LONG LIVE TUNISIA!  
Tunisians at the Crossroads  
Mass Movement - Uprising - the Lessons

MAWO Discusses and Celebrates Departure of Tyrant Ben Ali from Tunisia

Responding to a historic sequence of events in Tunisia, where a mass movement has emerged within the space a few weeks and has forced dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali to flee after a repressive rule of 24 years, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) called for a forum to discuss the issues titled, “Tunisia at the Crossroads”. Although organized in less than three days, the forum saw more than 50 people from many different communities, including Tunisians living in Vancouver, attend to discuss these important developments and their consequences.

The program included a compilation of news and media material, which began with clips of Western news showing the dawning or longevity of the Arab spring. The post-2011 Tunisian protests focused on unemployment and rising prices and then moved onto video after video of the huge mass movements which rocked Tunisia’s ruling elite and their imperialist backers.

The forum also featured two speakers, Azza Willow, a young Tunisian socialist justice activist, and Ali Yerevani, the political editor of the ‘Fire Thin Time’ Newspaper and an organizer for the International Action Center in the United States.

Azza gave a very moving presentation about the differences between the outside image of Tunisia as a stable tourist paradise portrayed by the majority of Western media, and the reality of growing up in a country where freedom of expression, association, and political participation were all stifled and supervised by a tiny and brutal ruling elite. She said, “I’m so proud of Tunisians for standing up and showing to everyone that it’s possible to change things and to be united.”

She ended by pointing out that Tunisians are not only the streets celebrating the ouster of Ben Ali, but are continuing to protest against an interim government which includes the elements of the old ruling elite.

All Yerevani, the next speaker, began by asking the audience to stand up for applause in appreciation for the heroic struggle of the people of Tunisia for opening a new era of mass struggle against imperialism. After a few minutes of standing ovation, he opened his talk by comparing the 1979 Iranian revolution, which itself was a huge mass movement to overthrow another imperialist backed dictator, to the current situation in Tunisia. You see those neglected in history become leaders...not dozens, but hundreds of thousands of people. You see their creativity, their initiative, their leadership. All the people you didn’t expect to be like this, because revolution spews up the whole process of life and releases the true energy of masses, therefore it brings out all the great potential of masses of people that under imperialism, we’re supposed to forget. This is what we see today in Tunisia.”

In the current context of massive destruction and oppression caused by the new era of war and occupation, he said that Tunisian people gave a great gift to the people of the world. “They brought the sweetest thing, the victory of human beings, the victory of people.” He called on the duty of people around the world is to support the mass movement in Tunisia, which is becoming increasingly organized, but that the most important is yet to come: “What to do now, and how to create a process which includes interests and desires of millions of Tunisians fighting for their dignity and self-determination.

He placed particular importance on the current struggle by people of Tunisia to liberate all people struggling against the previous regime from any new government. If Tunisians are successful in breaking these last links between their former rulers and their imperialist backers, they will have made a big step forward for oppressed people around the world, and will have caused a big setback for imperialist powers like the United States, France, England and Canada.

All emphasized that “the overthrow of the tyrant Ben Ali and continuing mass movement and revolutionary process is indeed a great victory for the oppressed people of the world within the set back imposed on them by imperialists in the last 20 years by the brutal and criminal war and occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. This is a great breeze of change in resisting colonialism and their proxy regimes for a better world for all.”

Discussion after the speakers focused on the importance of events in Tunisia, their effect on other Western-backed regimes in Northern Africa and the Middle East. Others also pointed out the important lessons people around the world and throughout Canada can learn from a people who stood up to a government which refused to represent them, and united to change a tyrant. MAWO will continue to follow closely how events in Tunisia unfold, and continue to organize events with masses of Tunisian people making their own history.

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In a Reflection published on August 25, 2010 under the title of "The Opinion of What Would Einstein Say?" by Fidel Castro, the Cuban president reflects on the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Majid Shahriari and the implications for international politics.

"The hand of Western governments has been behind the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Majid Shahriari and the blowing up of the country's nuclear race at the doors of a possible new round of talks and negotiations."

Castro highlights the continued threat of assassination attempts against Iranian scientists, including the murder of Mohamad Najjar, directly accused of being a CIA agent, and the murder of Majid Shahriari, who was killed in a motorcycle-bomb explosion. He argues that these acts are part of a wider campaign to subvert the Iranian nuclear program and prevent peaceful dialogue.

Castro also comments on the broader implications of these attacks, stating that they are part of a "frustration" directed at the international community's efforts to resolve the nuclear issue in Iran. He criticizes Western governments for their role in these assassinations and calls for a cessation of such activities.

"An Iranian nuclear scientist has been killed. The same people who poisoned[...]." - Fidel Castro