

Intervention at the African conference in Johannesburg

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Intervention of Comrade Mohammad Jmour on behalf of the Tunisian Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party at the African conference in Johannesburg 19-20 August 2010}.

Tunisian Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party, Thursday, August 19, 2010

The Tunisian Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party warmly thanks the South African Communist Party for its invitation to attend the 2nd Conference for Democracy in Africa and the 1st Forum of Left movements in Africa.

On this occasion, our Party salutes the heroic past and present South African Communist Party for the demands of the working class and workers in the country, and expresses our admiration for its work at the continental and international scale.

Our Party also wishes to salute the African National Congress (ANC) of the great leader Nelson Mandela which brought together all the forces of the country against apartheid and continues to lead the fight for a just and democratic society.

Similarly, our Party welcomes all fraternal parties, all organizations and all individuals who participate in this 2nd Conference for Democracy in Africa and the 1st Forum of leftist movements.

Our Party is delighted to be here with you in Johannesburg, and wishes to establish and develop links with any militant organizations that fight for national sovereignty, democracy and social progress in Africa and for peace in the continent and the world.

This cooperation is essential if we want to put an end to the acts of Imperialist powers and their allies who support dictatorships, interfere in domestic affairs, organise coups d'état, tearing at each other in their leadership race, encourage violent ethnic conflict, pay numerous agents and subordinates to propagate their worldview, install military bases, drive the arms race, and promote division and secession in order to continue their corporate plunder of the immense wealth of Africa and prevent its development.

Like other African countries, Tunisia is also part of the Arab world. The Tunisian people are also intimately tied to the Palestinian cause and struggle against the Zionist occupation in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. It is also committed to the Iraqi Resistance against the occupation of this Arab country by a coalition led by the imperialist USA. In the same vein, our Party wishes to reiterate its condemnation of the campaigns conducted by Imperialism and Zionism against Sudan and their undermining of the territorial integrity of that country.

Our party also wishes to express its solidarity with the just causes in the world, starting with the Cuban cause and that of all the countries threatened by aggression from the USA and its allies.

As for Tunisia, its people fought to stop the French protectorate since 1956, and the Bey system in 1957. This fight has been confiscated by an authoritarian and absolutist who has continued to perpetuate to this day based on a triple alliance of the ruling party, the security apparatus and the presidential circle.

This alliance has fostered over time the development of the class of landowners and businessmen with a layer of compradors associated with particular European capitalist groups, and it has favoured the interests of the countries of EU over the Tunisian national economy.

On the political front, this ruling alliance has managed over the years to monopolize - almost completely - public space by muzzling the opposition political parties and major trade unions and mass organizations, by harassing their workers and limiting their activities .

Given this situation, the Tunisian opposition has split into two.

A coalition - made up of liberals, the Muslim Brotherhood and activists of the extreme left - propagated the idea that the regime has achieved this degree of weakness and isolation internally and externally that dramatic action is likely accelerate its fall. Believing that the scheme is illegal, the coalition called for a boycott of institutions and elections because the people would give them no interest, that politics is locked and that the electoral system is undemocratic. Some even ask the Tunisian regime's western allies to put pressure on it, or even to intervene to establish "democracy" in Tunisia.

Our Party from its inception and over the five years of its existence has sought to develop and implement appropriate tactics consistent with the level attained by class struggle and its own development. This tactic is based on the following principles:

- Take into consideration actual conditions of the state of power relations that currently does not lean to our side;
- Stick to the masses, rely on them and bring them to gain confidence in their historical role;
- Support and stimulate the struggles where mobilization is sufficient to win even partial victories. The conquests, however small, raise the spirits of the masses and help to dispel the sense of fear or indifference that strives to perpetuate the regime. These small victories show that we can win major battles;
- All possibilities of legal work even if they are narrow to forge links with the working class and workers, and get them to fight for their lives, but also for the democratic and social republic.

Based on this, our party - though not recognized in spite of an application for legalisation filed in proper form to the Department of the Interior April 29, 2005 - participated in campaigns for the presidential election and parliamentary elections October 2009 as part of a political alliance called the National Initiative for Democracy and Progress, which includes, besides the PGWPP, Ettajdid Movement (from the former Tunisian Communist Party). As for the municipal elections of May 2010, our Party has supported the establishment of "citizen lists" as part of a broader alliance called Alliance for Citizenship and Equality whose formation was officially announced in Tunis on 10 June 2010.

Party participation in these various campaigns was an open political battle rich in experiences and achievements:

- The Party has participated actively in the preparation of electoral manifestos, making sure that

these documents, distributed in hundreds of thousands of copies, reflect the concerns and demands of the people;

- The party took part in the electoral lists for both the legislative and municipal elections, several comrades having obtained the lead candidate in their district, but many lists were improperly invalidated;
- The Party has led voter registration battles, and also urged people to register as observers at polling stations;
- Party activists, candidates or not candidates have crisscrossed the country from north to south, issued manifestos, pasted posters, held public meetings, and established relationships with citizens;

Party activists and many supporters have resisted pressure to get them to withdraw their candidacy, or to abandon their role as observer.

- Official results released by the Ministry of the Interior do not match the reality of the ballot or the real balance of forces in the country. The figures recorded by observers at elections to give "citizens' lists" rates of around 20%, while official figures are accredited under 3%.

Our Party believes that the path it has chosen and which engages in open battle, a highly political battle, a battle that allows its supporters to toughen the field and establish links with the most advanced elements of the working class, is on track to accumulate strength, change the power relationship and move forward toward a democratic and social republic.

Convinced that the fight for democracy is inseparable from the anti-Imperialist struggle and the struggle for social demands, our Party has committed since its formation in other directions:

- The Party has been at the forefront in denouncing the Zionist aggression against Lebanon in the summer of 2006 and against the Palestinian in Gaza Strip late 2008-early 2009 and that resulted in major demonstrations around the country;
- The Party has involved itself in every struggle for better living conditions, maintaining the public sector and the development of remote areas like mining area of Gafsa, which was the scene of a long-lasting protest action.

The Tunisian Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party also continues to assert its right to legal existence, for which it has applied. By this means, the working class will be able to openly and publicly express their demands.

Tunisian Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party calls on all left parties to support it in this claim by whatever means they deem appropriate.

LONG LIVE THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY!

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS LONG LIVE!

LONG LIVE THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND TUNISIA!

VIVA THE COOPERATION OF THE AFRICAN LEFT FORCES!

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY,
DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS!

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