

Statement

# Tunisia: For a popular workers' pole around the UGTT

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Not a day goes by without the outbreak of new mobilisations and new struggles. Because the popular *résistance* has not wilted despite the repressive apparatus, despite the marginalisation and scorn shown not only by the counter-revolutionary state apparatus but also by all the parties hungry for power, ignoring the revolutionary process and forgetting the objectives to be realised by this revolution.

The situation has particularly deteriorated for the inhabitants of the poor regions and the workers in certain sectors abandoned by the authorities. The same is true of the unemployed, women, youth, whose situation necessitates an urgent and revolutionary approach, something which neither the Islamist and liberal government on the one hand, nor the RCDist/modernist coalition on the other, constituted around Béji Caïd Essebsi and supported by an "opposition" in decline - the descendant of the democratic movement and the traditional left - can provide.

The renascent reactionary bipolarisation (Destouriens/Islamists) under its crude form seeks more than ever to exclude the revolutionary and popular forces from the struggle for power, to strike at independence and radicalism in the ranks of the workers' movement, notably the trade union movement, to use it anew as a support and accomplice in the struggle for domination over the sites of power.

Certainly, the emergence and the propagation of forces of popular resistance in different sectors and different regions create the necessary climate to counter this bipolarisation by rejecting each of its actors in the corner of the enemies of the revolution detested by the people. But the division of left forces on the one hand and the neutralisation of the UGTT - the main determinant force for popular and working class mobilisations - on the other, continually bring the two reactionary poles to the forefront of the scene, as sole possible alternatives for the people.

From its coming to power, the Islamist-liberal coalition has understood that the UGTT was the sole force capable of crystallising an independent popular and workers' pole opposed to the two reactionary poles disputing domination of the state institutions. The UGTT is indeed in the best position to mobilise and organise the workers and intervene in a determinant fashion in the popular mobilisations. It is also best positioned to bring about the convergence of the popular struggles and mobilisations of feminist and youth associations and organisations, and left and democratic parties. In addition, it surpasses all the political organisations and apparatuses active on the political scene, in historic legitimacy and credibility among the workers, youth, women, the inhabitants of the internal regions and the popular neighbourhoods who have experienced the revolution and appreciate the determinant position of the trades unionists who put all their weight into the struggle, as well as the importance of the structures, premises and resources of the UGTT in the revolutionary movement.

Despite the series of complex conspiracies involving multiple actors, the revolutionary process is still

underway. It now necessitates the greatest clarity in political analysis and in the identification of the forces capable of pursuing it until the realisation of its objectives. And these are two linked and interdependent tasks. For the urgent popular demands which have nourished the revolution remain unmet. And their realisation remains conditional on the construction of a popular and workers' pole which will have as its centre of gravity and guarantor of its unity and the crystallisation of its strength the UGTT. The left and democratic forces united around the UGTT and united inside it will be the main motor of this popular workers' pole.

The Islamist pole with its Salafists and pseudo liberals and the Destourian pole reappear on the political scene working for more increasingly unrestrained capitalist projects, accentuating the policies of dependency and submission to the imperialist powers. In this context, the popular workers' pole will concretise the urgent revolutionary tasks and demands, notably the recuperation of ill gotten gains and the arraignment before the courts of the criminals and looters of public property, the placing of recuperated property under the control of the workers and people via structures of popular power elected at the local, regional, sectoral and national levels. It is also about taking immediate measures to guarantee a stable income to all and to deal with the questions of employment, the public services which must be developed and whose free nature should be guaranteed; cancelling the public debt and placing strategic sectors and resources under popular control with a ban on their privatisation; cancellation of the agreements consecrating dependence and the capitalist pillage on the one hand, and submission to imperialism and Zionism on the other.

Such a pole which would commit itself to revolutionary tasks and popular mobilisations would be capable of beating the two reactionary and counter revolutionary poles whatever the financial, media and police support from which they benefit. Such a pole can be realised and crystallised if the trade union left with all its components can be convinced that our efforts are vain so long as we have not overcome the unjustified divisions, and as long as we neutralise the UGTT and exclude it from active participation in political affairs in general and electoral affairs in particular. By building this revolutionary workers' pole, the revolutionary movement will rediscover its dynamism and realise great steps towards the realisation of its objectives.

Statement by the Ligue de la Gauche Ouvrière (LGO) (Workers' Left League) March 29, 2012

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\* The LGO is a radical left political organisation formed in Tunisia during the revolutionary process, including long-standing revolutionary militants in the country.