

Tunisia has become the latest hot spot in a global wave of popular rebellion against failed economic policies, corruption, and despotism. Ongoing protests throughout the country – called the Sidi Bouzid intifada by Tunisians in reference to the city where the protests began - were sparked by the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, a twenty-six year old street vendor. Like many, he suffered from under-employment and police violence. The rebellion went largely unnoticed by the international commercial media until the Tunisian dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, fled to Saudi Arabia on January 14th, ending 23 years of autocracy.

The International Commission of the Socialist Party USA salutes the people of Tunisia in this important step toward liberation. The ousting of Ben Ali shows that tyrants cannot rule over a population that refuses consent. In particular, we recognize the central role played by working people. While students and the middle class also went into the streets, it was workers, organized by the General Union of Tunisian Workers that gave the

demonstrations structure and tipped the balance of power toward the protests. Through concerted mass action, the working class of Tunisia proved to have the power to overthrow a seemingly invincible authoritarian regime and make history. The revolt has inspired popular struggles throughout the region and the world. Already protests have rocked Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen and other Arab states.

The Tunisian struggle continues over the nature of a new government. Mobilizations in the street are continuing in protest against a proposed “unity government” which maintains many officials from the old ruling party. Protesters are demanding a new democratic constitution before elections.

Removing the dictator is not enough; the entire dictatorship must go.

Behind the scenes, economic

power brokers are working to preserve neo-liberal economic policies, maintain close relations with foreign interests, and insulate themselves from democratic forces. Recent revelations from Wikileaks have exposed how French and U.S. diplomats were well aware of the corruption and human rights violations of the Ben Ali regime, yet maintained uncritical friendly relations. A truly democratic alternative for the people of Tunisia that is independent of economic and diplomatic imperialism will be served best by connecting to the international socialist movement.

The International Commission of the Socialist Party USA pledges to share Tunisia's story, and to pressure our



government to respect Tunisian sovereignty. We extend our solidarity and seek greater ties with the movements in Tunisia of unionists, women, youth, and socialists. The liberation of Tunisia from Ben Ali's personal dictatorship brings us one step closer to ending the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, warding off aggression against Iran, and ending the occupation of Palestine.



SOCIALIST PARTY USA
339 LAFAYETTE ST. #303
NEW YORK, NY 10012
phone. 212-982-4586
natsec@socialistparty-usa.org

THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
STATEMENT ON
TUNISIA

JANUARY 31, 2011

The Socialist Party believes that a socialist transformation of the existing market economy can only occur on an international basis, transcending national boundaries. Capitalism can not be reformed into a more humane society. We reject entirely the idea that the role of socialists is to benevolently administer capitalism, in the vain hope of alleviating its evils. Only a rapid transition to democratic socialism can avert the imminent prospect of catastrophe and crisis that confronts all of us.

Thus, the Socialist Party will place a priority in its international work on establishing links to democratic socialist parties that have completely broken with the Socialist International. We will also reach out to our comrades in syndicalist unions and to those in radical social movements, especially the anti-imperialist wing of the anti-war movement. We seek to establish close relations with organizations that share our perspective, working on joint projects moving us toward our common goal.

LOCAL CONTACT:



Visit us online to join!

<http://www.socialistparty-usa.org/joinus>