected this, because this agreed contract was much worse. This showed an exemplary determination and a spirit of sacrifice. The agreement signed by the confederations included keeping only 50 permanent contract workers in the workplace but not those with fixed-term contracts which expired at the end of the year and in March; it would not guarantee the salary levels, nor the continuation of work in that warehouse, opening the way for possible transfers.

At the stroke of 4 o'clock in the morning of January 5 the porters of the contracted cooperative Associate Services at the Penny Market Warehouse of Desenzano del Garda, the most important of this chain in Italy, went on strike to obtain the proper work routines, seniority and the implementation of the national contract. The strike and picketing continued to the bitter end. At an unsuccessful meeting at the Prefecture of Brescia, it was proposed to demobilize workers in exchange for a meeting after two weeks.

On Friday 8, in front of pickets in Fidenza and Desenzano numerous squads of police were deployed. Despite the picketing being robust and tenacious, they eventually had to give way. In the morning they were cleared in Desenzano. Some Pakistani porters, when they were attacked, shouted "Allah Akbar", God is great. The bourgeois press took the opportunity to describe the picket as being promoted by Islamic extremists. The Regional Councillor for Civil Protection declared that "we must return these extremists in Pakistan straight away." The goal of the Bourgeois is to isolate Pakistani workers from Italian workers, who must not see this strike as an example of real struggle.

The following day the workers returned to work and found the warehouse closed tight, with goods diverted to the base in Arborio (Vercelli).

At Bormioli the political police even proposed, under the threat of use of force, the agreement of the confederates. The refusal led to blows and resistance by the workers. One by one they are removed from the picket line, and placed in armoured vehicles. About 40 workers were taken to a police station, and detained there for eight hours then being released with charges of resisting a public officer and civil violence. But they would not bow their heads because on the Saturday night there was a march through the centre of Fidenza, shouting "Bormioli Rocco, tomorrow another blockade" and on Monday morning they returned to picketing the company. After eleven hours there was a new intervention with four armoured police vehicles and carabinieri. The next morning also this plant remained closed by a lockout.

In response to the lockout of Desenzano, on Wednesday 13, at 4 am, the SI Cobas mounted a picket line of about eighty workers at the Penny Market warehouse in Arborio (Vercelli). In addition to the porters of Desenzano there are workers and militants of SI Cobas of Brescia, Milan, Parma, Piacenza, Turin and Genoa, including a group of drivers already on strike, working for a company which operates within the warehouse; these were all of different nationalities: Italian, Pakistani, Romanians, Poles, Moroccans, Senegalese. Workers from many countries, united by a common goal - the struggle against exploitation - from which country does not matter. The workers who work in the warehouse, none of whom were enrolled in SI Cobas, did not resent the picket line, which was total, and some workers stopped to talk to pickets before entering work. The external yard was filled with trucks. The Penny Market in Italy has six logistics warehouses, two of which, being the most important, are now closed down, one by the bosses lock-out, the other by the workers. In the early afternoon, the company agreed to meet a delegation of SI Cobas. At five, after thirteen hours, the blockade was terminated with an agreement that committed Penny Market and cooperative to reopen, within ten days, the warehouse of Desenzano, with the return of workers, and the start of negotiations on the implementation of the national contract.

Two days later, on Friday 15, the porters went on strike at ND Logistics and DHL of Settala (Milan), at ND Pontenure (Piacenza) and a new blockade was established in front of the factory of Bormioli, Fidenza. In the early afternoon, having ended the strike at ND, part of the workers of Pontenure warehouse, along with a group of workers

in Desenzano who had come out to support them, would go to strengthen the blockade at Bormioli. Towards the evening, two contingents, one of police and the other of carabinieri, assaulted the workers, this time not merely to evict the pickets - the fourth in a week - but with a frontal charge, batons in hand, chasing them up the traffic ring road and then lined up inside the factory gates.

Not even this more brutal use of bourgeois state force did impede the SI Cobas and workers. The same evening the workers paraded again in procession through the centre of Fidenza. The next morning, Saturday, as we were concluding this article, a new picket was deployed in front of the factory, reinforced by workers of Desenzano, Brescia, Milan, Piacenza and Bologna. Meanwhile in Milan the workers go on strike in Ortofin of Trucuzzano, Settala and Liscate.

Perhaps the government, i.e., the bourgeoisie, has decided to break the labour movement in logistics sector and its union, the SI Cobas, by hook or by crook, before it expands beyond the limits of this sector, infecting other categories and organizing the working class. But are they finding this a tough nut to crack, and we hope that this is the case, and operate so that they end up with broken teeth.

One thing is certain: when workers go down the road of struggle, with real strikes, to the bitter end, with pickets blockading goods and scabs, the bourgeois regime slips away democratic mask and shows its true face, that of the dictatorship of capital on the working class.

Airbus Production moved to USA

Airbus' new American facility is expected to open early in 2016. Airbus has moved into the North American commercial airliner market looking to match Boeing's market share. The new facility will allow Airbus to assemble the European made component parts into aircraft for the North American market, currently the world's largest.

By locating final production in the US, Airbus also obtains an opportunity to market military products to the US government and Space Program which have preference for buying US made products. A report in the Seattle Times newspaper states:

It's an aggressive move, considering the European plane-maker controls only about 20 percent

of the U.S. market. That share will reach 40 percent as soon as carriers including American Airlines take delivery of Airbus planes on order.

Bregier's team has set its sights on grabbing half a U.S. market that has traditionally favoured the home player, even as the two manufacturers share the global market 50/50. "We are a large aerospace company, and should the situation arise where we have something competitive to offer the U.S. Air Force, for instance, this would certainly be a site where we'd consider doing something," Enders said in a televised interview.

Break the workers

Airbus has located its new facility in the gulf coast port of Mobile in the southern state of Alabama. Alabama is a "right to work" State where laws encourage workers not to join unions. But Alabama is far from the worst of the Southern states for union membership

"Union members are 10.8 percent of [Alabama's] workforce, federal statistics show, compared with 2.2 percent in South Carolina and 16.8 percent in Washington State, where rival Boeing Co has Jetliner factories. Boeing's South Carolina plant is not unionized."

Business news site "Bloomberg News" states: «By locating its plant in low-cost, union-unfriendly Alabama, Airbus "puts pressure on trade unions back in Europe," aerospace analyst Richard Aboulafi told Agency France-Presse. Boeing's factory in South Carolina, which recently a unionization drive, serves a similar function relative to the company's unionized plants around Seattle. Hourly pay for durable-goods-manufacturing workers for all U.S. nonfarm workers for the first time on record last November. Aircraft production workers have been a holdout, with an average hourly wage of \$37.90 in June, but that could change».

Trade Unions at breaking point

The major union for airplane construction is the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). IAM was founded in 1888 and has around 700,000 members in Canada and the United States, 333,000 who are currently working in the industry. A member of the only national union structure, the AFL-CIO, IAM leadership runs the union as a "business partner" with the employers. For the aerospace companies IAM will lobby US Congress for lucrative military contracts. To get an idea of their class collaborationist policies here is the president of IAM appealing to the management of Airbus: «We tell (Airbus) that we are the leading aerospace union in the North America and we would like to get off on the right foot and organize their workers," Buffenbarger said. "We can bring

order in the workplace: We are a union with a demonstrated history of trying to work out problems and to create an efficient operation, just as Boeing became more proficient because of its skilled workforce. We can help make them successful, or we can have a knock-down, drag-out fight».

Like most US unions IAM signs contracts with no-strike clauses. However in between IAM will strike to protect its members' interests, the last time against Boeing in 2008:

On Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008, members of the union ratified the contract, ending the eight-week strike. The new contract was approved by 74 percent of those voting in favor. This was the longest strike against Boeing by this union since 1995, and the fourth in twenty years. The strike cost the union members an average of \$7000.00 in base pay and cost the company \$100 million per day in revenue and penalties with a postponement of the delivery of aircraft. Boeing has a \$350 billion backlog.

Members Trying to Take Back the IAM?

Until 2015, the IAM had no contested elections for national leadership in 50 years and President for 110 years.

After the IAM International union forced a concessionary contract on the Washington State centred Boeing workers, a campaign to reform IAM campaign formed around a worker's Facebook group. The social-democratic union reform magazine "Labor Notes" reports: «The current reform effort is based on a program to 1) eliminate nepotism 2) lower spending e.g. a Lear Jet for international officers and lower salaries (\$304,000 in total compensation for President Thomas Buffenbarger), and the numbers of international officers».

Reform candidates received about 1/3 of the votes in that historic contested IAM Presidential election. There doesn't appear to be any other organized opposition.

Back to the Basics

These efforts of a handful of rank and file members to take on a well entrenched union oligarchy are applauded. However, the group will need to take on and fight concessions as well as how to organize in the southern states and elsewhere. They are fighting deeply ingrained class collaborationist organizational and educational institutions that undermine the union.

The ideological weaknesses of being willing to work with the employers will take more than a change of leadership to root out. It takes an active, educated and fighting rank and file base. The International Communist Party offers IAM members an understanding of capitalism and experience in rank and file struggle that will aid in that effort.

Democratic Tunisia can't stop the revolt of the unemployed

In the eighties, the Bourguiba government, following the IMF's directions, had bet on the development of tourism and exports, neglecting the inner regions. For this reason, following the rise of grain prices, the city was in the vanguard of the 1984 bread riots, during which 184 proletarians were killed. But the region continued to be ignored during the next two decades of the Ben Ali government.

During the 30 day so-called Jasmine Revolution of 2011, Kasserine, a city of west-central Tunisia, has paid its tribute in blood. More than 50 people in Kasserine died from government snipers positioned on rooftops. The crimes committed in Kasserine by the former regime were never fully acknowledged by the new democratic order, which fuelled the distrust of the population.

On January 12th, high school students staged a revolt and set their school on fire. On the anniversary of the so-called Tunisian revolution, January 14th, a 28 year old recent graduate, Ridha Yahyaoui, during a youth organization protest against their exclusion from a public competition, climbed on a light pole where he was electrocuted, dying two days later.

The masses were moved by against the Ben Ali regime in 2010 by a suicide and another tragic event dragged tens of thousands of proletarians into the streets against an equally ruthless class regime, now cloaked by democracy. At dawn, on January 17th, 500 unemployed young people threw stones at the headquarters of the governorate¹ of Kasserine kicking off a new revolt. Police responded with tear gas, but an impressive demonstration passed through the streets of the city gathering thousands of young proletarians and fighting off the attacks of the gendarmerie. Within a few hours the revolt had already spread to the nearby cities of Zouhour and Ennour.

The terrorist methods of the Ben Ali regime continue to be used by the new democratic government against those who fighting to improve their conditions. In prisons and barracks, the National Guard gendarmerie continues to torture systematically. Terror remains the only means available to a bourgeoisie incapable of satisfying the essential needs of the lower classes. Tunisian proletarians have quickly learned the illusory nature of the democratic solution to their problems and are now conscious of the true content of the new constitutional freedoms.

The uprising spread across the country and thousands of young workers came into open conflict with the police in Sfax, Siliana, Mdhilla, Meknassi, Tahla, Fernana, Meknassi, Beja, Jendouba, Sidi Bouzid, Kebilli and Redeyeff. Just two days after the death of Ridha Yahyaoui, 14 of the 24 governorates of Tunisia were engulfed by the revolt. On January 18, a small march also reached the capital.

Meanwhile, the base unions announced a three day strike in the hospital in the town of Ben Arous.

On the fifth day of clashes in Kasserine, January 19, a 6 pm to 5 am curfew was decreed. Clashes across the country occurred on the evening of January 20th and the official report of the Ministry of the Interior details one death and 80 serious injuries among the police.

On the same day the headquarters of the governorate of Tunis was occupied by the UGET student union, which demanded a job for every family. In Carthage, clashes occurred within a few hundred meters of the presidential palace and at night broke out in several suburbs. In almost all of the governorates public offices are closed for security reasons.

On January 20th, there are also riots in the cities of Tozeur, Medenine, Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid, Kairouan, Sfax and Enfidha.

In Kebili, between 20 and 21 January crowds set fire to National Guard offices and, according to reports from a local radio station, police and gendarmerie² withdrew from the city. The army had to intervene directly to restore order. On 23 and 24 January more minor outbreaks occurred.

The situation is settling down. The Tunisian government eased the curfew, now imposed from 10 pm to 5 pm. Thala, in the governorate of Kasserine, was one of the last towns brought back to order, where there had been major clashes up to January 30th, only then were all the police headquarters returned to State control.

But the fact that the violence has ended does not mean that social peace has returned.

Against Imams, State Unions and Stalinists

In Muslim-majority countries, the Islamist movement has organized and mobilized the masses, starting from the mosques. We saw this during the crisis in Algeria in the early nineties and during the Egyptian revolt against the regime of Hosni Mubarak. Nothing similar has happened in Tunisia, where there was no link between the insurgency and Islamists. And there are no reported episodes in which they are able to dominate the public squares.

In January 2016, in an attempt to recover its members' confidence and to confuse and divide the

proletariat, the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) called a general strike in the governorates of Greater Tunis. The “struggle” was quickly resolved with an agreement with the Employers Association - the Tunisian Union of Industry, Commerce and Handicrafts for a 6% wage increase of in the private sector. But the negotiation had been underlay in December, so it was only formalized an agreement already made.

During the revolt, the UGTT also asked its members to defend government office buildings threatened by “anarchists, thugs and thieves”, it opposed itself against the young unemployed and asked union members to not join in the events threatening the “democratic freedoms of the revolution”.

On January 4th, the UGTT called for a general strike in Education for the 27th of the month: this strike was called off along with a general strike of cultural workers. Even a three day general strike of fuel transport workers, scheduled for the 21st through 23rd of January was cancelled. It was a betrayal of the working class in the name of bourgeois national interest.

In Enfidha, following clashes on January 20, the UGTT has declared a regional general strike for January 26; although on the 25th the union tried to delay the beginning of the strike, facing the prompt response of the city’s proletariat who marched on the headquarters of the union and battled with police until evening. Also in Enfidha on January 26th, the UGTT cancelled a planned strike at the airport, explaining that the revocation was to encourage a “peaceful climate” with the Turkish company that manages the structure as well with the Ministry of Transport.

Some of the right-wing opposition parties have accused the Popular Front, a counter-revolutionary coalition of Social Democrats and Stalinist hacks, of having sent provocateurs among the unemployed. But the Tunisian bourgeoisie knows that the Popular Front is not an enemy. It functions only as a transmission belt between the bourgeoisie and the unemployed movement. Popular Front MP’s were committed to continue the negotiations with the Government, as the official mouthpiece of the Association of Tunisian Managers has defended it’s work for having always been “against any kind of infiltration of criminals, anarchists or any sort of reactionary elements who tried to infiltrate the social movement to push it way from its noble goals”. In addition, the Popular Front “has never ceased to defend the state’s structures and has always rejected bringing down the government”, to the point it was even received by Tunisian President for consultations. It is completely part of the “constructive oppo-

sition” to the government and as such, useful to the bourgeoisie in order to maintain the social order.

The proletarian movement must beware of these false friends who are even more dangerous than its avowed enemies. It must seek its political independence from the bourgeoisie and opportunists by giving itself a real class trade union, independent from the state and the employers. Its most combative and resolute elements will identify with the tradition of revolutionary internationalist communism, the International Communist Party. Only then can we challenge capitalism, its poverty and bourgeois terror.

The Independent Trade Unions

Since the January revolt, the unemployed youth movement has started to develop connections with the grassroots unions.

On January 29th a general strike was organized in Sfax, which was strongly supported by the working class in response to the call for action of the unemployed movement demonstrating the possibility of an alliance between employed and unemployed, a prerequisite the class struggle in Tunisia.

On February 1, the base unions called a general strike in the cities of Al Ayoun, Bel Abbes, Feriana and Jedlian in the governorate of Kasserine. On February 2nd, workers from the nearby town of Sebiba responded to the grassroots unions and the unemployed youth movement protests. Local Teacher and Construction trade unions also joined in strikes.

On 4 February, the unemployed movement in the governorate of Al Gafsa announced that it was organizing a march to the border with Algeria.

The same day kindergarten workers of the governorate of Nabeul went on strike, factory workers in Le Kef struck to defend their salaries, as did the hospital workers of Kasserine. Dock workers at the port of Rades in STAM (port of Tunis) began a two-day strike, considered illegal by the Ministry of Transport as well.

On February 8, the UGTT with the support of local unions declared a general strike in Enfidha which declared a 100% participation rate for both the public and the private sectors.

On the same day in Kalaat el Andalus sailors went on strike to demand the reopening of the port and the strike found support with area resort workers. All roads leading to the town were blocked with barricades of burning tires.

On February 14th, the town of Le Kef was drawn into a general strike to the bitter end and was completely blocked. On February 17th, the city was still on strike. Also on February 14th municipal workers in the governorate of Nabeul proclaimed a three-day strike for wage claims.

All these general strikes called by the grassroots organizations at the city level, together with the unemployed movement, demanded that their region be recognized as economically depressed by the Central Government, so it can access special government sup-

port funds.

This movement certainly can't resolve the crisis in these regions. The mosaic of base unions which are often only locally influential isn't unified enough to organize the Tunisian proletariat for a generalized class struggle against class struggle. Yet these struggles pave the way for all these weak and small economic struggle organizations, to grow and unify in one united union capable of mobilizing the proletariat in an open war against the bourgeoisie on a national scale.

Palestine: proletarians against bourgeois

The average salary of a teacher living in the Palestinian Authority governed section of the occupied territories is €700. Average monthly expenses for a working-class family is €1,200.

On February 9th, those teachers went on strike claiming compliance with a 2013 agreement with the Palestinian government promising wage increases, improved pensions and adaptation of seniority.

For weeks most of the schools of the Territories remained closed, while other facilities have remained open for very limited hours. Various demonstrations were held in the West Bank cities, the largest in Ramallah, where the processions have reached twenty thousand demonstrators.

Mirroring the Israeli army's methods, Palestinian Authority security forces have erected numerous roadblocks preventing buses carrying the strikers from reaching the city. Workers were IDed, threatened and arrested. Taxi drivers who transported striking teachers in Ramallah have been threatened with loss of their licenses.

In numerous countries loudspeakers of mosques call on workers to stop the strikes. Everywhere nationalism – even that of oppressed peoples such as the Palestinians or the Kurds – and religion are weapons of the bourgeoisie against the working class. The real oppressed are the workers and the true oppressors the bourgeoisie, around the world, even those who, for now, are not recognized the right to have their own state by the international council of the large and small imperialist robbers, to make better use of the local workforce.

On February 16, the Palestinian police arrested 22 teachers and union leaders who had spoken in favor of the strike. The crackdown caused an opposite effect to those desired by the local bourgeois regime, causing other workers to join the struggle and strengthened the strike, which has become to

the bitter end and upped the strike demands for increased wages from the initial 2.5% to 10%.

In Palestine even teachers have run into the official union as an obstacle, and were forced to organize themselves in a “teachers coordinating committee”. The regime union in education, the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, was overtly challenged by strikers, who demanded the resignation of the general secretary and the election of new delegates.

The Palestinian teachers are an excellent example for all the region's workers showing that your own bourgeois government is the primary enemy to organize and fight against. Only through a workers union of the whole area, breaking with nationalism, even the Palestinian proletarians can alleviate their suffering, fighting alongside their class comrades of all colours and nationalities against the international bourgeoisie who for decades have had them fighting for a nationalism that is not theirs and will never be.

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