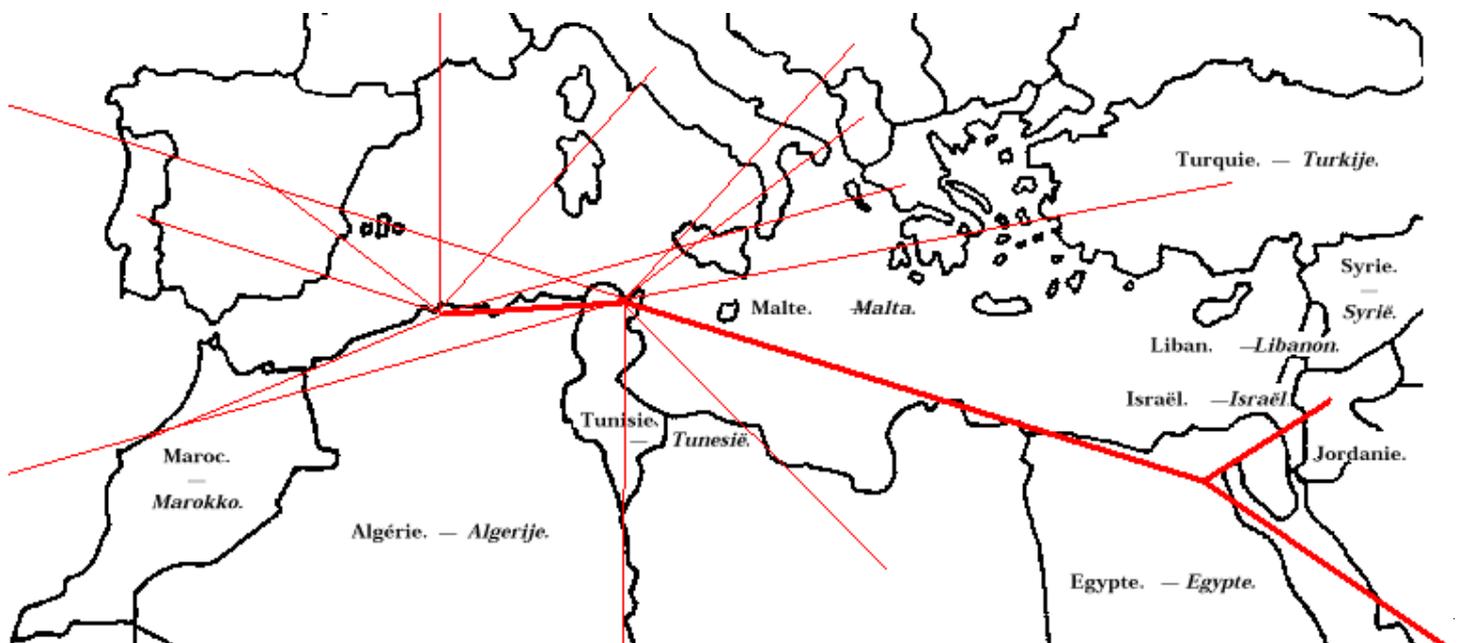


Mass Strike

Volume 1 - Number 3 - February 2011

Workers' emancipation will be carried out by workers themselves
Bulletin of the International Luxemburgist Network

From Tunis to Cairo to...



Revolution in Tunisia and Egypt – Lessons on how to win

The revolution in the Arabic region that began in Tunisia and spread to Egypt — and will no doubt spread further — is the first major victory in reversing the assault on the world working class that intensified with the crash of '08. Not only did mass revolt succeed in getting rid of the dictators Ben Ali and (nearly) Mubarak (although not yet the rest of those governments), but the fear generated among the ruling class of all the Arab countries has caused roll-backs of austerity measures in Algeria, Jordan, Yemen and elsewhere, with taxes on food falling, subsidies reinstated, new jobs program announced.

Mass protest works — but only when, as in Tunisia and Egypt, it strikes fear in the hearts of powerful, fear that they will lose their power. The Tunisian revolution has been able to do that because this movement united the whole working class behind demands that are in the interests of all. It arose initially over protests about unemployment, and some of the first slogans were “*Work for all*” and “*Down with the high costs of living*”. As Rosa Luxemburg pointed out in her description of mass strikes over a century ago, political demands, such as the demand to get rid of Ben Ali, arise out of economic demands in a mass strike movement, and in turn political victories lay the basis for broader economic demands.

The Arabian movement also frightens the rulers because it is independent of the existing parties and institutions. It is not led by parties or unions whose leaders can then channel or betray the movement. Instead the movement has seized control of existing

organizations at the base, turning union locals into mobilization points, against the will of the top union officials and repeatedly forcing those officials to take more and more radical stands to catch up with a movement that they do not lead.

Third, this movement generates concessions because it poses offensive demands, demands to improve the situation, not just to resist previous cuts. The demand of “work for all” is particularly effective and stands in sharp contrast to the far more cautious defensive demands of “no cuts” that have been raised with far fewer results in Europe and the US. These demands make the rulers worry — what will they be demanding next?

The impact of the revolution will unquestionably spread not only through the Arabic-speaking region, where protests have broken out in Algeria, Jordan and Yemen, but also to France, where 600,000 Tunisians have gone to live, and which shares a language that most Tunisians speak. Many Tunisians also speak Italian, so links exist to Italy as well.

Of course ultimate victory in Tunisia, Egypt and the whole region is far from assured. For the revolution to advance, it must be able to create independent, nationwide and even region-wide democratic organizations that can press for its central demands and make them more concrete. Already, popular committees have sprung up in neighborhoods, often taking charge of security. But with the return of exiled opposition parties, such committees will have to be able to elect delegates to city-wide and national workers’ assemblies that maintain their independence

from the existing parties. The threat to the revolution is that the upcoming elections will channel the movement into support for those existing parties that do not question the system as a whole. The challenge is to create a democratic organization that can participate independently in elections as well, running candidates behind its own demands.

The issues that the Tunisian and Egyptian workers face are not in the least unique to them—they are faced by workers around the world. Nor is their response particular to those countries. The demand of Work for all — jobs for all; the concrete demand for a public works program with direct government employment is one that addresses the needs of workers everywhere. The revolution in the Arab world, still young and at its earliest stages, shows that this demand can become a relying cry globally for a united movement that can win great victories.

In this issue :

World Hunger and the Silent Tsunami	p. 3
Abstract of the ILN's 2010 May Day Appeal	p. 4
Tunisia and the Jasmine Revolution	p. 5
ILN European Leaflet against the crisis	p.10
Jobs for All, Legalization for All, a Massive Public Works Program	p.11
A Brief Wildcat Strike Takes the Spanish Skies by Storm	p.17
ILN Statement of Agreement	p.18

Who are we ? The International Luxemburgist Network groups together activists who are in general agreement with the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg. We stand for the democratic self-organization of the working class and mass strike as a major tool. It is through this process that workers can form themselves into a class capable of leading a truly democratic society, self-managed by all, according to social needs and not profit. **Contacts :** english@luxemburgism.lautre.net – **Website :** <http://luxemburgism.lautre.net/>

World Hunger and the Silent Tsunami

by Inti

In 2008, speculation in the world markets led to a peak rise in the prices of food commodities, as measured by the FAO Food Price Index (cf. Figure 1), and hunger riots in several countries in Africa (including Egypt), Indonesia and Haiti. Demonstrations were harshly repressed with "security" forces, including the UN in the latter, opening fire on protesters. The falling prices of financial stocks encouraged investors to make money with these foodstuffs, essential to human lives, and gave way to a "silent Tsunami", as a representative of the World Food Program (UN) labeled it.

By the end of 2010, this record was slightly surpassed with the cereal price index going up by 39 % in 2010. Over the same period, the Oil and Fats Price index went up by 55 % and the Sugar Price Index by 19 %. These figures increased even further in January 2011, the FAO indicator soaring by 3,4 % and reaching a new record, both in real and nominal terms, after seven consecutive months of inflation.

The official explanation is the unusual drought in Russia which gave way to a decrease in export, but no major event affected Sugar production last year yet its price climbed up anyways. So we can easily see that speculation is back and it is fueled by disasters as an excuse to increase stocks and therefore prices. The trade of profits for hunger across the world is therefore in large part due to the deregulation that took place during the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, backed up by the banks, not merely natural phenomena.

This is a terrible news in a world in which 925 million people don't get enough to eat (that is almost 1 out of 6 people)¹ and 1 out of 4 children

– around 146 million – are underweight in developing countries², even though it is possible to feed the entire human kind. In a world ruled by the markets, those that can't pay are forgotten by the invisible hand (or shouldn't it rather be called the "blind" hand?).

Today the G8/G20 is officially working on solutions to prevent famine but of course nothing can be expected from leaders whose only response to the events of 2008 were bullets. These very same rulers have imposed a neoliberal (that is freedom for economic powers to do whatever they want without any restraint) globalization whose one of the main foundations is lowering the trade barriers (import taxes, mainly) in the Third World while keeping protectionism in the developed world. This allowed the further domination of multinationals, putting them in competition with the local production in the developing countries (whose economies were mostly agricultural) and destroying it with low prices (a phenomenon known as "dumping"). Now that the food commodities reach sky high prices, underdeveloped countries can't turn to their national production for a solution because the farmers, who make up three-quarters of the world's hungry, impoverished with "free trade", have long gone to the cities looking for wage-slaved employment in factories or service sectors, often in vain.

Today almost all African countries import more cereals than they export, according to the FAO³. The

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/al390e/al390e00.pdf>, 14th of September 2010

² UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children*,

<http://www.unicef.org/sowc/>, 2007

³ AFP, *Flambée des prix : la FAO déconseille de moins exporter*, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/>

situation is so alarming that this organization discourages restrictions on export from these countries, imposed in order to keep the stocks within their boundaries, as this tends to increase the prices in the world market as the offer decreases. So no solution is offered within the present system : nor protectionism and its import taxes that increase prices nor liberalism and its dumping that increases poverty.

The solution will come from us, workers, all over the world. It is only through a democratically organized production that social needs will be met, not through a capitalist system. The workers, once they take both political and economical power directly in their hands, are the only ones willing to invest in agriculture in the developing world in order to prevent such disasters.

In this sense, the rebellions throughout the Arab world is a lesson to all of us. Beside their demand for "Jobs for all", protesters are demanding lower prices and have succeeded, like in the French Caribbean in 2009, through their mobilization to impose changes. Taxes on food imports have decreased (a temporary solution) and subsidies have been granted in order to prevent a major social revolution. Other temporary solutions should include the ban of speculation and the social control over financial firms. But the real ultimate solution that we must all, in the South and in the North (where small farmers are also victims of multinationals as they are forced to sell at very low prices while the latter resell the commodities with an important profit to consumers), aim to is to confront the problem at its very root : capitalism.

afp/article/ALeqM5gpCL0ovRzfg_h_nBFyZ2SIXoLB_tQ?docId=CNG.2f863e300b480e8d21a7f30c92984acd.31

¹ FAO, *FAO news release*,

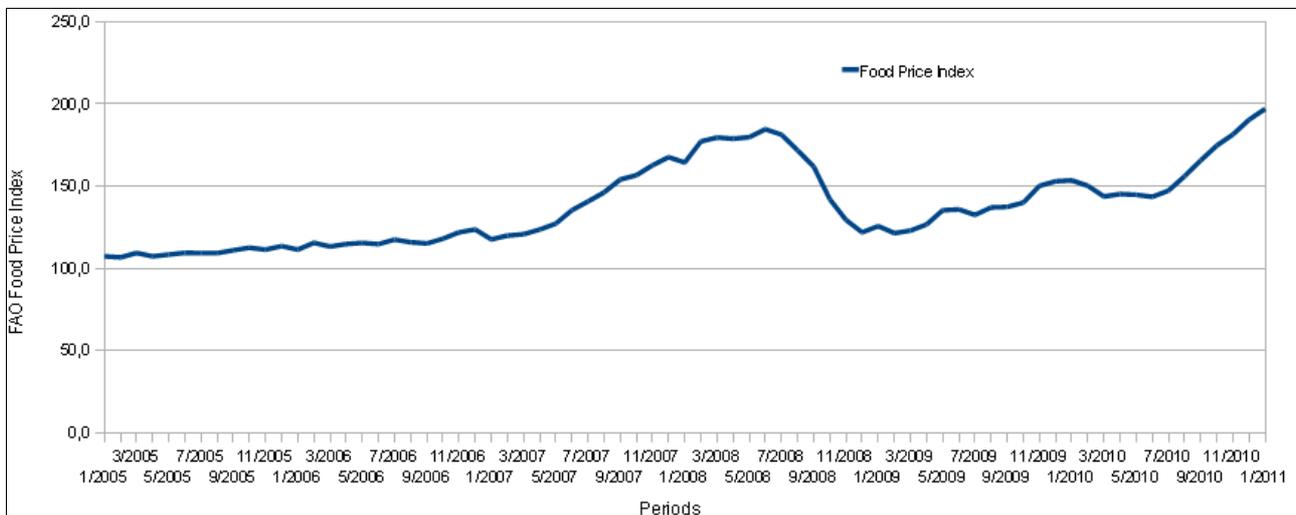


Figure 1 - Food Price Index from 2005 to 2011

Source : FAO, February 3rd 2011, <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/FoodPricesIndex/en/>



Abstract of the ILN's 2010 May Day appeal

<http://www.luxemburgism.lautre.net/spip.php?article112>

... This new stage in the crisis is leading to further transfer of wealth to the bosses in Greece : pension and wage cuts, increase of VAT (the most unfair tax since both the rich and the poor pay it at the same rate)... as the EU, the IMF and the stock markets welcome such attacks on workers. But this is not an isolated case. The same measures are being put in place in Spain, Britain and France and will certainly occur elsewhere. We can not be fooled by the new official interpretation which tries to blame now isolated countries instead of the global capitalist system and its financial attacks. At the same time, the struggle there will have a great impact in future struggles in other countries. Greek protesters do understand this and they are not wrong when they tag on

a wall in Athens : *"We are an image from the future"*.

The current isolated struggles must unite everywhere. In order to face an united international attack from the ruling classes, the workers have no other choice than to respond as well in an united manner, both on the national and international levels. We can not let ourselves be fooled by the racist propaganda instigated by the State whose only aim is to divide workers. We can not accept the idea that if there is a crisis today it is because the Greeks are "lazy" and responsible of what happens. Nowhere must we pay the bosses' crisis.

The working class must put itself in motion in an autonomous manner : with independence and without hierarchy. It must gain

conscience of its power and realize that they are no supreme savior. Through strikes and through solidarity actions with workers all over the world can we gain the experience to stop the attacks against our living standards.

Our immediate demands should be :

- ▶ Transfer of wealth from Capital to Labor : wage and pension increase, replacement of the VAT by a stronger income tax affecting the upper classes, suppression of tax benefits for the rich and big companies ;

- ▶ Jobs for all : lay offs should be banned and the public sector should hire unemployed workers for building, as an example, public housing ;

- ▶ Legalization of all

foreign workers : the workers belong to an unique international class ;

- ▶ Socialization of the main industries (banks, factories, transports...) : workers must take them in hands so as to plan their productions according to social needs instead of today's imperialism ;

- ▶ Review of international trade agreements, ensuring a co-development among countries instead of the current imperialist domination.

This process – which can be called "socialization" as it makes the working class take over society and its destiny – will only gain short term benefits if it stops half way. As workers take power over their lives, they will have to continue towards the only solution to the capitalist crisis : Social Revolution.

Tunisia and the Jasmine Revolution

by Inti

Tunisia was considered by many as the most stable place in the Arab world and the less likely to get hit by unrest. Over the past decade, the economy grew at a speed of 5% on average. It is considered the second most competitive country in Africa and it has the second largest revenue per inhabitant in the North of the continent. Its main industries include an important industrial sector and mines provide source of natural wealth. But as social movements don't follow any path imposed by the outside, but rather are the fruits of deep underlying causes, they manage to awaken a submitted population without the need of any leader. It is in Tunisia that a mass strike movement has emerged (although actual strikes are limited) and spread to the Arab region.

Unfortunately, Tunisian wealth is not organized democratically in order to meet social needs but rather for the profit of foreign multinationals and the local elite. Privatisations and the effective start of a free trade agreement with the EU (mainly France, Italy and Spain) on January 1st 2008 reinforced the status of an exporting country, highly integrated in the world capitalist economy (since the crisis of 2008 the GDP growth rate has slowed down as demand from Europe decreased), where workers' low pay opened the way for further exploitation as compared to the one prevailing in Europe.

It is the poorest that pay most of the flows of this economic model and in particular the youth. The latter was encouraged to study but its unemployment rate was 31 % in 2005 (it is surely worse after the outbreak of the global crisis) while the overall rate goes up to 14% and precariousness and poverty became the general life conditions of young people and their families.

The case of Mohamed Bouazizi is symbolic of this situation. This 26 years old graduate but unemployed had no other choice than become a street vendor of fruits and vegetables in Sidi Bouzid, in the rural heart of Tunisia. His goods were seized by the authorities because he didn't have a license nor did he bribe them to make them change their minds. This was the only source of revenue for his entire family. He therefore went to the prefecture to get his belongings back but all he got was a refusal accompanied by insults and physical violence. As a desperate act of outrage, he set himself on fire in front of the official building. This took place on December 17th 2010 and was to become the beginning of a strong rebellion that led to the ousting of the dictator Ben Ali.



The Jasmine, the national flower of Tunisia, gave its name to the Revolution

The majority of the population recognized itself in the experience of Mohamed Bouazizi and understood his anger at the flows of the social system summarized in this event : poverty, corruption and authoritarianism from the State. On the very same day, dozens of shop owners and students gathered in front of the prefecture in solidarity and demanded to meet the local governor. This initial demonstration was, just like almost the entire revolution so far, spontaneous and independent from any existing party or union.

The movement reached in a few days other cities near Sidi Bouzid

but was already attacked by authorities since its outset. According to the information we have gathered, the first demonstrator killed was the 18 years old Mohamed Ammari in Menzel Bouzaiane. This did not undermine the protesters' determination and what were peaceful demonstrations turned into open confrontations in which official buildings and headquarters of the RCD (*Constitutional Democratic Rally*, the ruling party) were attacked.

The State repression was not the only cause of deaths we got to deplore. Like Mohamed Bouazizi, several people of all ages took their lives, in different regions of the country but also in Algeria, Egypt and other countries where oppression and poverty are the rules, development the exception. The first life lost was the one of Houcine Neji, a 24 years old unemployed who electrocuted himself in order to denounce the social injustices. At the age where hopes should fill our minds, Capitalism pushes people over the edge so as to keep "freedom" for the ruling minority.

By Christmas, the rebellion reached the capital Tunis. In spite of this, the first official reaction of Ben Ali was to undervalue the strength of the movement. During his first speech since the beginning of the revolution, on December 28th, he claimed that it was due to a minority of extremists and that it was not representative of the situation in the whole of Tunisia. He decided to intensify the State violence against protestors.

Like with his other speech that would take place in the days after, this only helped the development of the actions. As a second attempt to calm down the population, symbolic decisions were taken so as to

personalize the problems and hide their social roots in simultaneity to an intensification of repression : the governor of Sidi Bouzid got fired on December 30th ; on January 12th the same occurred with the Interior minister and a commission charged with fighting corruption was promised. At the same time, Ben Ali had asked a top commander of the army to open fire during demonstrations. His refusal led to his removal but also to a higher popularity of the army, even though it had brought support to the brutal police.

This same recipe, State violence mixed with personalization of problems, will be followed by the government after the ousting of Ben Ali so as to channel the movement into a basic support of different members of the ruling class.

But one of these measures did represent a major victory : jailed protesters were freed on the 12th of January. Few days before, while calling rioters "terrorists", Ben Ali promised that 300 000 jobs would be generated in 2011 and 2012. During his last speech, the day before his fall, he promised lower prices on food, allowing less limited Internet access and political freedom.

This was not enough to fool the revolt. On January 14th, Ben Ali left power, with the help of the army who had secured the airport, after stealing 1,5 ton of gold from Tunisia.

From the very beginning, what united the movement as it spread to the entire country were economic demands against unemployment and high cost of living, mainly basic food products in the midst of a peak in their prices in the world markets . These demands were the same ones put forward by other spontaneous movements in Algeria and then Jordan, Yemen and Egypt and that are currently shaking the foundations of these authoritarian

regimes.

These demands were not only defended by the youth but also by the entire working class, that is those that have no other mean of subsistence than their work whether they are employed or not. The faces of the demonstrations were diverse and quickly evolved to represent the entire population. Women, men, young and older protested and stood up to the police in spite of the harsh repression, present since the start, and that claimed an estimated of 100 lives.

As the mobilization progressed, and surely also as a response to police violence, these demands turned into political ones. Opposition to the dictatorship, call for more freedom, for a genuine democracy, etc. came to complete the list of requests from the working population. As the government felt that it started losing the battle, it accepted many of the initial demands but it was too late, the revolt was now asking for Ben Ali to step down. And so he did.

Since his fall, many positive reforms were announced so as to paralyze the movement, but in essence these are just temporary if the issues are not dealt with at their very roots and if the rebellion delegates their duty to develop its revolution. As the protesters kept their struggle on, police repression returned, showing up the true face of the new "democratic" governments that have taken the place of the previous one.



Somewhere in Tunisia...

As our editorial puts it, the greatest challenge today is for the movement in Tunisia, just like in Egypt and elsewhere, is not to loose control of its own movement.

The movement was spontaneous not because it was disorganized but because only the masses could have made these changes possible. A popular spontaneity is not a religious dogma nor an opposition to organizing. It is rather a requirement for the start of a movement and an opportunity for organizing democratically, from below, without giving the chance for self-declared leaders to corrupt its aims.

Tunisians workers, after seeing what are the real objectives of the new power, have an opportunity to attack the core of their troubles : capitalism. For this, they can only rely on themselves and create their own self-managed movement, open and democratic, putting forward their own demands. Local councils could elect delegates to regional or national councils so as to coordinate the movement across the country.

In this sense, it is very encouraging to see that in the cradle of the revolution, Sidi Bouzid, a local council was created in order to protect the revolution and run the affairs of the area (<http://www.mediapart.fr/en/club/blog/mohamed-amami/240111/declaration-constitutive-du-conseil-de-siliana-traduit-par-mohamed-am>). We don't have enough information on this, but it seems that, even though it doesn't (at least not yet) oppose capitalism (nor does it support it), it constitutes a great alternative to the present ruling power and a space for the democratic development of the struggle.

This movement is not just an inspiration for Arab workers, nor are the problems it confronts only limited to the region. Capitalism creates poverty and limits freedom all over the world. Just as solidarity must be developed on an international level, we can draw a lot of lessons from this movement so as to apply them to our local situations.

Timeline of the Revolution

- 17th of December** : Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26 years old street vendor in Sidi Bouzid (centre of the country), had his goods (fruits and vegetables) seized by the police because he did not have the required license nor did he bribe the police controlling him. He got insulted, hit and even spat on by one of the officers. Even though he had a diploma, he was jobless and this activity was the only revenue for him and his brothers, sisters and widowed mother. After trying to get his belongings back at the siege of the local prefecture, he set himself on fire as a protest. On the very same day, tens of shop owners and young people gathered in front of the prefecture demanding to meet the governor. **18th of December** : the movement gathered strength in Sidi Bouzid : a spontaneous demonstration, violently repressed by the police, turned into an open confrontation until late in the night. **19th of December** : the confrontations continued in the city : the local headquarter of the RCD (*Constitutional Democratic Rally*, Ben Ali's party) got attacked. The police, present both in uniform and as civilians, began patrolling the city...
- 20th of December** : the movement reached the city of Meknassis (center), near Sidi Bouzid. **22nd of December** : in Sidi Bouzid, Houcine Neji, a 24 years old unemployed, climbed an electric pole and shouted "*no more misery, no more unemployment*". In spite of the fact that the crowd asked him to get back down, he ended his life by jumping off. He was the first victim. The protest reached on this day Menzel Bouzaiane (center). The delegation headquarter was set on fire and the national guard base besieged. **24th of December** : in Menzel Bouzaiane, a 18 years old protester got shot by the police. In spite of his youth, he was the first victim killed by the State. His name was Mohamed Ammari. Other demonstrators were hurt, including Chawki Belhoussine El Hadri, a 44 years old man, who will die because of his wounds on December 30th. **25th - 26th of December** : the movement reached for the first time the capital Tunis (North) where unemployed graduates protested.
- 26th of December** : The hypocrisy continued when Ben Ali meets Mohamed Bouazizi's family in a luxurious house. During his first speech since the start of the movement, he claimed that protesters were just a handful of agitators betraying the "homeland". He threatened them with heavy repression. **27th of December** : following the call of several unions, hundreds of protesters (students, unionists and human rights activists) met in front of the UGTT (Tunisian Labor General Union, who had backed the Government and the bosses in the past) headquarters in Tunis. They gathered to show their solidarity with the movement, claiming the right for a job and demanding a just development for all the regions. Lawyers, a very active profession in the Revolution, protested in Sidi Bouzid. **28th of December** : Ben Ali goes to visit Mohamed Bouazizi who had been transferred to a hospital near Tunis. The press was there to take a picture of the encounter but it failed to mention that the dictator and the other officials didn't bother using any mask (the doctors and nurses around them are almost all wearing such protection) and there increased the risk of introducing germs in the room. **29th of December** : a demonstration took place in Tunis. **30th of December** : Chawki Belhoussine El Hadri, wounded on December 24th in Menzel Bouzaiane, died. In an attempt to calm down the rebellion, the governor of Sidi Bouzid was fired. The government claims that the agitation was limited to a local level and was not a mirror of the situation in the entire country. **31st of December** : lawyers showed their solidarity in Sousse, Monastir, Mahdia, Gafsa, Jendouba and Grombalia. **3rd of January** : in Thala (centre-west), demonstrators clashed with the police. Near Sidi Bouzid, 250 protesters, mostly high school students, took part in a peaceful march to express their solidarity with the movement against

unemployment and the high cost of living. The protest turned violent after the police provoked it by firing tear gas, one of the bombs reaching a Mosque. Furious, the protesters burned tires and the office of the RCD.

In Sidi Bouzid, high school students took the streets without any problem.

4th of January : death of Mohamed Bouazizi, in the evening.

5th of January : around 5 000 people participate in the burial of the young man, now a martyr, and expressed their anger.

In Sidi Bouzid, a mother and her children climbed a electric pole and threatened to end their lives if the Government refused to help them find a job and decent housing.

The repression intensified. The State blocked websites, the police patrolled as civilians in the streets, schools were closed down...

The French newspaper *Le Monde* reports various repressed protests throughout the country (http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2011/01/05/tunisie-nous-vivons-un-mouvement-sans-precedent-1461433_3212.html) : a peaceful demonstration became violent after police provocation in Thala, Kasserine and Hammamet. Nevertheless, the movement was still limited to the main cities.

The main demands were

"Jobs for all", "Down with the bribes and favouritism", "Tunisia free", "Ben Ali get lost" ("Ben Ali dégage" in French, slogan took up also in that language during the protest in Cairo on January 25th). According to reports sent from Tunisia to *Le Monde*, no one would have dared say these things a month ago.

Several violent arrests took place in the night in Thala.

The upheaval extended itself to the neighbouring Algeria.

6th of January : most secondary and high schools were on strike in Sidi Bouzid.

In Chebba, Mohamed Slimane, 52 years old, killed himself. Father of unemployed graduates, he was sick and had asked for help to sustain his family and take care of his health in vain.

This desperate act was accompanied by two other ones : a young man set himself on fire in Metlaoui and another person threatened to electrocute himself so as to denounce unemployment and corruption.

The 22 years old rapper Hammada Ben Amor (known on the Internet as "El General", on which we can see a clip of his song "President, your people is dead") was arrested in Sfax (the second largest city) as well as 3 cyber-activists : El Aziz Amami, Slim Amamou and Hamadi Kaloutha.

Demonstrations were held in solidarity in Canada, Algeria, Europe, as in Paris where 250 people gathered.

7th of January : demonstrators were wounded after the police opened fire in Saida and Regueb.

8th of January : a second street vendor and a 50 years old father Moncef Ben K set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid.

The UGTT manifested its solidarity with the movement during a demonstration in Tunis. About 100 people remained silent for a minute in memory of the victims fallen since the start of the revolt.

The Algerian government decided to decrease the import taxes on oil and sugar so as to limit the prices paid by consumers. The prices of sugar, oil and flour had doubled in the past months.

9th of January : the Tunisian governments admitted that 8 protesters got killed (5 in Thala and 3 in Kasserine), a first acknowledgment since the start of the rebellion. By the end of the day, the number of victims rose to 14. *Le Monde* announced 23 assassinations in Kasserine, Regueb and Thala (http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2011/01/09/tunisie-nous-marchons-vers-l-inconnu-1463104_3212.html).

10th of January : in Regueb and Kasserine,

demonstrations for the memories of the fallen protesters ended up in a street battle with the police, the latter got support from the army. The cities of Thala, Meknassi and Seliana faced the same situation.

In an attempt to quiet down protesters, Ben Ali promised during a second speech since the beginning of Revolution that 300 000 jobs would be created in the next two years. All of the schools and universities got closed down as decided by the dictator. For him, those that have stood up to the police were "terrorists".

Nevertheless, the mobilization increased after the speech. It now reached the tourist areas and Tunis, where the police besieged the university Al Manar after hundreds of students shelter themselves inside.

One more suicide is to deplore. Another unemployed graduate, Alla Hidouri, hurt by bullet in a leg during the protest of December 24th in Menzel Bouazaine, ended his life.

11th of January : the former colonial power, the French State, had remained silent over the situation that its friend Ben Ali was confronting. The foreign affairs minister, Michelle Alliot-Marie proposed Tunisia the "know-how" of France of keeping order during riots, in the Parliament while saying at the same time that France had no lessons to give to other countries (should one remind her that the French

elites did not hesitate a second in criticizing Gbagbo from Ivory Coast over the past weeks ?). fired and the government announced that investigation will be undertaken against corruption. shoot protesters. Ben Ali fires him. He will become, together with the army, very popular because many lives were saved even though the army had tried to keep order during the Revolution. palace and arrive at one of the terminals. Ben Ali left Tunisia for Saudi Arabia. According to certain sources. The dictator had planned to create havoc in the country, hoping that the people would beg his return. His militias did cause armed confrontation but the army, backed with self-organized neighborhood committees patrol the streets searching the armed groups.

The wave of riots reached the suburb of Tunis during the night.

12th of January : 2 people got killed and 4 were hurt in Douz. Among them, there is the franco-tunisian Hatem Bettaba. Then again, no "lessons" was given by the French government.

In order to stop the riots in the area around Tunis, a curfew was declared.

In a desperate attempt to stop the progression of the movement, the government freed the jailed demonstrators. However, Hamma Hammami, a 59 years old high ranked member of the Workers Communist Party of Tunisia, got imprisoned.

The Interior minister was

13th of January : the situation led to looting of Casino and Carrefour (French multinationals working in relation with the Tunisian ruling elites) supermarkets in Gafsa, Gabès...

In the third – and last ! - speech, Ben Ali promised to not be a candidate for his re-election after 2014 and to grant freedom and civil rights to Tunisians, including a larger access to Internet, and to lower the prices of basic commodities.

In spite of the promises, two workers are killed in Kairouan. The estimated number of victims of repression is now 66.

A top-ranked commander of the army refuses to follow Ben Ali's orders to

14th of January : in reaction to Ben Ali's speech, some Tunisians show their happiness. At the same time, thousands demonstrated and asked him to leave power.

Protests and riots continue their progression. Police violence has not stopped.

During the afternoon, Ben Ali announces the dissolution of the government and anticipated legislative elections in six months. A curfew is established during the night.

The army gets its position in front of the Interior Ministry and takes over the airport of Tunis. Shortly after, official cars abandon the presidential

A new government will be put in place, with many old heads of the RCD. The population will continue its movement so as to stop the Revolution from being betrayed from above. By the end of January, general strikes will be called out by the UGTT.

The example of Tunisia has been followed in many other Arab countries, challenging dictators serving world capitalism and oppressing their population.



Again, somewhere in Tunisia.

ILN European leaflet against the crisis

Workers of Europe! Fight for Our Way Out of the Crisis! Jobs for All: A Massive Public Works Program, Legalization for All, Socialization of Finance—Wipe out the Debts

Across Europe, and around the world, workers have begun to fight the layoffs, and the cuts in wages and living standards with mass protests and one-day general strikes. These are essential steps. But so long as the protest demands are limited to stopping the cuts, stopping the layoffs, they will fail to do more than slow the rate of decline. To stop and reverse the layoffs we have to formulate demands that say what we are **FOR**, not just what we are against, what **our** solution is to the crisis.

The capitalists' plans have done nothing except funnel trillions from workers' pockets to the capitalists, slashing consumption and driving the world economy into a deeper depression. **The only way to create jobs and to end the unemployment crisis is to reverse this flow of wealth from capital to labor, to have governments directly hire millions of workers for a massive public works program to fulfill unmet social –to provide low-cost housing for all, free quality health care, and free higher education ,to improve mass transit, clean up the environment and to research and develop new cheap, clean sources of energy-- financing this program by taxes on capitalist and corporate wealth. We mean here a truly massive program, employing tens of millions of workers across Europe to do the work that needs to be done.** Therefore the demand for a massive public

works program, with direct government employment, at prevailing wages has to become a central demand of workers today. This is the way—the *only* way—to provide **Jobs for All**. Already in the United States some major organizations, including the California Federation of Labor, have begun to make this same demand. But to build a united movement of all workers for Jobs for All, we must at the same time demand **Legalization for ALL**. In every country millions of immigrant workers who are among the most affected by the unemployment crisis can't get government jobs because they have no papers. Their undocumented status allows employers to exploit them, pushing down wages and working conditions for ALL workers. To end this and to get jobs for ALL, we need legalization for all so that everyone in a country has the right to work there. This means immediate legalization without exception for the undocumented. We will not allow ourselves to be pitted against each other. To get power, we need unity of ALL workers.

The capitalists and their governments and parties say there is no money—that the money must go to pay the debts—to the capitalists banks and financial institutions. But the private financial system is bankrupt—it is kept afloat only through huge government bailouts. Private finance today operates only as a giant black hole

soaking up money. Workers must demand the **Socialization of Finance**—state ownership of ALL finance, and running the state institutions democratically. This would wipe out the debts and free that money for social needs.

How We Can Win

The way to win these demands is the way public works programs and other major concessions were won in the US, France and elsewhere in the 1930's, in the last Great Depression--by a radical, ever-growing mass movement that threatens the **power** of the capitalists. A democratically organized, Europe-wide mass strike movement will strike fear into the hearts of those who really rule, fear for the existence of their rule of the few. Concessions from them and victories for us will follow from that fear.

The first step is to begin to unify workers and their organizations behind these demands. We call for the formation everywhere of Jobs For ALL Committees to organize around these demands and for workers to gain the endorsements of these demands by unions, immigrant and community organizations. An initial goal can be the integration of these demands into the planned September 29th General Strike.

Come to a meeting to discuss how we can organize around these demands, one of several taking place in European cities.

FORWARD OUT OF THIS CRISIS, NOT BACK



"The Crisis is them, the solution is us... all !", somewhere in France.

Jobs for All, Legalization for All, a Massive Public Works Program

by Lili Gomez and Eric Lerner

Why these demands now?

Today, in the United States and around the world, the working class faces a rapidly deepening crisis of mass unemployment. One in six workers in the US is unemployed, while in the African-American and Latino communities, one in four is out of work. Almost no country in the world has escaped this crisis and in some countries, like Spain, the scope of unemployment is far worse. Unless the steady rise in unemployed can be stopped and rolled back, the threat of layoffs will be used by both public and private employers to force workers to accept massive cuts in wages, pensions and working conditions. Such cuts will in turn slash consumption, pushing the global economy into deeper depression and sending unemployment soaring in a never-ending spiral. Jobs are therefore the central issue today for all workers, employed and unemployed.

Workers have begun to respond to the cuts in wages and living standards, and in some cases to the layoffs, with mass protests and even, as in Greece, one-day general strikes. These are essential steps. But so long as the protest demands are limited to stopping the cuts, stopping the layoffs, they will fail to do more than slow the rate of decline. **To stop and reverse the layoffs we have to formulate demands that say what we are FOR, not just what we are against, that say what is our solution to the jobs crisis.**

Since the crash of '08, the experience of the "stimulus" and "bailout" plans by governments around the world have shown clearly that the private sector cannot be begged or bribed to produce jobs, no matter how many trillions governments hand to the

corporations. The private sector is still destroying jobs, and the bailout money is flowing straight to the pockets of the few tens of thousands of fantastically wealthy shareholders who own these corporations. So long as the markets continue to contract, so long as austerity plans spread across country after country, corporations have no reason to hire new workers. There are no new Chinas out there to open up new markets. The bailouts and the austerity plans are nothing but machines to funnel trillions from worker's pockets directly to capitalists' bank accounts.

Yet there is plenty of work to be done. Tens of millions of jobs are needed to build houses, schools and hospitals, to clean up the Gulf and other environmental disasters, to repair the crumbling infrastructure and to greatly expand essentials services. **The only way to create jobs and to end the unemployment crisis is to reverse the flow of wealth from capital to labor, to have governments directly hire millions of workers for massive public works program to fill these social needs, financing this program by taxes on capitalist and corporate wealth.** Therefore the demand for a massive public works program, with direct government employment, at prevailing wages must be a central demand of workers today. **This is the way—the only way—to provide jobs for all.**

On July 14, 2010, the California Federation of Labor, the largest state union federation in the US, adopted a resolution supporting this demand for a massive public works program. While there is a big difference between resolutions and actual action, the unification of the working class behind this demand is now a priority for activists not

only in the US but everywhere.

Here in New Jersey, where the authors organize, this demand for a public works program has been endorsed by several immigrant and community groups—and it has become the demand of other groups around the country as well. In this campaign, we have linked the demands of Jobs for All, a Public Works Program to the demand of **Legalization for ALL**. We have set up a NJ Jobs for All Campaign organization to unite immigrant rights, community and anti-war groups, unions and others behind these demands. We call on activists to set up such Jobs for All Campaigns everywhere and to coordinate their activities on a national and even international scale.

Jobs and Legalization are linked

Why do we link the demand for Jobs for All to the demand for Legalization for All? Quite simply because you can't get one without the other. Today in the US, millions of workers in the two communities most affected by unemployment—African-Americans and Latinos—can't get government jobs. For Latinos, it is because millions are undocumented immigrants. For African-Americans it is because the racist justice system has given millions conviction records that bar them from government—and many other –jobs. To get jobs for ALL we need legalization for all so that everyone in this country has the right to work here. This means immediate legalization without exception for the undocumented and opening up of jobs for those with past convictions. Unless these two communities can participate fully in a public works program, the movement for such a program will be fatally weakened. To get power,

we need unity.

This is true not just in the United States, but everywhere—immigrant workers must be an integral part of the movement for a public works program. In nearly every country the undocumented status of millions of immigrants allows employers to exploit them, pushing down wages and working conditions for ALL workers. Only legalization for all can end this and only legalization can integrate immigrants into the fight for a public works program.



In 2008 and 2009, undocumented workers achieved gains through strikes in France supported by the unions, in this case SUD and CNT.

But equally, immigrants can't win legalization without at the same time helping to build a movement for a public works program, for jobs for all. Today, with rising unemployment, governments and political parties are trying to pit native-born and immigrant workers against each other, competing for the same shrinking number of jobs. Only a movement that demands jobs for all, and shows how that can be practically achieved, has a chance to unite immigrant and native-born workers into a force that can win.

What is a Public Works Program?

So what is a public works program? The aim of a public works program is not merely to create jobs, but equally important it is to produce the goods and services that the working class so badly needs—to provide decent affordable housing for all, to provide free higher

education for all, to greatly improve education at all levels, to provide quality health care for all, to provide modern, rapid mass transportation, to clean up the environment and to research, develop and produce new, cheap, clean sources of energy. There is vast work that needs to be done not just by construction workers, but by factory workers, by teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers scientists and artists.

In every country in the world there are vast unmet social needs. Filling them will easily absorb those who are now out of work. For example, in the United States, less housing has been produced for decades than is needed to keep up with population growth and the decay of older housing. Eliminating the shortage of 10 million units of housing over a decade will alone create 2.5 million new jobs. In education, class sizes have to be radically reduced to give a quality education to all. In addition, far more people would attend college if they could afford it, so making college free, as it is in some countries today, would require a major expansion and the hiring of tens of thousands of professors. Together this program would create 6.5 million jobs.

Filling other urgent needs—adequate mass transit systems in every major city, rebuilding our bridges, tunnels, and flood control systems, building new hospitals, cleaning up capitalism's many messes like the recent Gulf of Mexico oil spill and finally providing the resources to create new clean energy sources will, we can estimate, create another 5 million jobs, for a total of 14 million direct government jobs (see Table 1) For each government job created, money will flow into the rest of the economy because these workers will be spending far more money than they did when they were unemployed. This additional effect will probably create at least one indirect job for each direct government job. So the program as

whole could create 28 million jobs—about the same as the number of unemployed in mid-2010.

Can it be done?

Could this actually be done? Well we know it was done—in the last Great Depression, a working-class mass movement forced the government to institute massive public works programs in the United States—the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Work Progress Administration (WPA). The Civil Works Administration, begun in the fall of 1933, lasted only four and a half months. Within the first week of its operation, it employed 1.1 million workers and employment peaked at 4.2 million. The total cost of the project was \$30 billion in 2006 dollars.

CWA was able to accomplish so much in so little time because it was based on direct government employment. No contracts were let, no contractors involved—the government employed the labor directly—at union wages. Getting rid of the contractors was vital then and is again today. Contractors and their subcontractors absorb at least two-thirds of the money governments spend on projects today, leaving less than a third for wages for workers. In addition, there are huge delays in the contracting process. Direct government employment ends both problems, with no dollars going to profit. And if the government got things done quickly in the 1930's and again in World War II, where entire factories were built—by the government—in six months or less, it can do things equally fast today.

The CWA enraged the corporations and political pressure caused the Roosevelt administration to terminate it. However, a militant and growing movement of unemployed workers forced the government to again institute a giant jobs program—the WPA. Unlike CWA, WPA did not provide union wages and workers had to battle constantly to raise wages and to preserve the

program itself.

On the other hand, WPA lasted six years, not four and half months, so its accomplishments were on an even grander scale: 600,000 miles of highway, 116,000 bridges, 5,600 new schools, 30,000 new public buildings, countless parks and recreation areas. Again no contracts—with their profits and corner-cutting—were involved. The quality of the work is evident today, 70 years later, in nearly every community in the country. The WPA did not only build things, it employed artists, actors, and musicians to paint murals, put on plays, and concerts. It hired historians to create local histories, photographers to document the Depression. It mobilized the talents of eight million workers—in a country with less than half the USA's present population.

Workers in the 1930's fought to get a prevailing wage on these projects and workers need to demand the same today. The public works wages can't undercut other wages—rather they should set the standard, bringing up other wages to that level.

Take back the money

But the politicians and critics say: "there is no money for such a huge public works program." Indeed, such a program would be expensive. As shown in table 1, such a program for the US alone would cost \$1.5 trillion a year. However, to say the money is not there is just a lie. The money is there—the capital and their corporations have it and they stole it from us. **We need to take it back.** Over the last 35 years, nearly 20% of national income in the US has been transferred from workers to capital—and much the same has happened the world over. Before, nearly 60% of national income went to workers wages, 40% to capitalist profits and managers' income. Now it is 60% to capital, 40% to labor. Put another way, 20% of all income has been transferred to the richest

½% of the population.

There are many ways that it can be taken back. For one, the destructive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have to be ended immediately. All the vast sums that now go to armaments production and development have to be re-directed as well, along with the vast productive resources involved. For the arms industry wastes not just money but the brains of millions of skilled workers, scientists and engineers and the most advanced and productive factory machinery in the US. Those resources can be redirected to the tasks of the public works program.

Second, the stolen money has to be returned—a tax on the banks to take back the bailout trillions, a tax on oil companies to retrieve the trillions stolen in price increases, and most important a tax on the capitalists' wealth itself. Working people in the US pay 3% and 4% of the value of their homes in property taxes, but the stock and bonds of the rich are untaxed. A modest 5% annual tax on the wealth of these who have financial assets above \$2 million dollars would alone raise \$1.2 trillion a year, 80% of the cost of a public works program. Together these measures, as shown in Table 1, would raise more than \$2 trillion a year, enough to substantially close the US federal budget deficit as well. In other countries, very similar figures can be arrived at.

Finally, in many countries, the budget is drained by debt payments to the banks. But the private financial system is bankrupt—it is kept afloat only through huge government bailouts. Private finance today operates only as a giant black hole soaking up money. We must demand the **Socialization of Finance**—state ownership of ALL finance, and running the state institutions democratically. This would wipe out the debts and free that money for social needs.

These are just some ways of taking the money back. Others can be suggested. The key thing is that the

money comes from **them**, the capitalists—not from **us**, the workers.

Why ask the government to do it?

But, many will object, why demand that the *government* create jobs and rebuild America? Isn't the government an inefficient, bloated bureaucracy that can't do anything right? Look at the state of the schools, some will say. Others will ask—isn't the government going to do what the corporations want in any case? Isn't it inherently corrupt, and undemocratic? How can we expect it to do anything in favor of the workers? Wouldn't it be better to try to build up our own economy, outside the corporations' control, with cooperatives?

Now, we could immediately reply and ask those who think "government" can do nothing beneficial, "what about the WPA and its thousands of schools and parks, what about Social Security and unemployment compensation, the Civil Rights Acts, and Medicare?" But we need to go deeper to overcome the last thirty years of capitalist myth-making about "the government".

What is essential here is how we look at the world—as mythology, or as historical process. In mythology, the world consists of unchanging "things" whose basic character is described by myth—tidy descriptions or stories that may sound convincing, but exclude anything that contradicts them. In today's neoliberal mythology governments—all governments at all times—are inefficient, clumsy, bureaucratic and wasteful, while the free market is efficient, technologically advanced and, in the long run, beneficial for all. (Just ignore that little mess in the Gulf of Mexico!)

The other way of looking at the world is to see it as composed not of things, but of evolving historical processes, not changeless myths. If

we look at governments over hundreds or even thousands of years one thing is clear: government arises out of the conflicts of classes—groups of people who share common economic interests and a common role in the economy—and throughout their existence they respond to those conflicts. What is also clear is that any specific government, because of its structure and history, responds far more to one class, the ruling class of the time, than it does to any other class.

Today, governments in every country in the world respond to the interests and wishes of the capitalist class first and foremost. Perhaps nowhere is that clearer than in the United States, where most US Senators are themselves wealthy capitalists and where every representative and executive at every level who are not themselves capitalists have “for sale” signs around their necks. Those who contribute the huge sums used in electoral campaigns can dictate exactly what decisions are made. To call this “corruption” is to fundamentally misunderstand it—this is how capitalist government is designed and structured to work: in favor of capitalists.

But capitalist governments can be compelled to create programs—like public education, like the WPA—that benefit workers. It is exactly those programs that the capitalists hate, vilify and destroy if they can. In the past forty years capitalist media have drummed into everyone’s head that governments—**meaning those programs like public education that help workers**—were useless and incompetent. At the same time they have been making deep cuts in funding just those services, crippling them. It is this self-justifying circle—“the government does not work, and to prove it we’ll cut it even further”—that has convinced millions of workers that the “government” can do nothing right.

Take the example of public

education. Up until 1976 in the US, as in many other countries, the percentage of young people graduating from college rose, increasing five-fold to 25% over 30 years. Such a shift was essential in an increasingly technological economy. But in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, under Carter and Reagan, there was a huge shift in government priorities away from education and towards armaments. With the economy stagnant, capitalism has less and less use for education.

The result over the past 30 years is that the percentage of college graduates among US youth has also stagnated, even falling among men. The cause is easy to see—the costs to the student of public higher education have more than doubled in this period and the share of total costs paid by students has risen by 30% in just the past decade. For two-thirds of the population a college degree has become unaffordable.

This has had a major impact on high schools as well. Realistically, students’ main motivation to study in high school is getting into college, and the main (although not only) motivation in going to college is getting that degree. With college degrees dubious for a large majority of the population, that motivation and thus achievement in high schools are crippled—a crippling the capitalists then blame on teachers and public education! As jobs for even college graduates become rarer, employers are requiring higher degrees, shrinking further the elite that can afford many years of education and further drying up motivation for those who can not.

A massive public works program could solve this problem by making all higher education free and spending the \$200 billion a year need to expand universities and to provide the teachers and other resources, including a major reduction in class size, needed by high schools to prepare students for college.

There is no necessity either that government projects be run bureaucratically, although that is the way things are done now. We should, as part of a public works program, be demanding that the projects be run democratically, with decisions made by elected boards representing both workers on the projects and the communities benefiting from them. Obviously, such a democratic structure will be very hard to win from the government, but it is important to make it a goal. Democratic structures will not only make the project far more effective in delivering the goods and services that the working class needs, it will make it far harder for the government to cut back the programs in the future. Experiments with such community-workers boards running factories are being tried right now on a small scale in Venezuela, and they do work.

How can we win?

How could we possibly win such demands which are certain to be opposed by the mighty with all their might and wealth? Since the capitalists control the government, what can we do to force them to give up such a large concession? Certainly, NOT by doing what the left in the US so often does: rely on the Democrats. When President Obama, still the senator from Illinois, contributed his vote to the initial bank bailout of 2008, few on the left questioned this dire contradiction to his promise of hope and change in Washington. Yet the succeeding year and half of his presidency leaves little doubt that the American public has been duped once again. Perhaps for those who believed they had voted for the lesser of two evils there is comfort in the belief that things potentially would have been worse under McCain, but the fact remains that little difference if any exists between Democratic and Republican governance. Rising unemployment, rising rates of foreclosure, continuation and

escalation of war, catastrophic global environmental degradation, lack of affordable basic health and housing, a deteriorating public sector, and a continued funneling of public resources to bail out and subsidize private corporations are just a few of our major concerns that have not been addressed and that millions of Americans wait frustrated for government to resolve.

Many activists put energy into electing Obama—very few put any into building a real independent opposition party. But what has changed since Bush left office? Have jobs stopped disappearing? Have the trillions stopped flowing from the government to the banks? Have the ICE raids and deportations stopped? Have the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan stopped? Has the torture chamber at Guantanamo closed? Has the governments stopped claiming in Court that the President can detain and hold whoever he wants without trial or charge? *What has changed* except the complexion of the President (and, oh yes, his grammar)?

If any lesson has been learned it is that we can wait no more. We can only rely on our own organization and action. The only way to win a public works program, to win jobs and legalization for all, is the way a public works program was won in the 1930's—by a radical mass movement that threatens the **power** of the capitalists. The WPA was not the result of Roosevelt's generosity. It was the result of years of mass organizing of the employed and unemployed, mainly by the Communist and Socialist Parties of the US and by other socialist groups. Over a five-year period this organizing resulted first in local unemployed councils, then in national organizations, and finally through a merger of many unemployed and community groups, in a million-member organization, the Workers Alliance of America, which united immigrants and native-born,

employed and unemployed workers in one democratically-organized movement. During this period, unity of employed and unemployed workers led to a mass strike wave, including city-wide general strikes in 1934 in San Francisco, Minneapolis and Toledo.



Demonstration of the Workers' Alliance of America in San Francisco in 1939 against the cuts decided by the Congress.

This mass-organizing process was neither easy nor short. But it frightened the rulers of that time into making concessions they would never have otherwise made. The same situation exists today. The only way to win is to build an independent mass movement with organization at all levels, from neighborhood to nation. What scares the corporations and the capitalists that control them is workers' independent, democratic **organization**. We are many, they are few, and they know it. They rule only because we are divided and disorganized. Their social rule is threatened if a mass movement can organize and unify millions of workers.

They do not fear any top-down organizations, no matter their size. Leaders can always be bought off or, if necessary, destroyed. But if a mass movement arises that really organizes democratically at all levels, where workers feel that "we are all leaders", then capitalists and their government will give concessions to attempt to stop the organizing process. They will fear the movement's

growth more than the losses the concessions cost them. That is how concessions were actually won in the last Great Depression, and much more recently how, in February 2009, the month-long general strikes in the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique won major concessions.

Today, in the midst of the Second Great Depression, capitalists will make concessions only when faced with the threat of loss of power. To think otherwise is to truly ignore reality. To try to make friends with Senators and Representatives, to lobby, to placate them, to give them platforms at our rallies, to work with them to formulate "realistic" policies is the shortest path to political suicide. What we need to do is to build a movement that will strike fear into the hearts of those who really rule, fear for the existence of their rule of the few. Concessions from them and victories for us will follow from that fear.

Stabilization—or more war?

The WPA, CWA and other public works programs stabilized the US economy in the mid-1930's and stopped the downwards cycle of layoffs and falling consumption that had existed since 1929. Between 1935 and 1937, WPA employment peaked at 3.5 million and unemployment dropped by 5 million. A public works program could do the same thing today, not only in the US, but worldwide. The key is to transfer money from capital to labor.

In the 1930's as today there were no good alternatives to such a program. In Germany, where the Nazis crushed the divided German working class, they imposed their own "Public works" program—a giant rearmament program that prepared for World War II. Nowhere did the private sector lead the way out of the unemployment crisis—nor can it today.

To be sure, we believe that such concessions will be partial and

temporary, liable to be withdrawn at any moment the movement weakens. The WPA did not end the Great Depression, which ended only in the catastrophe of WWII, and the program itself ended before the war began. In our view, such gains can become permanent and the new depression ended only when the power of capitalism is destroyed and the movement that has won such concessions can become the basis for the establishment of new institutions of workers democratic rule—the basis for socialism.

By no means does everyone have to agree with that assessment in

order to work together in a movement behind Jobs for All, Legalization for All and a Public Works Program. Indeed such a movement can succeed in bringing together what have until now been disparate issue-oriented fights. It can unite those fighting for immigrant rights, the labor movement, environmentalist, housing, and anti-war activists, because it addresses all these issues. To fund the public works program the wars must end, and the program itself must address the key problems of the environment and new sources of clean, cheap energy.

The first step towards building such a movement, which has already begun on a small scale, is to build Jobs for All Campaign committees that can work to win the existing organizations of the working class—immigrant groups, unions, community and environmental and peace organizations—to these demands, to gain their endorsement and their help in building mass events. The endorsement of the public works demand by the California State Federation of Labor is a good start. We urge all those who support these demands to work together with us and others to accomplish that first step.

Table 1

What is the work to be done?

Housing		Units needed per year
	Replacement:	0.5 million units
	Population growth:	1.4 million units
	Elimination of 10 million unit shortage in a decade:	1.0 million units
	New jobs:	2.5 million
Education		
	<i>Cutting class size in half, doubling college education:</i>	
	School construction	2.0 million
	New public school teachers	3.5 million
	New college employees	1.0 million
Cost of free tuition for all		\$0.2 trillion per year
Other infrastructures		
	Flood control, bridges, hospitals, mass transit etc.:	1.5 million
Health		2.0 million
Environment		
	Pollution clean up:	1.0 million
	Clean energy research, development, production:	0.5 million
Total direct government employment		14 million
Indirect additional employment		14 million
<i>Total new jobs</i>		<i>28 million</i>
Total government cost		\$1.5 trillion per year

Where does the money come from?

Ending Iraq and Afghanistan wars, converting arms production:	\$0.4 trillion per year
Repayment of Bank bailout over five years	\$0.2 trillion per year
5 % wealth tax on assets over \$ 2 million per family	\$1.2 trillion per year
Tax of 100 % on all increases in oil and gas prices since 2003	\$0.2 trillion per year
Total	\$ 2.0 trillion per year

A Brief Wildcat Strike takes the Spanish Skies by Storm

by Inti



From right to left : air controllers, civil servants and unionists, jailed by the media lynching. The latter says : “Let me guess...you were an obstacle against the cuts and the privatization of your company... a bad example for other collectives of precarious and resigned workers... and you made the error of standing up for your rights... Did I guess correctly?”
Taken from <http://www.controladoresaereos.org>.

Not so long ago, the Spanish economy was, together with the Irish one, the model of European capitalism. Today, after the bust of the real estate bubble, like in many other countries in the world, workers are paying for the crisis of the system. In spite of having 4 millions unemployed (public statistics office INE), that is the highest rate proportionally in Europe with 20,7 % of workers and 43,2 % of young people under 25 as of October 2010 (Eurostat), and of an increasing precariousness, the “socialist” government did not hesitate to impose series of austerity measures in order to “calm down” the financial markets and to transfer more wealth from the worker to the boss.

Among the latest counter-reforms, we find the ones presented by the government on Wednesday December 1st : the end of a subsidy for long-term unemployed and the privatization of 49 % of the airport authority AENA [1], among other neoliberal attacks. The first response from workers did not take long.

During the afternoon of Friday December 3rd, 2 400 air controllers decided to go on strike without previous announcement and in the midst of long weekend of 5 days, putting an end to airplanes traffic. The movement was against privatization and changes in the

management model and in the timetables. Beyond this conflict, the government had been reducing the “privileges” of these workers for a year now, counting on a tremendous support from the mass media (for example, the news agency AFP is not afraid of using the government’s own rhetoric) to divide the Spanish working class.

In reaction to this strong strike, the government, with the backing of the right-wing opposition, declared the state of alarm in the morning of Saturday December 4th. The royal decree (BOE 295), hence, assimilates the air controllers to military employees, forcing them to go back to work and imposing civil aviation under the army’s rule. Freedom of speech, of meeting and labor struggle are very limited or canceled. Had the strike gone on, the workers could have been found guilty of disobedience by a martial court and sentenced up to 8 years of imprisonment. In the afternoon, they returned to work.

Ever since, the government’s arrogance found its own echoes in the mainstream media as its unique limit. On top of the shameful “lesson”, threats from the vice-president and the minister of Promotion followed because it was now time to make “justice”, since “it can not be that every now and then arm wrestling is done with the State without letting the State respond”.

Without any further ado, AENA established 442 disciplinary files against the strikers.

What justice? How is it possible to justify this method, never employed since the end of franquism, not even after the failed coup on February 23rd 1981 nor after the terrorist attacks of March 11th 2004 in Madrid (191 dead and 1 856 wounded people) ? What is behind this other than class struggle ?

The government can continue claiming social justice and democracy but neither its policies or its measure can make us forget how illegal the latter was. As explained by

[Controladoresaereos.org](http://www.controladoresaereos.org) (<http://www.controladoresaereos.org/?p=6661>), the state of alarm was illegal since, as it is stated in the organic law 4/1981, in order to issue this type of decree there has to be a catastrophe, a sanitarian crisis, a situation in which first necessities products are not available and – reason invoked by the State – the halt of public services as long as “**one of the other situations detailed in the present article exists at the same time**”, that is one of the other three case scenarios. This did not happen.

The decree sets forth that the state of alert will last 15 days but the government already said that it

could continue it in order to prevent strike should be seen from a Iberian peninsula. Mass strike, that another strike during the Christmas general perspective. Europe, not is a political and an economical holidays. The aggression can, thus, just Spain, is being submitted to strike, based on the unity of all, continue under the fake bourgeois austerity plans so that us, the would allow us to stop the sacrifices democracy. The latter always exists working class, will pay for the of our standards of living for the as long as the worker accepts to be capitalist crisis. We already saw an worship of the god of capitalist gain. under control but it becomes a joke increase in the official violence For this reason, we owe all of our whenever s/he puts her or himself during the movements in France solidarity to the air controllers, since in motion. some weeks ago, now we see we know that we are all attacked another limit being crossed in the with these measures.

This state violence for a simple

What is the International Luxemburgist Network ? Why this Organization Now ? (Statement of Agreement)

The International Luxemburgist Network is a new organization of militants who are in general agreement with the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg. Our aim, as members of the working class, is to help in the organizing of a world revolution to end capitalism, contributing our perspectives based on radical socialism and democracy.

We have organized this network around Luxemburg's concepts because we believe that these concepts are central to understanding and acting on the present world situation. We think that those who agree in this viewpoint need to work together to exchange views, formulate new ideas, disseminate them within the working-class movement and to coordinate action and organizing. Obviously, we are not, nor do we try to be, the only activists who base themselves on the work of Rosa Luxemburg. Neither do we believe that Luxemburgism can be a dogma. All militants can exhibit freely their ideas, since freedom is an indispensable condition for the construction of socialism. But there are a few key ideas that we agree on:

1. Luxemburg's conception of the democratic self-organization of the working class is vital today as an alternative to the Leninist notion of a vanguard of professional revolutionaries, separate from the working class and itself guided by a centralized body of experienced leaders. We reject all such top-down, hierarchical organizations, because such hierarchy only mirrors the separation under class society of those who decide from those who work. It can never overturn such a society. Only organizations that are democratic and give the power to make decisions to the workers themselves can help to organize a new society in which all decisions are made democratically, and power is in the hands of the many, not the few.

2. The democratic organization and unification of the working class arises out of workers' collective action in mass strikes, as Luxemburg first showed a century ago. The process of self-organization and mass transformation of consciousness that she described has been demonstrated repeatedly in the mass strikes of 1918, 1936, 1968 and many other years, up to the present. It is through this process, not just through electoral or labor-union action, that the workers can form themselves into a class capable of leading society. These struggles can form the democratic organs of direct workers' power—workers' councils or assemblies—that can, in a revolution, become the governing bodies of socialist society.

3. At a time of global economic collapse, Luxemburg's theory of the accumulation of capital makes it clear how and why capitalism has reached its ultimate limits. The continued existence of capitalism thus will lead humanity into a prolonged period of decline and ultimately, if allowed to continue, into a new Dark Age of barbarism. Her analysis shows why revolutionary transformation, an end to capitalism and the social ownership of all wealth are essential today. Capitalists' concessions to the working class in this period will occur in struggles, but will only be temporary unless power over the economy is taken away from the capitalists.

4. Finally, the unification of the working class is essential if it is to take power. Luxemburg's uncompromising opposition to all forms of nationalism and to the myth of national self-determination is a critical basis for our consistent opposition to all the divisions of today based on sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or skin-color. Like Luxemburg, we believe that workers everywhere have the same interests.

Critical as it is, Luxemburg's work grew out of a living, evolving tradition of Marxist working-class thought that includes the work of many others before, during and since her time. We draw on that larger tradition, not on her work alone.

We encourage all those who generally agree with the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg as summarized here to contact us and to join this Network.

Contacts : english@luxemburgism.lautre.net – **Website :** <http://luxemburgism.lautre.net/>

Take part in the ***International Luxemburgist Forum***

at <http://luxemburgism.forumr.net>,

a forum for all those in general agreement with the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg